

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

AMBASSADOR WILLIAM ANDREAS BROWN

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

[Note: This interview has not been edited by Ambassador Brown.]

Q: This is an interview with Ambassador William A. Brown. It is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. Well,

Bill, let's start at the beginning. Can you tell me when and where you were born and something about your family?

BROWN: Alright. I was born on September 7, 1930, at the hospital in Winchester, Massachusetts, because there was no hospital in Lexington, Massachusetts, where I grew up. My family and I considered that Lexington, Massachusetts, was, indeed, "the birthplace of American liberty" - which was the town slogan. We thought that this was more than a slogan. The place of my birth imbued me with certain attitudes, given the fact that we considered that we were at the center of the American Revolution and that it all began there. In my early years I didn't realize that the Revolution began in other places as well and about at the same time.

Secondly, I would say that I grew up on the wrong side of the tracks. That is, I grew up in East Lexington, Massachusetts. There was quite a divide between the center of the town of Lexington, where the more affluent, establishment people lived, and those of us who were from East Lexington, on the Arlington County line. I just addressed my 50th high school reunion and mentioned this. My reference to it in these terms touched those others who were from East Lexington.

I grew up in unusual circumstances. My parents were divorced when I was a baby. My father was from a nouveau riche family which had suffered reverses in the Depression. My mother was the daughter of a Danish immigrant workingman. Given the social attitudes of the time, my mother had no recourse, due to the Depression and so forth, but to move in with her widower father, who was a sort of surrogate father to me, a hard-working Danish man from the working class. So, although I had a formerly wealthy widowed grandmother who lived in the more affluent town center, I grew up in a working class milieu, in an area which was significantly Irish Catholic and Italian-American. This Italian section of Lexington was called, "Guineaville." On the fringes of this area there was a small, Jewish community which was very poor and was called "Jewville." So I grew up in the midst of all of these stereotypes, ethnic, religious, and so forth.

Q: Were you raised a Catholic?

BROWN: No.

Q: I was going to say that there must have been quite a divide between the Catholic...

BROWN: There was. Remember, this was not just Catholic. It was Irish Catholic in the Boston sense. That is to say that Jesuit priests visited the families of the parish. When I was a kid, I remember hearing stories about this. The Jesuits reportedly thundered from the pulpit of the Catholic parish that they knew that some of their parishioners were murderers who practiced contraception. Abortion wasn't even mentioned in those days, but people who used contraceptives were considered murderers and were considered guilty of sin.

There was a very strong, anti-British background to all of this. This was very interesting to me when, much later in life, I dealt with British diplomats and lived in Leeds England for over a year.

I went through Lexington High School. I didn't know this at the time but, for those conservative days, Lexington had a rather progressive school system. My classmates, once I reached high school and discovered the whole town, included the sons and daughters of some very accomplished people. They were professors at the universities in the Boston area, such as Harvard College, MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology], Tufts College, and so forth. So there were some remarkable people around Lexington.

I said that I came from, shall I say, the wrong side of the tracks. Looking back on this time, I originally thought that I was going to be a military officer. An Italian neighbor of ours had fought in World War I. He had sons, but they didn't quite measure up to his standards. This neighbor had been impoverished between World Wars I and II but had been in the National Guard or the Army Reserve. When World War II came, he suddenly rose from the status of being a butcher in civilian life to that of full Colonel in the United States Army. He came back from World War II in glory and picked me as a sort of surrogate son in this respect. He was determined that I was going to go to West Point [U.S. Military Academy].

Q: May we go back just a bit? When you were in grammar or elementary school, what were your interests at that time?

BROWN: I was quite sports-oriented. I was fortunate, through my mother and her friends, to become fond of reading quite early. Lexington was still significantly rural, although a suburb of Boston in those days. So there were plenty of woods and open fields in which to play Cowboys and Indians and so forth. In those days tennis was a popular sport, but the people I knew didn't play tennis. That was a wealthy man's sport. I was a caddy at the golf course, but I didn't play golf. I carried the golf clubs of the wealthy. [Laughter] So the sports I played included baseball, football, basketball, and track.

Q: I assume that quite a bit of this was also organized, was it not?

BROWN: Yes.

Q: You didn't have Little Leagues and things like that...

BROWN: There was no formal organization. It was sand lot baseball. I still bear a scar from playing ice hockey. That was played outdoors. In those days there was no easily available, indoor hockey rink. Lexington had quite a sports reputation, including championship baseball, basketball and ice hockey. We were very good in track and in baseball and football.

Q: What sort of books were you reading?

Q: Somewhere my mother had obtained a copy of the old “World Book of Knowledge,” published in about 1905. I still have it.

Q: It consisted of about 20 volumes. I read it all the way through.

BROWN: It was extraordinary. Early on, I became interested in military history. By the time I was in junior high school I was reading a great deal about the history of the American Civil War. Of course, Lexington had its own history and held annual parades on April 19 to commemorate Paul Revere's ride. Houses were marked with signs saying that this was where Paul Revere stayed, and this was the old tavern he visited. Lexington was steeped in history, and there were artifacts from the period of the American Revolution in the buildings and so forth. History was very much in my reading.

Q: The statue of the “Minute Man...”

BROWN: Oh, yes.

Q: Must have permeated the atmosphere of the place. Although there was still some anti-British feeling, you must have been old enough to begin to feel the impact of World War II. How did that affect you?

BROWN: At my age World War II meant that my mother went to work. Remember, my parents were divorced. My mother and I were living with my Danish widower grandfather, who was a hard-working man. With the manpower shortage at the time, my mother went to work in a cookie factory, on a cookie assembly line. I myself was able to find work, and I started out making 15 cents an hour, working on local farms. That was a real taste of farm work. The years from 1941 to 1944 involved rough farm work, when I worked down on my knees, weeding. The employers really pushed us. As I said, I started work at 15 cents an hour and felt damned lucky to get that.

World War II meant that my grandfather, like other neighbors, worked for the Office of Civil Defense. He was issued a helmet, an arm band, and a shovel. Meanwhile, my father, whom I rarely saw, was in his late 30s. He was so gung ho in support of the war that he managed to get a commission as a chemical warfare officer. All of the males of the right age went off to military service, including Dickie Cook, a guy who was a sort of role model for me. Dickie was the son of the local fire chief. He lived about two houses away from us. Dickie Cook got a commission in the Army Air Corps right out of high school. He had the right stuff, and they rushed him through mathematics and so forth. He became a Bombardier. He came back, years later, with a different attitude toward the Air Force. On a bombing run over Japan his plane was attacked. When it gained maximum altitude to evade the enemy he froze, and suffered severe nerve damage.

During World War II one was filled with patriotism. As the war continued, I remember getting summer jobs at a Boys' Baptist Camp on the southern coast of Maine. That's

where I was when the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki took place, and the war came to an end. I was then 15 years old and just itching, almost dying to get into combat. Thank God I didn't! However, I was influenced by the other neighbor I mentioned who came back to Lexington as a full colonel. He reinforced an emerging mindset. I wanted to be a military officer, go to West Point, and so forth. Indeed, my high school yearbook said, "We hope that Bill Brown does as well at West Point as he did, playing the piano." Both of these objectives faded, with the passage of time.

Q: I was wondering. For many members of our generation, although I was two years older than you, World War II was the greatest course imaginable in the geography of the world. We read about places like Rostov [in the Soviet Union], Caserta [in Italy], and Iwo Jima [in Japan]. Did you follow the war closely?

BROWN: Yes. My Danish grandfather, although he did not have much of a formal education, was a reader. So, like millions of other Americans, we gathered around the radio in the evenings for a real ritual of listening to the news. My grandfather subscribed to the "Boston Globe." Yes, we followed the development of the war in great detail.

Q: How did this turn out in terms of your experience? Were you much interested in girls? Usually, I've found that with Foreign Service officers it usually turns out, when I ask what they majored in, they say, "Sports and girls." [Laughter]

BROWN: Well, I had a girlfriend. I met her once again at the 50th reunion of my high school class, after the passage of 50 years. Because of my working experience at the camp on the coast of Maine, where I worked in the kitchen and so forth, I also met a girl from the Bronxville, New York, who was really something. So I had a romantic attachment there. I was also heavily into music. I was into classical music and then I turned to jazz. For a while there it looked as if I might make music a career. All of that faded away, but I was in a band, circulating around and making some money, playing musical engagements.

I was pretty heavily into sports and was determined to get a college degree. I thought that I was going to West Point. There was one other thing. I was inducted into the DeMolay organization and became the head of the local DeMolay group.

Q: The DeMolay organization is the Masonic youth organization.

BROWN: It's an affiliate. I don't know how they are now, but Masons were sort of our mentors and sponsors. DeMolay was an independent organization for young men. There was a counterpart organization for girls, called the "Rainbow Girls." So I had something to do with that as well.

Q: You were getting ready to graduate from high school, which would have been about 1948 or so?

BROWN: Yes. Then came the shock of realizing that I couldn't get into West Point [U.S.

Military Academy] or Annapolis [U.S. Naval Academy]. I had a meeting with Congressional Representative Edith Nourse Rogers. She was a great, feminine figure in our Congress. It was pretty unique in those days for a woman to be a Member of Congress. She said to me: “You look like a very nice, well-motivated young man. However, I have to tell you that I make my nominations to the service academies strictly on the basis of grades on a competitive, civil service examination. All of the spaces are committed for the next two years. If you want to wait for two to three years, you're welcome to take the exam.” That applied to Annapolis as well as West Point.

I was shattered at that time. Then I learned of the “Holloway Program,” an NROTC program [Naval Reserve Officers Training Program].

Q: It was named after Admiral James Holloway.

BROWN: I took the entrance examination and, lo and behold, I was accepted. Under this program the Navy would send you with a scholarship to any one of about 52 colleges and universities throughout the country. I was accepted at Harvard University and became a gung ho member of the NROTC. I was one of only two members of my NROTC class who opted for the U.S. Marine Corps.

So the NROTC put me through Harvard University. They paid for my books and tuition and gave me \$50 a month. It was a great program. Since I had that support, I could afford to live at Harvard, rather than live at home in Lexington, Massachusetts, and commute to class.

I'd like to go back to the matter of social status in Lexington. In East Lexington, where we lived, almost nobody went to college. There was one fellow named Boyce, who lived across the street. I remember his mother. She was a widow who washed clothing to keep the home together. Her arms were lobster red up to her armpits. We called her son “Pro,” for “Professor.” He was the first young man in the neighborhood to go to college. He went to Tufts University. World War II had something to do with this. He became a football coach.

Traditionally, kids who grew up in East Lexington did not generally go to college. However, World War II changed this tradition.

Q: World War II was really an earth-shaking change.

BROWN: I had been determined to go to college, and now it became possible. I went to Harvard University under the Holloway Program. That was just wonderful. If I couldn't go to West Point, my idea was that I would become a career officer anyway, thanks to Harvard and the NROTC. I thought that I would become a career Marine Corps officer. The advent of the Korean War [1950-1953] only strengthened my determination to do this.

I went to Marine Corps basic training in 1950 at Little Creek, Virginia, and then went down to Pensacola, Florida, when the Korean War broke out. My classmates' interest in the Marine Corps had dramatically declined by this point. However, I was all set to go.

Q: Before we move onto your military career, what about Harvard? You were there from 1948 to 1952?

BROWN: Yes.

Q: What was Harvard like?

BROWN: Well, until I entered Harvard I thought that I was pretty bright. I had worked hard on my studies in high school. I had some good teachers. However, I came to realize that Harvard was tough going. I was quite a grinder [studied hard] at Harvard. I majored in history. That is, European history and then more particularly Russian history. Then I concentrated on Russian history in the Far East. Progressively, I began to study Chinese history.

Q: It's interesting. You really studied places where you later served in the Foreign Service.

BROWN: That's right. It took me a long time to reach this point. During my junior year at Harvard some fantastic things happened to me. My studies were a typical grind, if you will. I engaged in sports, but they were intramural sports. However, I really hit the books. I had to do this, considering what I was aiming for.

By my junior year I had fallen in love with the girl who was to become my wife. At the same time I began to study the Chinese language, because I realized that there was such a dearth of really good work on China in Western languages. I realized that if I were going to be serious about studying China, I should learn Chinese. So I became one of only two undergraduates studying Chinese. I had a great professor, Francis Woodman Cleaves who was also a "Mongolist" [specialist on Mongolia]. He was a fantastic teacher of languages, history, and related subjects.

A whole, new world opened up for me. My love affair and my second love affair, that is, things Chinese, were such that, by the time I graduated, I had credit for a year's graduate work as well. By the time I graduated from Harvard, I had completed the first year of what became Fairbank and Reischauer's graduate program in Far Eastern affairs.

By the time I left Harvard to go into the Marine Corps, I had become a member of Phi Beta Kappa [scholastic honor organization], I had done well in the Marine Corps subsection of the NROTC midshipman contingent, and I graduated with a magna cum laude degree. I also had this unique interest in Chinese and Far Eastern studies. I had in my back pocket, as it were, a graduate fellowship for the Harvard Yenching Institute. It was understood that I was going into the Marine Corps. However, just in case I wanted to

come back to Harvard afterwards, I had that.

Q: It sounds as if you had found that you had an aptitude for languages.

BROWN: Well, Stuart, later on we'll come to many language experiences which I had, courtesy of the Foreign Service Institute, the U.S. Government, and the State Department. I would say, "No." For me studying languages has always been hard work. However, my exposure to Chinese was a real love affair. I loved it and worked on it. Later on, my knowledge of Chinese was to suffer, because I was in the Marine Corps. However, I knew that I wanted to learn to read and speak Chinese well. However, I would never characterize myself as a natural polyglot.

Q: What about Chinese studies at this time? The Cold War was still going...

BROWN: This is something that I want to talk about. It has a later aspect as far as the Foreign Service is concerned.

By my junior year at Harvard I was actively engaged in Chinese studies. That, of course, put me into what was called, "Rice Paddies 101," as the general course on China and Japan was called. That meant introducing me to John King Fairbank and Edwin O. Reischauer [Harvard professors]. Their courses on China were packed with students. There weren't a lot of other courses on China, but I took whatever there was. There was one course on the Sociology of Asia, which covered China and Japan. This was taught by John Pelzel. He was a Marine Corps veteran and reservist, who was called back into active service in the Marines during the Korean War.

This was a time, remember, of McCarthyism [rabid anti-communist movement led by Senator Joseph McCarthy, Republican, Wisconsin]. The China area of specialization in the Foreign Service was being gutted. John K. Fairbank was labeled by Senator McCarthy as a Soviet spy and was linked with Owen Lattimore [China specialist in the Institute of Pacific Relations], whom McCarthy referred to as the chief Soviet spy of the Asian studies field. John Carter Vincent [a Foreign Service Officer and China specialist] was sacked from the State Department and was staying at Harvard. We had entered a period when these conservative outlooks were so hot and heavy that, on being approached to be the President of the Harvard Liberal Union, I rapidly turned this down, because in the prevailing atmosphere, when I hoped shortly to be commissioned a Marine Corps officer, the last thing that I wanted in my security background were the three words, "Harvard," "Liberal," and "Union." This was all very real.

Q: Oh, absolutely.

BROWN: This was the period when "loyalty oaths" [sworn renunciation of support for communism] were very much in vogue. There was "loyalty screening," and so forth.

Incidentally, by the time I graduated from Harvard, I was already married and had a

daughter, notwithstanding the fact that my contract as a Navy Midshipman required that I not be married. However, when I left Harvard as a newly-commissioned Marine Corps officer, I was well married and already had a daughter, Joanna-maria.

Q: What was your impression of how Harvard handled the McCarthy period? You know, in later years, we were concerned about the Vietnam War. More recently the issue of political correctness and all of that have acquired a certain vogue. Some of our universities did not handle these challenges well.

BROWN: Some material has recently been published on this period. According to some of the material which I have seen, Harvard didn't come out as well as it likes to picture itself, in the sense of having been a great defender of people accused of being involved with communists. From some material that I have read, it would appear that professors who had tenure kept it, but those who did not yet have tenure were urged to testify before Congressional committees if called upon to do so. That is, if they were subpoenaed and so forth. Altogether, it was a very tense situation.

I was of a pretty liberal persuasion at the time. However, I was certainly imbued with strong, anti-communist feelings regarding Communist China, or "Red China," as it was called, but also in terms of opposition to the Soviet Union. Deep convictions were being formed at this time. More radical and outspoken people were being singled out and named. The overall atmosphere surrounding Harvard University, including Cambridge, Boston, the working class, and so forth, was affected by this situation.

Q: In particular, Catholic groups were...

BROWN: Oh, yes. The Catholic Church was very much on the side of Senator McCarthy.

Q: I guess that Reischauer was teaching on Japan, and Fairbank was teaching on China.

BROWN: Well, Reischauer was teaching on both Japan and China. They cooperated and gave their course in alternating sequences. They were trying to convey an overview of the situation. With their respective backgrounds, each was able to comment on the situation. Reischauer was not solely specialized on Japan. After all, he had gone to Korea and into China for orientation purposes in the 1930s. They were both so well read that they interfaced very nicely.

The course that Reischauer and Fairbank taught in sequence was very popular and very well attended. Of course, this course was blasted by Senator McCarthy.

Q: I was wondering how you found dealing with what was called at this time, "Red China." There was the government policy of non-recognition of Red China. Of course, in the 1950s China had entered the Korean War. There was the controversy of "Who lost China," and all of that. I would have thought that the Reischauer and Fairbank course would have been tricky to teach.

BROWN: Not for Fairbank. When I entered his course, it was before the Korean War, and Chiang Kai-shek was in a state of collapse. Fairbank was extremely critical of the Chiang Kai-shek regime as being rotten, corrupt, and so forth. I would probably differ in my appraisal of the situation from some other China hands, but Fairbank, if not an apologist for Communist China, was trying to convey to those of us attending his course how lopsided and distorted events had been presented in the past. He pictured how Chiang Kai-shek had exploited World War II and American sympathies for China. He said that Chiang had botched the situation, had a very corrupt regime, and on and on. I'll never forget a phrase or expression that he used in his course. He said of the Chinese communists: "We didn't scratch where they itched." He tended to use stereotypes in discussing them. However, by the time the Korean War broke out, I was past that controversy and was studying more advanced material on China, Chinese literature, and so forth.

Incidentally, when I was an undergraduate, I guess as a senior, I saw a notice on a bulletin board at Harvard about a course on Southeast Asia, "for graduates and undergraduates with special permission." I sought and was granted special permission to take the course. It involved one lecture a week. The lecturer was either flown in or came in by railroad, because there was nobody at Harvard who could teach a course on Southeast Asia at the time.

There was a person who sat in the back of the class. He may have been from the State Department or some other U.S. Government agency. He said to me: "Young man, you can get a job in the State Department if you can even name the countries of Southeast Asia." In that regard I'll never forget hearing a recently-retired, French Vice Governor of Indochina, who came in and gave us an historical overview of what he called: "The phenomenon of what we call the Vietnamese, or Annamese, moving from North to South over the centuries, pushing on and limited only by the 'Ms,' the mountains, the Montagnards, and malaria." Now, he noted, with quinine those barriers were falling. He predicted that what he called this very virulent form of Annamese expansionism would take over the whole area. It was a fascinating perspective.

However, the fact was that the state of Southeast Asian studies in those days at Harvard and at other American universities as well was very low. There was an anthropologist around who had some familiarity with Southeast Asia, but there was nobody who could really teach Southeast Asia.

Q: How about Marine Corps studies?

BROWN: I was really lucky. As I said, when the Korean War broke out, there were only two in our NROTC class who chose to stay in the Marine Corps program. We had a Colonel and a Technical Sergeant teaching one of our courses. The Tech Sergeant had been a First Lieutenant in World War II who then reverted to his permanent rank after the war. This Technical Sergeant was an historian who had studied deeply in the Widener

Library [at Harvard]. The Colonel and the Tech Sergeant gave us a history of warfare going back to Greece, Rome, taking us right into the major elements of military history, including the American Civil War, and World Wars I and II. They gave us a very unique insight into the conceptual approach taken by the top-notch thinkers in the Marine Corps between World Wars I and II.

They also covered amphibious doctrine. They took as an example the Gallipoli Campaign of World War I [in the Turkish Straits area]. They noted that many European military professionals had concluded that the Gallipoli Campaign proved that amphibious warfare was doomed to failure. However, The USMC leadership drew the opposite conclusions, saying that if this campaign had been handled the right way, it could have been successful. That was truly a great course. When the Korean War broke out, the Tech Sergeant was immediately called up as a commissioned officer. The Colonel was a very dedicated man who later became a general. This course provided me with quite an education.

Q: What about the retreat of the Marines from the Chosin Reservoir during the winter of 1950-1951? Did that set a lot of people thinking?

BROWN: Oh, yes. Bear in mind that, although I opted for the Marine Corps and served as a Marine in Korea, during most of my time at Harvard I studied the Navy. It was toward the end of my time at Harvard that I took courses specifically on the U.S. Marines.

During the summer time of my Harvard years I served as a Midshipman and then later, in 1951, I opted to go to Quantico Marine Training Center as a Marine. I went through a sort of boot camp at Quantico. So by the time I graduated from Harvard, I was really gung ho. I was just dying to go to Korea, be a hero, and so forth.

Q: What did your wife think about this?

BROWN: My wife had a magnificent background. She was a professional social worker. She was the last person in the world whom you would expect to endorse what I wanted to do. We were in love and, from the beginning, she took the attitude: "Whither thou goest..."

So I went to Quantico, then artillery training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and then to Korea. She came with me to San Clemente, California, where the day before I departed for Korea she gave birth to our second daughter, Margarita Andrea, and waited for me to come back. I was a Marine Corps artillery officer in Korea.

Q: When were you in Korea?

BROWN: By the time I got to the front line in Korea, the war was over. The armistice had been signed [July 27, 1953]. So I was in Korea from August, 1953, through the beginning of the following summer, when I came back to the U.S. While in Korea I was a

Forward Observer and later headed an artillery Fire Direction Center.

I submitted an application for advanced training in Chinese. The Marine Corps answered in typical fashion. They said in effect, "Lieutenant, after you've had about five years under your belt, then you can apply for such things. For now, you're a 'line officer' and you'll do what you're told." I therefore submitted my request to resign, which was a traumatic experience because I had wanted to make the Marine Corps my career. My Colonel called me in and said, "You're crazy. You've got a wife and two kids. Do you realize what this means?" However, I persisted in my request and I got out of the Marine Corps.

So I was then able to re-enroll at Harvard University in September, 1954, and took a few courses under Fairbank and Reischauer. I already had a year's work toward an MA under my belt, so I entered the second year of the graduate program. I soon decided that I wanted to be a teacher. The word was: "Get a joint degree," so I doubled up on both Japanese and Chinese, so that I could satisfy that portion of the joint degree program. We lived in a cold water flat on \$110 a month.

Q: Under the GI Bill?

BROWN: The post-Korean War version of the GI Bill. I just poured it on in pursuing my studies. Again, my wife was very supportive. I got my MA under Fairbank and Reischauer in 1955. By 1956 I completed the oral exam for a Ph.D. degree.

At this time, or some months prior to this, I studied Mencius [Chinese philosopher] in a very small class consisting of about five students. One day I came into class and found Morton Abramowitz, Wever Gim, and a fellow named Smith. They were talking about some exam and how difficult it was. I said, "What's that?" They said, "The Foreign Service exam." I said, "What's that?" They said, "You take it to be a diplomat. You ought to try it."

I literally stumbled into the Foreign Service that way. I had no more idea of joining the Diplomatic Service than the man in the moon. However, I had a wife, two kids. I took the Foreign Service oral exam on the top floor of the Customs House in Boston and, surprisingly enough, passed it. I'll never forget that exam. Wow!

Q: First of all, when you took the exam, it was a three-day exam, right?

BROWN: No. I think that the written exam took one day. I don't recall that it took three days.

Q: I'm just trying to remember when the State Department switched from a three-day to a one-day exam.

BROWN: I guess that I was among the first to take the one-day exam.

Q: I took the written exam in 1953, and it took three and one-half days.

BROWN: By the time I took the exam it had been cut down to a long, single day.

Q: What about the Foreign Service oral exam? Could you talk about it?

BROWN: The oral exam was fascinating. I took it in the late winter of 1955-56 or early Spring of 1956, I guess. I took it on the top floor of the old Customs Building in Boston. It was a very windy and cold day. As I waited, out came the previous candidate to be examined. He looked pale and was sweating. As he walked by me, he hoarsely uttered one word: "Economics!"

So it was to be. I entered the room, and here were three stern gentlemen, or at least they struck me as pretty solemn and stern. They had my record in front of them. They started off, asking: "Well, you were a Marine in Korea. What was the Rhee Line?" I said, "The Rhee Line? I guess that has something to do with North-South contacts." They said, "You were in Korea. Don't you know what the Rhee Line was? Didn't you read Time and Newsweek?" I said, "Well, no, that's not what I was reading. I wasn't reading much of that!" The Rhee Line turned out to be a fishing boundary between South Korea and Japan.

Then they said, "Describe the economy of Texas." And on and on it went. As you recall from those days, this was a matter of exerting pressure on the candidates, and it was confrontational. They were trying to find out what you didn't know and what you did know, and they were exerting pressure on you to see how you reacted.

I'll never forget one question in what was, to me, a pretty rocky session. One gentleman asked me: "Do you know anything about the Civil War?" I said, "Well, a little." Immediately, he asked: "Who were the generals at the Battle of Gettysburg?" I said, "You had General Meade, commanding the northern side, with General Hancock on the Left, and so forth. On the South you had, of course, General Lee, with General Pickett in the Center and General Longstreet on the right flank." He said, "That's enough." [Laughter] He shifted to another question.

Q: I know. Just when you got cranked up, they shut you up fast.

BROWN: Yes. Then I got an unsolicited offer of a job from CALTEX [a joint venture of Standard of California and TEXACO]. This was in the spring of 1956. They offered my wife and me a free trip down to CALTEX headquarters, which then were on Madison Avenue. I said to my wife: "Hey, they're offering us a free trip. Let's take it." So we took it. We drove down there in my car, with our two, little kids and stayed with friends. I showed up at CALTEX as sort of a lark, you know. I bought myself the first and only hat that I ever had. It was a flat top hat, which was popular in those days.

I walked into CALTEX headquarters on Madison Avenue in time for an 8:00 AM appointment, I guess it was. By the end of the day I'd been through their winnowing

process. I ended up in the office of the Executive Vice President, way up in the Penthouse of this tall building. He said to me: "There are three other guys parked around Washington, all trying to get this job. However, as we look at you, you're the guy. We'd like to hire you in marketing in the Far East." The job was in their Chinese or Japanese subsidiary. I said, "I have to tell you that I passed the Foreign Service exam, and I'm also waiting to take my Ph.D. orals." He said to me: "Young man, I started as a truck driver in China and worked my way up. How you lead your life is your business, but let me give you just one piece of advice. Don't become one of those 'cookie pushers,' those 'striped pants guys' in the State Department. " He was revolted by seeing a young guy of promise wreck his life like that.

However, I sweated for a couple of weeks and then turned down the CALTEX offer. I often said to myself: "I'll kick myself, no matter what I decide to do." However, thank goodness that I did go into the Foreign Service. I took my oral exams and entered the Foreign Service on the following day, in October, 1956.

Q: October of 1956. I assume that by this time you had checked with people to find out what the Foreign Service was about.

BROWN: Not too much, really. However, I was lucky in the sense that Wever Gim had entered the Foreign Service earlier. When I went to Marine Corps Reserve Training in the summer of 1956, I had a chance to get together with Wever in Washington. I think that by then Wever may have already been headed for Korean language training. It all sounded thrilling and exciting. I really didn't know too much about the Foreign Service. The basic attitude of my wife and me was: "Let's go into the Foreign Service for a year or two, see whether I can do my Ph.D. thesis, and then have another look."

Now, the trouble, academically, was that the field was so dry at the time that Fairbank's advice to graduate students and to serious Ph.D. students under his guidance, was to spend four, five, or six years, really doing a book. In other words, write a thesis that was a book. Then pick up a secondary area, whether it's American history, literature, or whatever. Go and sell yourself in that secondary field. Then, once you get in through the back door at a university, you can say, "By the way, I can teach a course on the Far East. (End of tape)

Q: You were saying that you had a wife and two kids...

BROWN: That's basically the way that Helen and I came at the Foreign Service. We said, "Let's go in, see what it's like for a couple of years, try to write a doctoral thesis, and then re-examine the situation." I really didn't know too much about the Foreign Service.

Q: Well, what level did you come in at? What was the salary? About \$4,000?

BROWN: I came in at \$5,050 per year.

Q: Oh, boy!

BROWN: You say, "Oh, boy!" because, compared to your time, that was pretty good.

Q: Well, I just came in a year before you did.

BROWN: Yes, but the entry salary had gone up a little bit. Remember that I had left the Marine Corps a couple of years before that and at that same salary. However, there was no negotiating. I just accepted it, and there we were.

Q: Could you describe your class at the FSI [Foreign Service Institute]? That is, your Basic Officer Class.

BROWN: A significant number of the males in the class had been in the military services. There were a couple of young fellows who hadn't yet served in the military. One of them shortly got a draft notice. In those days he had a choice of satisfying the military service obligation by spending six months in the military, then being discharged, and going back into the Foreign Service.

There were a couple of women in the class, which was interesting. The class included a couple of men who were a bit older. Pete Spicer was one of them. He has just died at 71. Another one of the older men was Gerry Livingston.

Q: He was a German specialist.

BROWN: Yes. I think that another one of the older members of the class was Fritz Pappendorf. I was 26 and felt old at the time. I thought that the Foreign Service was quite a risk for me.

There was a small group of us who were very lucky, waiting for the orientation class to start. While we waited, we were assigned to work in a section of the State Department in offices at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and 19th Street, NW. At the time this was a fairly tall building, in which a panel, or committee, handled assignments of Foreign Service Officers. A small group of five or six of us was put to work there, summarizing in two paragraphs on a single piece of paper the careers of the officers whose folders were put in front of us.

Q: I did that kind of work, too.

BROWN: That gave us a remarkable insight into the Foreign Service. We were to write up the background of these officers and pass these two paragraphs to the panel which was considering where to assign them. I remember reading the record of one officer. The first efficiency reports on him were in long hand. They were datelined "Riga" [Latvia]. Of course, that was a post which, among other things, watched developments in the Soviet Union [and which was closed when Latvia was absorbed into the Soviet Union in 1939].

Remember that in those days efficiency reports were still classified CONFIDENTIAL. The stuff we read caused us to think: "I wonder how I'll get along in this system."

Q: I remember one personnel file. As a junior officer this man had blotted his copybook by having as his mistress the wife of the Governor General of Dakar [French West Africa]. That wasn't a good idea. [Laughter]

BROWN: This experience was an eye opener and a unique opportunity to get a feel for how the State Department personnel system worked.

I remember coming across the personnel file of a man whose father was the Security Officer who investigated me when I applied to enter the Foreign Service. The poor, old Security Officer had the job of climbing up four flights of stairs in a rickety tenement in the South End of Boston to interview me and our neighbors. There was something almost Dickensian about it.

So we had that experience. The Orientation class was very serious, and these were serious times. The war over Suez broke out...

Q: In October, 1956. It was also the time of the Hungarian Revolution, which broke out at about the same time.

BROWN: Absolutely. Little did I realize that some day I would become Ambassador to Israel. I had no idea that this might happen to me. These were momentous days, as you say. Those two events, the Suez Affair and the Hungarian Revolution, came at the same time. Some people argued that they were related and that the Soviets exploited our engagement in the Suez crisis to pull off the invasion of Hungary. I don't know if that is true.

What interested me also was the fact that I had not passed my world language test, when I entered the Foreign Service. I had opted to take the examination in French, having had a smattering of French in high school and at Harvard. So I was put on notice that my assignment as a Foreign Service officer was a probational appointment. After finishing the Basic Officer Class, notwithstanding the fact that I had been notified that I was going to be assigned to the Consulate General in Hong Kong, which sounded delightful, I would have to take three months of French. I was moved to point out that I had studied Chinese, but Chinese was not considered a world language in those days. This, despite the fact that if you took all of the people in the world who spoke French, German, Russian, Spanish, and Portuguese and put them all together, they still didn't equal the number of those who spoke Chinese. However, Chinese was not considered a world language, so I had to take three months of French and was glad that I did, even though it seemed crazy to be going to Hong Kong after that. Eventually, I passed my French exam.

Q: Did you have any thought of where you were going?

BROWN: I wanted to be assigned to the Far East and specifically to a Chinese language post. Since we couldn't go to "Red China" or communist China, the choice then and for years afterwards was between Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, plus a couple of Chinese language positions in such places as Rangoon, Jakarta, and Warsaw, where the Ambassadorial talks with the Chinese Communists, which had started out in Geneva, were now continuing. However, that assignment to Warsaw was for a highly qualified interpreter.

When I was in that small group which did personnel file summaries for the review panel, prior to starting into the Basic Officer Course, the lady who was supervising us was fairly influential in arranging assignments. Thank goodness for that, because I was assigned to Hong Kong. I've forgotten her last name, but bless her, she had something to do with my assignment, I'm sure. I was very happy to go to Hong Kong.

Q: You were in Hong Kong from when to when?

BROWN: We arrived in Hong Kong in June, 1957. By the way, talking about the "perquisites" of the job, we went across the Pacific on a ship belonging to the American President Lines. We crossed the Pacific three times on one of their ships. It was a great trip. Since they couldn't give us economy class, they gave us what was called "minimum first class." There was nothing in between.

Q: I think that they gave the Foreign Service first class as a kind of subsidy for American President Lines.

BROWN: Anyhow, we arrived in Hong Kong in May or June, 1957. My wife was pregnant and our son, Alex, was born shortly thereafter on June 28, 1957.

Q: When did you leave Hong Kong, so that I get this clear?

BROWN: I left Hong Kong in August, 1959. I came as a Passport Officer, and we can talk about that. Then I was designated a Commercial Officer in 1959.

Q: Let's talk first about Hong Kong in general as you saw it in 1957.

BROWN: Remember that I saw it as a junior officer, which meant that we were living on the Kowloon side. I saw this assignment as an exciting, new beginning for a young, career officer. At the time Hong Kong was very definitely a refugee town. You might recall that it held many Chinese refugees from the communist occupation of China. It had already gone through all kinds of riots. That is, Kuomintang [Chinese Nationalists] versus the pro-communists. There had been serious riots before we arrived, but they were put down by the Hong Kong Police.

I was excited to be in a Chinese language post. Then I came to the realization that very

few people in Hong Kong - at least those with whom we had consular contacts - spoke Mandarin. The kind of people I was dealing with spoke a sub-dialect of Cantonese. So for eight hours a day I was dealing with people with whom I could not communicate orally, even though they were Chinese.

Two of our four children were born in Hong Kong: a son Alexander Pericles [in 1957] and a daughter, Anastasia Katerina, in 1958. Hong Kong was exciting intellectually and academically because I had chosen for my thesis a Chinese hero of the 13th century, A. D., Wen T'ien-hsiang. He was a great hero in Chinese history but was relatively unknown in the West. He came from a rural background. He had scored "Number One" in the civil service examination of 1256, I think it was. He entered the Chinese civil service at a time when the Mongol onslaught was reaching its peak. The Mongols were driving the Sung dynasty to its utter ruin. As the Sung court fled southward, two of the princes of the Imperial Family, young boys, stopped in what became known later as Hong Kong.

There was a stone marker commemorating this. Some members of the Faculty at the University of Hong Kong were kind enough to take me under their wings, as it were, and made me an honorary Fellow of the University. This made it possible for me to pursue my studies there. I had not known it, but the figure whom I had chosen from the 13th century had acquired a distinct, contemporary political aspect. That is, Chiang Kai-shek's people over in Taiwan had seized upon this figure as a symbol of undying loyalty, even in the worst circumstances. He had remained loyal to the death. Indeed, Wen T'ien-hsiang was put to death by the Mongols, at his own request.

I didn't know this when I had chosen the subject for my thesis. A few, little articles about him appeared in the Hong Kong newspapers. They concerned the travels of the fleeing, Sung court. Members of the Sung court had gone through Hong Kong, trying to escape the Mongols.

I undertook Mandarin language training at the Consulate General, hoping eventually to get into economic and political work where the mainstream was Mandarin. So I went through a couple of years in Hong Kong in a linguistic atmosphere characterized by the use of sub-dialects of Cantonese in the office. I worked through interpreters. Meanwhile, outside the office, I was doing preparatory work for my thesis and meeting people who spoke Mandarin. I worked in the old building of the Consulate General, on the "hill" in Hong Kong [on Garden Road]. I learned that the Political and Economic Sections were entirely separate from the Consular Section and were located in the Hong Kong-Shanghai Bank Building downtown, as it were.

This takes us to the question, if you will, of the "bifurcation" of the Foreign Service. So often, the Consular Section is in one place, and the heart, the boss, and the Political and Economic Sections are elsewhere. The Consular Section was in a rickety old building. The safes had been placed very carefully because of the structural weakness of the building. I reported to the Passport Unit of the Consular Section. Altogether, it was a marvelous experience. In that regard, remember that institutionally we were going

through the Wristonization program.

Q: Could you explain what Wristonization was?

BROWN: Henry Wriston [Dean of Brown College] had headed a commission on the reform, the streamlining, or the updating of the Foreign Service to fit what were considered the challenges of the period. He advocated a program under which people who had been in non-traditional Foreign Service categories, including Civil Service, "GS" service, or whatever, were given an opportunity to be given the status of Foreign Service Officers, under a simplified procedure. This carried with it, of course, a commitment to work overseas. Quite a few of these people were assigned to the Consular Service. For example, the chief of our very large Consular Section in Hong Kong, and I can't remember his name now, was a career Passport and Visa Officer. He was a very able man, but Hong Kong was his first, overseas experience. He was a middle-aged man when he took his first, overseas assignment.

The head of my Passport Unit was Edwin Reeves. He was a career, life-long Passport Officer here in Washington, DC. He was pretty far into his middle age. He was a quiet-spoken man who knew his field, inside and out. This was also his first, Foreign Service experience.

Another example of the Wristonization program was Tom Shoesmith. He had a background in INR [Bureau of Intelligence Research], as well as a strong, Japanese background, including his service in the military. Tom had been integrated into the Foreign Service as an intelligence analyst back in Washington. Hong Kong was his first, overseas tour in the Foreign Service. Tom broke me in at the Consulate General in Hong Kong. Many years later I succeeded him as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of state for East Asia and Pacific Affairs and he became Ambassador to Malaysia.

Also in the Consular Section was Alexander Sessums Cleveland Filler, a brilliant, regular Foreign Service Officer. Later on, Mark Garrison came to the Consulate General out of INR. He had been a Political Analyst with GS status. I broke him in as a Consular Officer.

So, altogether, there was quite a mix in the Consular Section. The Section had its internal tensions. At the time there was a remarkable, other development. About this time Congress was becoming aware of massive fraud in Chinese immigration, which had probably been going on for a century. It dawned on Congress that there were an awful lot of Chinese in the United States who had entered the country under false names and identities. Congress made a special appropriation of funds to support a large unit in the Consular Section of the Consulate General in Hong Kong, called the "Fraud Unit." Assigned to this unit were investigators who had formerly been with the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation], Social Security Administration, State Department Security division, and so forth. They now had an opportunity to enter the Foreign Service via this temporary appointment and perhaps be integrated as Foreign Service Officers as well.

Some of them were so integrated.

Q: I knew Laurie Lawrence. He was later Ambassador to Jamaica. He and I were good friends.

BROWN: I knew him well. We were also very close friends. Laurie came into the State Department and after a stint in the Fraud Unit got an appointment as a Notarials Officer in the Consular Section. This was a great and very challenging job in the Consular Service, particularly in Hong Kong.

Tom Shoemith broke out of the Passport Unit and became a notarials officer.

This was a time of great change in the Foreign Service and great interaction between these newly appointed junior officers such as myself, newly-integrated Wristonees and the Fraud Unit, which had an unique oral charter with the British authorities in Hong Kong. Members of this Fraud Unit did things and went places in a way which would have raised the hair on the neck of civil libertarians. I once accompanied one of these officers, Vic Dikeos, who later became Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Security. Vic was a real pro. I accompanied Vic at 4:30 or 5:00 AM as we paid a call on a Chinese family suspected of fraud. We were accompanied by a local Chinese, who quietly knocked on the door of this family. We worked our way into this flat, shall we say, and swept up every piece of paper we could find.

Q: You were looking for the Briefing Book.

BROWN: We were looking for the Briefing Book. In other words, material which would help us break the case. People who wanted to be classified as American citizens signed a form in English in which they requested an interview at the British-American Tobacco building in Hong Kong. This is where the Fraud Unit was housed. In a separate building, they underwent a rather rigorous interrogation, with dramatic gestures and so forth. The fraud investigators used the classic technique of a network of informants, who were paid to dig up material that would lead to breaking these cases.

It was remarkable. If there were something particularly unsavory, of the kind that would hit the newspapers, our understanding with the British authorities was that the British would not protect those Fraud Unit officers were involved. Apart from that, the Fraud Unit had great leeway. For a new Foreign Service Officer such as I, one could see that due process and so forth didn't necessarily apply. It was quite an education.

This had positive and negative sides. On the positive side we would get the opportunity to reconsider cases which might otherwise have already been approved. We either inherited them or dealt with cases that had already been referred to the Fraud Unit. They were written up in such a way that we built the case for fraud investigation. We would say that the applicant is known by this or that name. Here is the background on him. Here's an affidavit where he, she, they confessed and so forth. We then had to deal with the irate

family in the United States and their lawyers, as well as, at times, a Congressman.

My first case involved a very thick folder. On top of it was an irate letter from Senator John F. Kennedy, asking what was going on. The Senator pointed out that there have been three years of delay on this case. He asked what we were doing about it. Of course, the case stank. However, we were under pressure from the ripening and aging of these cases which were being investigated.

The breaking of a case had its darker history at times. Often, there was some tension between the Consular Section and the Fraud Unit which developed in the course of querying the process and the validity of the conclusions. We might refer the case back to the Fraud Unit for further investigation.

There was another element, Stu, which was interesting here. There was a single, INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service] officer, Pat Noble from Montana. Pat lived on the Kowloon side, so we together commuted. I had a very good relationship with him. However, there was considerable tension between the State Department and INS. At one time, when I wrote up a case, noting, among other things, that I had broken the case with the cooperation of Pat Noble and, therefore, wanted to give Pat and the INS a nod for their contribution in helping me break the case and clarify the record, I was instructed to drop that approach. This so outraged me that I seriously considered resignation from the Foreign Service. I finally gritted my teeth and deleted the nod to INS for its help in breaking the case.

However, that was the tension, institutionally and at that time. Remember, this happened in the period between 1957 and 1959. I discussed the situation with Pat. He said, "Well, that's the way things are. Forget it. Don't be so foolish as to consider resigning." He was in Hong Kong primarily as the INS agent for the deportation of certain Chinese who had been arrested in the United States on one count or another. Either they jumped ship in an American port, and therefore entered the U.S. illegally; they had been uncovered in the United States as a result of some investigation; or they had been nailed [arrested] in the course of a narcotics or other inquiry and were being deported. Pat Noble was the man who received them, under an arrangement with the British, and took them on a train going to the Chinese border where he got off and they continued on into China. This caused some of these people to scream that they were being sent to a certain death. Their lawyers, advocates, and so forth would often pile on at this point.

At times Pat Noble had to negotiate with Washington, on the one hand; with the British, on the other; or with the Consulate General, as we sometimes had related cases. For the most part, we worked together quietly, and it was a very interesting relationship.

Q: Could you explain for the listener, or the reader of this transcript, what the issue was? Why were we looking into this matter? You were part of the Passport Unit of the Consular Section. What was the issue that was being investigated?

BROWN: As the communists pushed southward in 1948-49, thousands of Chinese descended on U.S. consular authorities for help in escaping the communists. First, they applied for documentation in Shanghai and then, as the communists pushed farther South, to our Consulate General in what we called "Canton," or Kuang-chou (Guangzhou). That was a wartime situation which became overwhelming.

At that time Foreign Service Officers in China became aware of the fact that they had thousands of applications for certification as American citizens which were flawed in one way or another.

Q: They were claiming American citizenship.

BROWN: They were claiming American citizenship by virtue of their birth to an American citizen father. Under the discriminatory citizenship laws at the end of the 19th century and early in the 20th century a person could not become naturalized as an American citizen if his father were Chinese or an Asian. That covered the area from India through Japan [the so-called "Asiatic Triangle"]. There were anti-Asian, discriminatory provisions in the law. The only way that a person of Asian ancestry could be documented as an American citizen was to be born an American citizen, either on American soil or by virtue of one or both parents being American citizens. There were certain, restrictive provisions which applied in such cases.

Therefore, the great boon for Chinese was the San Francisco earthquake of 1906. Many Chinese subsequently appeared before magistrates and judges in the United States and said, "I am So-and-So. I was born in San Francisco, but the fire and earthquake of 1906 destroyed the records. I have a friend here who can testify that I was born in San Francisco." I believe that American judges, by and large, took a liberal view of the situation, under the circumstances. They felt that it would be better for a thousand frauds to be certified rather than have one man lose his American citizenship. This situation was exploited by some people.

Those Chinese who gained the status of American citizenship then would go back to their native villages in South China. These were predominantly in four districts in Kuangtung Province. These were called the "four districts." In Cantonese, these were the "Sei Yip." (One of these districts, Chung Shan, was the birthplace of Sun Yat-sen.) They would be documented as American citizens when they were leaving the U.S. to go to China. They would be interviewed by INS inspectors in San Francisco, Honolulu, or wherever they were leaving from. They would record their American citizenship and set down, for the record, that they were heading for their native villages. They would stay there long enough to become get married, and then come back to the United States.

After they came back to the U.S., the general pattern was something like this. Let's say that they would return to the United States 10 months later, via Honolulu, San Francisco, or another port of entry. They would then appear before an INS inspector and would say, "I am So-and-So. You have my file here. I left the United States by ship as an American

citizen.” He would continue: “I arrived in my village in China. The day or the day after I arrived, I was married. My wife became pregnant, and she had a son whose name is Such-and-Such. She is pregnant again.” So all of this went into the INS record. Some time thereafter they would appear again and repeat this exercise. All the claimed children were sons. No daughters. All of them allegedly survived infancy, notwithstanding a high mortality rate among young Chinese children at that time.

Those slots for alleged American citizens which were created on paper in this way were then sold off. Over time, people who, in some cases, were not even remotely related, bought those slots, appeared before American Consular or INS officers and were grilled by officers who used interpreters and who painstakingly built up cases to test whether these really were the sons of an alleged, American citizen father.

Over time whole, schools were developed to teach people to describe their identity as American citizens. We had them in Hong Kong during my tour of duty there. They memorized this identity and swore never, ever, to deviate from it. It was a situation which did not allow them to confess to this fraud, no matter what the circumstances.

Now, that practice had been going on for years. The communist takeover of China after World War II accentuated the pressures. A young Vice Consul in Canton, reading about the “Charlie Chaplin” paternity case, “sold” Washington on the idea that if evidence were admissible in a paternity case in California...

Q: You're talking about blood tests.

BROWN: Yes. He said, “Why can't we test the applicant against the blood of the parents in the United States and see whether it matches?”

Q: This was before DNA tests were developed.

BROWN: It was way before DNA testing was developed. We were then dealing with the basic blood groups: A, B, AB, and O. This was tried out, and immediately we saw that nearly half of the cases we had didn't “match.” Your chances were only 50-50 to begin with. So from this evidence you could infer that more than 90 percent of the overall population involved in these cases involved fraud, one way or another.

Of course, these applicants for American citizenship almost universally developed the line, when we asked for documents: “The communists took them” or “The communists destroyed them.” We were faced with this endlessly parroted line, in response to our request for documents: “Well, I don't have my birth certificate,” or “I don't have my marriage certificate,” or virtually any certificates because “The communists took and destroyed these documents. I lost all of that.” They often added: “But I have this letter from my father in San Francisco,” or Cleveland, or wherever it was.

We then grilled them. By the time I arrived in Hong Kong, we were conducting blood

tests on a large scale. During my couple of years there I ordered more blood taken than I would ever care to admit. This process was carefully supervised. We had contracted with reliable doctors in Hong Kong and we insisted on checking photographs, thumb prints, and so forth, so that no hanky panky could take place. Then we arranged for blood tests to be performed in both Hong Kong and the United States. The Chinese applicants for American citizenship woke up to this and, in typical Chinese fashion, began to pre-test their blood. The citizenship slot may have been selling for, say, \$3,000, but the applicant had to have the right blood type, matching an American citizen. And the pre-testing had been done.

We and the Immigration and Naturalization Service responded by using more complex technology. In this case, sub-types of blood. You went from A, AB, and O to sub-groups. We caught so many of them that the Chinese found this out and pre-tested their blood in Hong Kong. We then got into “sub-sub-types” of blood, “E” and “D.” I remember getting a letter from a health official in California saying that, as a result of our testing, we had used up all of the blood serum for this kind of testing in Southern California. He asked us to stop ordering these additional tests.

So that's what we were doing. Here we were, regular Foreign Service Officers, plus some people who had been Wristonized into the service. We had a big Fraud Unit, which was grinding out all of these fraud cases. And young, Foreign Service Officers were thrown into this. At least in my case, I had this Chinese experience behind me, so that I could try to read the letters or the documents which were put in front of me and so forth. Other officers didn't have this background.

By the way, we had a couple of women officers involved in this program. We tended to look on them as “hard-boiled” types. They were largely Visa Officers who had been integrated into the Foreign Service under the Wriston program. Their attitude was that nobody was going to “sell them” any “soft soap.” By golly, they were tough!

Q: I have to say that this may sound like a “stereotype,” but it was often true. I think that the women officers that we were recruiting were probably somewhat limited in their education. They had come up through the ranks, and they weren't going to “deviate” from the rules. I think that regular Foreign Service Officers tended to be a little “looser” about interpreting the regulations.

BROWN: Yes. However, after listening to constant lies for eight hours a day, I tried to maintain my objectivity, but I did tend to acquire a rather “hard shell” over time. Nevertheless, during my time in Hong Kong things began to happen. The “Fraud Unit” was “cleaning up,” if you will, a lot of backlogged cases. We began to get more cases of Chinese children who had been born in Hong Kong, so they could get a locally issued birth certificate. So the question was whether we were going to accept that locally issued birth certificate or were we going to look deeper into the family background. There were some officers in the Consulate General in Hong Kong who said, “We sure will! The parents' birth certificates were probably fraudulent to begin with.”

There were “forgiveness,” “amnesty” programs back in the United States. Periodically, INS would say, “All right, if you will come forth and 'bare your soul' to us, you can 'fix up' the record.” However, underneath it all was the great fear that, if your grandfather had fraudulently entered the United States, INS could revoke that naturalization decree and go after not only the grandfather but his kids, and the whole family. So there was a tremendous amount of pressure overhanging all of this. Getting people to “confess” and clean up the record was a monumental task. Even if we were well disposed and were trying to say to these people: “Look, just clean up the record,” this was very difficult for them to do. Indeed, it was almost impossible, under the circumstances.

However, things were beginning to change because we were now getting younger and younger applicants. The putative father of a little baby might appear in front of you, bearing his U.S. passport. He might have married a Hong Kong girl. Then, if you had the Hong Kong birth certificate for this little baby and the marriage certificate of his parents in front of you, how far were we going to go into the father's and grandfather's background? That was a tough call.

Remember that, overall, passport and citizenship law was tougher than it is now. We could “confiscate” the passport of a Chinese who had gone to Taiwan, using a Taiwan identity card. It was a solemn decision, but we could arbitrarily “lift” the passport of a man we suspected of being involved in narcotics trafficking or some other kind of “skulduggery.” We could just say, “May I look at your passport, please?” If the applicant were dumb enough to hand it over to us, we could hold it for a while. We did that fairly rarely, but we had that authority. Times have changed since then.

Q: I think that this might be a good place to stop now, because I've got an appointment coming up. I thought that we might pick this up later, where we are now. We have you in Hong Kong involved in the passport business. You then “switched” to be...

BROWN: It was our dream, really, as young, regular Foreign Service Officers to get out of the consular sewer and get into the mighty and prestigious field of political and economic reporting. One had to accept the reality that, generally speaking, you do two years in consular work as well as you can. Then, maybe, you go on to something else. However, there were a few surprises. For me the surprise came one day when I was approached and asked: “How would you like to become a Commercial Officer?” Marty Hickman, our Commercial Officer, was leaving the Foreign Service. I was asked if I would like to replace him. Of course, I jumped at the chance.

Q: All right. We'll pick it up then. I also haven't asked you, and I will do so the next time, who was the Consul General in Hong Kong and how did you get along with him?

Today is November 5, 1998. Bill, who was Consul General in Hong Kong when you were

there?

BROWN: The Consul General was Everett Drumright. Of course, for me in those days, he was “God Almighty.” I think that he sort of enjoyed that position. He had steel blue eyes which seemed to go right through you, on the very rare occasions when a junior officer saw him. The Consulate General in Hong Kong was very conscious of the hierarchical position of senior officers. Remember, we were in two locations. We were over in the old, shaky, wooden consular building right up on the hillside. The Consul General and the other senior officers in the Political, Economic, and other, “elite” Sections were elsewhere. So we didn't see much of Drumright. I had the impression at the time that he was remote and aloof. You didn't see him coming into the office, asking people how they felt, and so forth.

Drumright was an “Old China Hand.” After serving as Consul General in Hong Kong he was appointed Ambassador to the Republic of China in Taiwan. So he left and was replaced by a gentleman whose name eludes me. He had been the DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] in Taiwan. [Pilcher] He was much more affable and friendly, although Hong Kong was a big post and we didn't see him too often. I bless him for transforming the July 4 reception, among other things, from an elitist kind of function. Drumright had the custom of inviting a few of Hong Kong's British elite to a tiny reception. Drumright's replacement, transformed the July 4 Reception into a much more plebeian event. I think that, since representation funds were short, we all had to kick in \$5 each or so. Hot dogs and hamburgers were cooked down in the courtyard, and so forth.

Incidentally, it was during this time that the new Consulate General building [on Garden Road] opened, and we all moved into it. That's now an old building. We can discuss this later. If you stay in this service long enough, you come back, as I have, to some places which you moved into when they were brand, spanking new. You visit them decades later, and people complain that this same building is old, dingy, confined, and so forth. However, that's life.

Anyway, it was the change from Everett Drumright to another Consul General. By golly, in between the two of them I think that we had another. Yes. He later became Deputy Assistant Secretary of State and Ambassador to Afghanistan. What was his name? I'll have to come back to that later on. [Stevens or Stevenson?] He was a character and was old line Foreign Service. He had a tremendous capacity for alcohol. He could just drink anybody under the table. So no sooner had we gone through all of these tremendous welcome receptions, which included quite a bit of alcohol, parties, and so forth, when he was notified that he was being assigned to a more senior post, and we had to do it all over again. All of this within something like six months.

I might mention that, in all of this, we had the Quemoy-Matsui crisis.

Q: Can you explain what that was?

BROWN: In the conflict between Communist and Nationalist China, and it was then very much a conflict, the Chinese Nationalists still held a number of small islands off the southern coast of China, including the islands of Quemoy and Matsui. In its anger Communist China, under Mao Tse-tung, resorted to fierce bombardments, particularly of Quemoy and Matsui, which were close to Amoy. For their part the Chinese Nationalists retaliated as much as they could. So the bombardments were real. At one time, as a very junior officer, I was invited by Consul General Pilcher to dinner. In the middle of it Pilcher was called to the phone, and he was informed that there was a massive bombardment of Quemoy and Matsui going on. The U.S. Seventh Fleet was moving to positions off Quemoy, and the situation looked very grim. The administration of the time...

Q: Under President Eisenhower.

BROWN: Made a very firm statement. Yes, it was President Eisenhower. It was a very tense time, and it looked for a time as if we might become even more physically involved. However, notwithstanding a tremendous bombardment by the communists, the Chinese Nationalists held, we evidently said and did the right thing, and this crisis passed.

We can now go on to my experience in the Commercial Section of the Consulate General in Hong Kong.

Q: This would be in the period 1958-1959. What did your job as a Commercial Officer consist of?

BROWN: I had no idea of what it would involve.

Q: You were with Marty Hickman in the Commercial Section.

BROWN: Marty Hickman had been the Commercial Officer. He was a Mormon. I only say that because people assumed that I was also a Mormon. I was suffering from amoebic dysentery, and we can touch on that later. At the farewell reception for Marty, I stood next to him with a non-alcoholic drink. He wasn't drinking or smoking, and I wasn't drinking or smoking, either. As I said, he was a Mormon, and I was replacing him. Therefore, in the view of many Chinese, I was also a Mormon. Marty later became Dean of the School of Social Sciences at Brigham Young University.

Anyhow, the Commercial Officer was part of the Economic Section. Ed Fried was the Chief of the Economic Section. He later became a very senior official in Washington.

I had a tiny office which I shared with Art Dornheim. Art's sole job was tracking down people who were dealing illegally with mainland China, from the point of view of U.S. law. We kept a black list on these people. I worked part time with Art on this job. Congress, in its disapproval of mainland China, had passed legislation prohibiting purchase of anything, including a postage stamp or a chopstick, from mainland China,

and this situation continued for many years. To buy something from mainland China was a federal offense.

Postal and customs authorities in the United States were all notified of any purchases of Chinese communist goods and/or services. We vigilantly pursued any American suspected of dealing commercially, in any way, with what was then called communist China. In fact, in a place like Hong Kong, we kept records on non-Americans who traded with communist China. In Hong Kong, when I took the first Congressional delegation into communist China in 1972, I met an English gentleman who twitted me about the fact that he had been on our “Black List” of those who traded with communist China. He asked pointedly who in the heck did we think we were, penalizing him for doing business with communist China, when he wasn't a U.S. national?

The big commercial story of the time was garments and textiles. This was the beginning of what we thought was a tremendous “boom” in U.S. imports of Hong Kong made garments and textiles. In relative terms, while to us this was a “boom,” in a broader perspective and historically speaking, it was a tiny “blip” indicating what was to come later. However, the British, spotting a tremendous opportunity, had set up for us, at our prodding, a strict enough inspection system so that we could vigilantly follow it and involve ourselves in it. Therefore, we would be able to certify that goods, whether they were brassieres, articles of clothing, buttons, and so forth were in fact made in Hong Kong of cotton and other materials not of communist Chinese origin. These items were put on a “cleared” list. They would then move progressively through British Customs and into bonded places from which they could be shipped to the United States. We were free to inspect this process.

The establishment of that kind of system lured representatives of the Seventh Avenue, Jewish garment concerns in New York to Hong Kong. There they joined, if you will, the former Shanghai textile and garment manufacturers who had left mainland China and moved to Hong Kong. What a combination that was! It was really something to see. I remember first considering these aspects of the trade rather dull, when I was writing reports on the number of garments by category which were being shipped in that week or month. The categories included stockings, dresses, ladies' undergarments, brassieres, and so forth. I remember wondering whether anybody really cared about this.

I once wrote a despatch which said, “Panties held up this week, but bras sagged a little,” or something like that. I wanted to see if there would be any reaction or comment out of Washington to this report. This took me into the Hong Kong garment and textile factories, some of which almost looked as if they were out of a Dickens' novel.

There were other commodities made in Hong Kong, such as plastic flowers. I remember visiting a plastic flowers factory. This was truly right out of a Charles Dickens novel. It was a huge, wooden, rickety, dimly lit warehouse which had been converted into a factory. As I opened the door and my eyes adjusted to the dark scene within, I saw dozens or hundreds of forms appearing to leap in the air. These were young Chinese workers,

each of whom had a primitive device with a long, wooden handle. The handle would fly up into the air, the worker would put some plastic chips in a mold, and then jump up and grab this long, wooden handle. With the weight of his body, he would then pull the handle down to the floor and then release it. That is how plastic flowers were made.

There were no labor laws which regulated this process. There was no accident insurance to protect the workers. At least in that business and at that time, there were no trade unions. Women who worked in the garment trade went to work in rickety old buildings. If the building housing the factory was open, it was open. If the factory wasn't open, it was closed. At lunchtime, the workers were all "kicked out" onto the sidewalk and given a half hour to get something to eat. I saw workers by the hundreds or thousands with their bowls of rice at lunchtime. The profits were high, the business was expanding, and a lot of money was being made. However, in relative terms that was just the beginning of the development of the Hong Kong garment manufacturing industry.

I also did investigative work. There already was a tremendous amount of fraud and piracy of American trademarked goods. "Arrow" shirt labels and "Singer" sewing machine needles were being "pirated" in lots all over Hong Kong. In other words, anything that people thought that they could get away with was being done. American firms had to employ agents to come in and "track down" these piratical activities. The same thing later happened with Taiwan. So this was a time of great, commercial ferment.

Among my very first cases was an incident involving a container on a dock in Kowloon. A restaurant owner "desperately" wanted to get this container cleared, but the British Customs authorities refused to free it, because it was a container from the United States containing chicken feet. Across the large container was a stenciled label which said, "Unfit for human consumption." A delicacy in Chinese cuisine was soup made from chicken feet. So I had to go through all kinds of contacts with British customs officials to get this shipment through customs.

Altogether, it was a fascinating experience, and it really brought me down to the street and into contact with local, Hong Kong Chinese entrepreneurs and Americans who were rapidly making their fortunes.

Then there was the whole business of monitoring firms which were suspected of "back door" dealing with communist China.

Q: We did this black listing and investigation in a big way in Latin America during World War II, to keep firms from dealing with Axis-controlled countries. I was wondering whether there might have been some old hands around who talked about what they did back in Latin America during World War II.

BROWN: No, but we'd already been at this effort to control trade with China for some years. Remember, this was 1957-1959. We didn't have computers and so forth. However, extensive card files were kept, and we had our eyes and ears open for information, of any

kind, which would suggest that anybody, American or otherwise, was attempting to trade with communist China.

Of course, Hong Kong was a major entrepot, and British and other foreign firms were doing big business with communist China. So, from the viewpoint of the British authorities in Hong Kong, they had to compartmentalize this trade. On the one hand, the British had to build a control system which would satisfy our needs, as far as garments, plastic flowers, and other Hong Kong items being exported to the United States were concerned. They had to ensure that goods made in communist China were not mixed into the flow of goods which was so profitable to Hong Kong.

By the way, Stu, as a result of this experience, I very nearly opted for the Foreign Commercial Service. I went back to the Department of Commerce on consultation on one occasion. They said, "You're doing a great job out there. Why don't you 'switch over' to the Foreign Commercial Service?" Thank goodness, I didn't. It would have been a major mistake on my part if I had done so.

Q: How did you find the attitude of the British authorities toward what they may have regarded as a "peculiar" American method of dealing with business in Hong Kong? How cooperative were they?

BROWN: We had a representative from the U.S. Treasury Department in Hong Kong, Charlie DeZevalis. He was a very flashy guy. The British realized that a very good market for Chinese-type goods was developing in Hong Kong, so they were quite accommodating. The British sought to ensure that we felt comfortable with the system which they set up. Probably because of previous experience, the possibility of this control system going awry and fraud creeping into that, as was so prevalent in other walks of life in Hong Kong, was very daunting. So the British authorities in Hong Kong were quite cooperative. In short, it was good business, and the British already were very sensitive to the concerns of the U.S. Congress in keeping on the right side of the law. Remember also there was another concern involved. Security-wise and in terms of visits by ships of the U.S. Navy Seventh Fleet, Hong Kong was now big stuff. There were thousands of U.S. Navy sailors pouring ashore in Hong Kong and making purchases. So the British accommodated us there, too. They had set up a system under which officers and men of Seventh Fleet ships could buy a great deal of merchandise from qualified, certified dealers and not have to worry whether the goods were of Chinese communist origin, and so forth.

Q: What was life like in Hong Kong, when you were a junior officer?

BROWN: Hong Kong was my first post in the Foreign Service, and it was most exciting. I could list a whole bunch of pluses. Two of our children were born there.

Q: How many children did you have at this point?

BROWN: When we left Hong Kong, we had four kids. So my dependents included my wife Helen and four children: three girls and a boy. Academically, I was now engaged in writing my thesis. I had become a honorary Fellow of the School of Chinese Affairs at the University of Hong Kong. I went out on expeditions which were related to the 13th century Sung dynasty. There were people actively interested in this. My wife was teaching English and English literature at New Asia College.

I had by now left the consular business behind me. This meant that I was sitting in the office eight hours or more a day, listening to a variety of “tales” and considering applications by various people to export items to the U.S. Work in the Commercial Section gave me an entirely new perspective on life. I spent a lot of my leisure time on various aquatic activities. I “crewed” for a British guy who sailed a boat. I became heavily engaged in spear fishing and scuba diving. Scuba diving was brand new in those days, and this was a real adventure. I managed to team up with some really serious scuba divers who could take me fairly deep down to look for fish. So I explored the outer fringes of Hong Kong as far as islands, fishing, and scuba diving were concerned. I took up tennis and met all kinds of fascinating people.

I bought an old car and did a lot of exploring in the New Territories [Kowloon side] and the related islands. At that time you could still swim in the outer areas of Hong Kong. Like others, I joined the local British club for swimming and other activities for the kids. Our two older girls were now in kindergarten and first grade in the British educational system.

In a word, life was “exciting.” Life in Hong Kong was a fascinating introduction to the Foreign Service. Our Consulate General in Hong Kong was totally independent of any embassy. It was THE major American window for looking into communist China. As I said, I wasn't really involved in studying the situation in communist China. We were almost entirely separated from other parts of the Consulate General, but the Commercial Section gave me a window into the situation in mainland China. I was studying Chinese. I was reading contemporary Chinese. I was hoping to get advanced Chinese language training on Taiwan, which I was able to do.

My thesis was coming along. I was discovering materials which I had not thought existed and which bore on the subject matter. I was meeting all kinds of interesting people, socially and commercially, and life was great. On the down side, Hong Kong was a large post. I was a junior officer in a hierarchical service. I had to “mind my p's and q's.” I had found work in the Consular Section more interesting than others did, because there was a Chinese aspect to it, after all.

As I think I mentioned, I got my first case of amoebic dysentery in Hong Kong. Amoebic dysentery in the mid-1950s in Hong Kong was a serious business. I knew one of the Defense Attaches attached to the Consulate General who was given a medical discharge from the military service because of amoebic dysentery. It could result in death. If it got to a certain point, it was incurable. So I was admitted to Queen Mary Hospital. The newly

developed medicine to treat amoebic dysentery was toxic to the heart and very serious stuff. I still bear the “scars” of that illness.

However, Hong Kong was a wonderful introduction to the Foreign Service as far as a first posting was concerned.

Q: One thinks of Hong Kong in those days as being very much British run. The Chinese residents were allowed to be merchants, and all of that, but they were kept somewhat apart. How were your Chinese contacts?

BROWN: There were two aspects to them. There was the commercial side of the Chinese community. They were local entrepreneurs, teaming up with, as I said, the Seventh Avenue garment industry in New York, both in terms of garments and later in terms of “gray goods,” or textiles. So that was quite a circuit. I wanted to learn to play tennis at an entirely Chinese tennis club nearby. I was the only “pale face” among its members. I took lessons at 5:00 AM. That was an interesting crowd, composed largely of Chinese businessmen.

On the academic side, my contacts were fewer, but among them were some people who were interested in the fact that here was a young American interested in the China of the 13th century, A. D. I was unique, in this respect. Within the British services, the police officers were British. The Chinese occupied the lower ranks of these services, from Sergeants on down to Constables. I made quite a few contacts among British civil servants and police officers as well. You could see, although the British didn't want to talk about it, that Hong Kong was held under a lease and that this lease would expire in 1998. This was still some 40 years in the future, but you could see the beginnings of change taking place. Some highly qualified Chinese were beginning to rise to higher positions in the government civil service and in business.

Q: Did you have any problems with the British? Sometimes, British colonial types could get under the skin of Americans.

BROWN: Yes, I was well aware of that. I ran into attitudes like that later on in my career. In Hong Kong such attitudes were far less obvious at the working level. The circumstances at the time made this almost inevitable. America was a great market and a great security partner for the British. Remember, these were terrible times in communist China. When we were in Hong Kong during the late 1950s, the mainland Chinese were going through the horrors of the so-called “Great Leap Forward.” This involved a burst of whatever you want to call it: revolutionary fanaticism, which rapidly deteriorated into the death of thousands of people from hunger. There was widespread starvation in mainland China, and thousands of people were trying to get into Hong Kong. The British had to strengthen their barriers against illegal Chinese immigration. So in all of this America stood as a very significant partner, not only for London, but more especially on the ground in Hong Kong. We fit in fairly well with the British in this respect.

Q: What were you getting in terms of talking to people who were following conditions in mainland China? Were you getting a very detailed picture of the stupidity and horrors of the Great Leap Forward?

BROWN: Yes. Of course, we followed the Hong Kong media, which included pro-communist elements but was still pretty critical about what was going on. There were China specialists, and not just in the American Consulate General, who made use of this great window into mainland China. There were such people as the famous Father Ladani, a Hungarian, [Jesuit] missionary whose total occupation in those days was studying China, getting reports out of China, and interviewing refugees from China. This was big business in those days. So one saw this tremendous burst of fervor and zeal, followed by the inevitable crash of the Great Leap Forward movement, which took a terrible toll of Chinese lives, including those who lived near and around Hong Kong.

The British security presence was still significant in Hong Kong. There was the Gurkha Regiment and there were elements of the Royal Navy, and the Royal Air Force. It was already being said that the mainland Chinese could take Hong Kong with a phone call, but when we arrived in Hong Kong, the British presence was still significant. On the annual celebration of the Queen's Birthday the British could still put on a pretty good, military display.

Q: While you were in Hong Kong, did you or any of your colleagues think about what you were going to do next?

BROWN: Yes, I was dedicated to the study of China. Remember that I had come into the Foreign Service and decided, in consultation with my wife Helen, that we would put in a year or two and then decide whether it would work out for us. Well, it was working out for us fairly well. There was also the down side of working in a bureaucracy with its restrictions, its hierarchy, and all of that. However, as a first post it was great. As a place to work on my thesis, Hong Kong was also exciting. So our attitude was: "Let's give this career another year or so, especially if I can get an assignment to another Chinese post." I particularly wanted to get advanced training in the Chinese language on Taiwan.

So I applied for advanced training in Chinese, was accepted, and was transferred to Taiwan in August, 1959. We took a good, long home leave, traveling to the U.S. via Europe. We stretched our dollars as much as possible by traveling "economy class." This made it possible for us to introduce our children to the great cultures of Lebanon, Greece, Italy, Germany, France, and so forth. I arrived in Taiwan for advanced language training in late November, 1959.

Q: So you were away from Hong Kong...

BROWN: From then until Chinese New Year's of 1961, or about 14 months in all.

Q: Where did you study advanced Chinese?

BROWN: The State Department's Chinese language school had been deliberately located at Taichung, then about four hours' drive south of Taipei. We were in an area of Taichung which had been the Japanese administrative center before World War II. In fact, most of us were able to negotiate moving into Japanese-built houses of the old style. They had sliding panels for partitions and beautiful little gardens, with tatami covers on the floors. They were drafty and cold, but living there was a great experience.

It was also a great experience for me, because I'd already had academic Chinese. However, it had become somewhat fractured. I'd gone into the U.S. Marine Corps. My spoken Chinese, in terms of the Mandarin dialect, was somewhat weak. I had acquired a lot of mixed pronunciations and problems with tones and so forth. However, my reading ability in Chinese was better than the average student coming from Washington. The standard Chinese language class started in Washington at the FSI and went on for about 18 months. Then the Foreign Service Officer student trainee went to Taiwan for 12 months.

I was coming into this program in Taiwan laterally, as it were. They couldn't quite fit me in, which was wonderful, because I got, not entirely, but very largely individual instruction. Because of my Marine Corps experience and my exposure to intensive, accelerated artillery training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, I had a view that you could make a lot more progress in a given language than, perhaps, the standard, routine approach would indicate. Remember, I had also had three months of intensive French language training at the FSI. I was tremendously driven in those days by ambition, both academically in terms of my thesis, as well as in Foreign Service terms.

The net result of this was that I took six hours of Mandarin Chinese a day. We had a sympathetic Director of the Language School, Howard Levy, who was a T'ang Dynasty specialist. I approached Howard because I had found a member of the teaching staff who had a classical education and whose father was a professor of literature at a university. I asked Howard if he would let me take an extra hour a day of classical Chinese, which was very unusual. The average student at Taichung didn't go into this. Essentially, this related to the 13th century, A.D., so that I could work on my thesis more effectively on my own time. He agreed. A lady teacher worked with me on classical Chinese texts. If she had a problem, she could go to her father.

I discovered, out in the countryside, in bombproof shelters, the Imperial Library, which had been whisked from Beijing by various means to Taiwan. Then it was moved, out of fear of a Chinese communist invasion, into special shelters. I found ancient texts there, protected by a librarian sitting outside. There were no xerox machines, no copying devices. When I buttered him up through introductions and so forth, I found that the way to order a text, if I could figure out what it was, was to throw myself at his mercy. This would happen on a Saturday or a Sunday. He would order coolies to go into the vaults and get great, wooden chests containing documents which he reckoned would be useful to me and bring them out. I would then hand copy these documents, bring the copied texts

back to my teacher, and try to interpret them.

Then word came through that I was being reassigned to Hong Kong. It came as a terrible shock to me to be assigned back there, probably back into the Consular Section. However, I said to myself that if that is what is going to be, then I have to study the Cantonese dialect. There would be only one way of going back to Hong Kong and trying to work in Mandarin, and that would be to be assigned to the Political Section. There was no hope of that, as yet.

So I added an extra hour of study of Cantonese. I was then taking eight hours of Chinese a day, mostly of intensive individual study. I was working nights on my doctoral thesis. I led a very regimented life. I would get up early, go to class at noon, dash back home for a quick, light Chinese meal, (We had Chinese cooks in those days.), have a half hour nap, and then go back to the classroom. In the evenings, I would have a light dinner and then work on until 11:00 or 12:00 at night on my thesis. This was a very demanding routine.

As time went along, I learned that I was not going to be assigned back to Hong Kong after all, but rather to the embassy in Kuala Lumpur. There was a personnel opening there, and it was thought that my Cantonese, as well as my Mandarin, would be useful. That led me to intensify my work in Cantonese. Then, at the very end, came the switch. The American embassy in Kuala Lumpur decided that to take on a Foreign Service Officer, his wife, and four kids would be a heavy burden on available housing. So the word came that I wasn't going to Kuala Lumpur. Instead, I was going to the Consulate General in Singapore! Bob Drexler, who was a bachelor then assigned to Singapore, was studying Hokkien as a second dialect of Chinese. He and I were both infuriated to learn that we had been switched. He would go to Kuala Lumpur, and I would go to Singapore.

This was the greatest thing that ever happened to either of us. I went to Singapore, which was boiling politically. Drexler went to Kuala Lumpur and got married! [Laughter]

Q: I've interviewed Bob.

BROWN: You have?

Q: What was the situation in Singapore? Singapore has been in and out of Malaysia. Where was it at this time?

BROWN: First, let me give you a few more sidelights on Taiwan. Remember, I was working intensively, and I decided that I wanted to learn the modern, communistic type Chinese, with the hope that some day I would be posted back to Hong Kong as a Political or Economic Officer. So I took special work in Chinese simplified characters with instructors who were cleared. A few instructors had been cleared to deal with these prohibited materials. I also got into Chinese cursive writing and so forth.

I took a flight with a few others to Quemoy and Matsui Islands. We flew by special plane

and visited these besieged, Chinese Nationalist bastions. There were also some individuals among this group, although I won't go into details, who had, shall we say, a rather nitty gritty view or experience with American involvement with the efforts of Chiang Kai-shek on the offshore islands and so forth. So it was quite an education in many, many ways. I traveled a lot in Taiwan. The new cross-island highway had been built. It was then a very perilous, dirt road through some magnificent scenery. During my tour in Taiwan, I was also activated very briefly in the U.S. Marines when Operation Blue Star landed. The Marines needed interpreters, so I put in a couple of weeks as a Marine Corps interpreter, down in Hung Nam in the south. This was an earthquake desolate area where 60,000 U.S. and Chinese Nationalist Marines and Navy landed. Some 5,000 Chinese prostitutes migrated to service them. I got into all sorts of things in Taiwan. It was a very exciting time.

Q: Let's talk just a bit more about this.

BROWN: I got to see Chiang Kai-shek, who flew down there for this exercise. On Operation Blue Star, the good guys were always the Marines who were landing. They had to have opposition, so a battalion of Marines who had been at sea for six weeks were emplaced inland as the defenders. That's why so many of these ladies of the night migrated from all parts of Taiwan down there.

Q: I'd just like to say this for the record here. On one occasion a U.S. Navy carrier group was apparently coming into Pusan. The Red Cross was getting a bunch of buses to go down from Seoul to Pusan and take the servicemen on a tour. A group of the "Madams" came up to the Red Cross and said, "Look, we're going to go down there anyway. Can we ride the buses down to Pusan and back? We'll pay you." The Red Cross would have liked to have saved money but decided that this arrangement probably would not look too good. It's a different world now.

What was the impact of the Chiang Kai-shek regime as far as the State Department students at the school in Taichung were concerned?

BROWN: Remember that this was a wartime atmosphere. Those magnificent beaches of Taiwan had been mined, and barbed wire had been strung across them. So there was no prospect of getting out and frolicking in the waves. I had to wait 20 years later to do that. There was heavy censorship and total propaganda. The use of Japanese, of course, was banned. The vast majority of the Taiwanese spoke Japanese, having been under Japanese occupation for a very long time [1895-1945]. Also banned were Japanese films, magazines, journals, and so forth.

The line in official Chinese Nationalist publications was very, very tough. The Chinese communists were referred to as "Gung Fei," which means "Communist bandits," with the symbol for a dog as the classifier added in front of this name.

Chiang Kai-shek's position had improved significantly, but the Chinese Nationalist

regime was still a very authoritarian and very military oriented society. However, the material side of daily life was improving. A railroad and highway infrastructure was in place in Taiwan. It had basically been constructed by the Japanese and was now being improved. The American presence was very significant in terms of military personnel and bases. In Taichung we studied next to a Chinese Nationalist Air Force Base, which had an American component, and which was later to be very significant during the Vietnam War, as far as ferrying goods and people to and from Vietnam was concerned. At the same time, the Chinese Nationalist line was that they were dedicated to recapturing and reuniting with the mainland of China on Chiang Kai-shek's terms.

While I was there, it turned out that this figure that I was studying, Wen T'ien-hsiang, of the 13th century, was a great, political symbol. Political courses in the Chinese Nationalist system had his portrait on the wall of the classrooms. Newspapers carried articles on him and his undying loyalty to the Sung Dynasty. A town on the East-West Highway in the Toroko Gorge was named after him. A statue of him had been erected, and the base for it was dedicated by none other than Chiang Ching-kuo, the son of Chiang Kai-shek. All of this was totally unexpected for me and a great advantage as well.

However, to come back to the situation in Taiwan. We had a very strong, security relationship with the Chinese Nationalists. We took this very seriously and we had a large, military presence in Taiwan.

Q: What about language studies? I suppose that your teachers were native speakers of Chinese. Were they kept under a certain amount of control by the Taiwan authorities? They were getting ready to fight against an invasion of Taiwan by mainland Chinese forces.

BROWN: Yes, but our teachers were selected for their accents and cultural backgrounds, so they were largely from Beijing. You couldn't say Beijing in those days. You had to say Beiping, the Chiang Kai-shek term for "Northern Pacification." It was forbidden in Nationalist China to say Beijing, and this was also frowned on in the Foreign Service. One had to say and write, Beiping. One was discouraged from referring to the "People's Republic of China." It was "Communist China," "Red China," or "Mainland China." In Taiwan one could say the "Gung Fei," the "Communist Bandits."

Our teachers were thoroughly screened by Chiang's security police. The teachers had to be very careful about what they said. One or two of the teachers were bold enough to make little jokes, on the side, but they had to be very careful.

I mentioned that in terms of studying about communist China there were several teachers who had been cleared to handle Chinese communist materials. These materials had to be kept in a secure place, watched, and so forth, out of fear of contaminating other people. We didn't know definitely but we suspected that our teachers had to be very careful in handling us and each other. They learned to watch themselves.

Q: Who were some of the students in your class?

BROWN: Among those with whom I overlapped one way or another were Mark Pratt, Harry Thayer, Roger Sullivan, Herb Levin, Burt Levin, Bill Payeef, Norman Barnes, and Marshall Brement. My family and I lived in the house left by Jim Leonard, who was later an Ambassador in Arms Control in the State Department. After completing language study in Taichung, he went up to be a Political Officer in Taipei. Some fine people who were going on to greater things were associated with that school. I might also mention David Dean, Richard Nethercut, Bill Thomas and Paul Kreisberg. These people were top-notch in our China service. They had gone through the school at Taichung.

Q: I'm not sure, given your schedule, that you had much spare time. However, were there ever discussions among the Foreign Service Officers studying Chinese at Taichung about where China was going? I'd like to capture what you were talking about when you were on your own.

BROWN: Naturally, career-wise, most of us were looking forward to the day when U.S. relations with communist China would improve and, at long last, we would be able to go to mainland China as professional diplomats. At the time I was at Taichung, the atmosphere was pretty grim. We had fought communist China during the Korean War. We lost about 58,000 men killed or wounded. We killed about 300,000 to 500,000 communist troops, both North Korean and communist Chinese. There was terrible hostility displayed in the propaganda from Beijing. There was the Quemoy-Matsui crisis [of 1958]. We all wondered: "When is this going to end? Isn't it time, or is it time to open up or loosen up a little bit?"

The election of John F. Kennedy as President [in 1960] gave us some hope of change, but this hope was falsely based. I'll come back to that later on. Regarding the future of U.S.-Chinese communist relations, we tended to split. There were those among us who were more critical of Chiang Kai-shek's regime than others were. Some of us said that Chiang's regime was militaristic and authoritarian. There was a certain amount of corruption in it. Nationalist China was still receiving a significant amount of U.S. aid, although the corner was turned while we were in Taiwan. Through our help and their own efforts, the Nationalist Chinese had so improved the situation economically and agriculturally that they were establishing the basis for light industrial development. They were visibly beginning to take off.

My old professor, John K. Fairbank, visited Taiwan when we were there. For him this was a dramatic visit, for he had been very critical of Chiang Kai-shek. By the time he came to Taiwan, he had to admit that significant things were happening on Taiwan. This tattered, battered bunch of Chinese Nationalists who had evacuated mainland China [in 1949] somehow, with our aid and their own efforts, had put things together.

Q: The Nixon-Kennedy debate [during the 1960 presidential election campaign] seemed to center on the future of Quemoy and Matsui, of all things. Did that debate have any

reverberations in Taiwan?

BROWN: I can't speak for all of us in the Taichung language school, but I think that we were pretty solidly for Kennedy, in the hope that a more liberal administration would somehow move things forward in terms of U.S.-Chinese communists relations. We weren't naive, but I would say that that was our predisposition. Remember, we were a mix of State Department and USIA [United States Information Agency] officers. There were also people from some other U.S. Government agencies. However, our group was essentially composed of State and USIS people.

Q: Where were the American military training their people?

BROWN: At that time they had their own language training center.

Q: They had the Defense Languages Institute at Monterey, California.

BROWN: Yes. Later on, years later, when I came back to Taiwan as DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission], U.S. military officers had now been inserted into the Chinese language program at Taichung. However, when I was at Taichung, we were all civilians.

Q: So then you went to the Consulate General in Singapore. Is that right?

BROWN: I went to the Consulate General in Singapore. I arrived in Singapore on Lumumba Day, February, 1961. A great, anti-American demonstration was taking place that day.

Q: Was anyone killed?

BROWN: No. Regarding the situation in Singapore now, I was assigned as a Political Officer. This was my great break in the Foreign Service. The situation in Singapore was as follows.

There was a very young Government, led by a very young, elected Prime Minister, whose name was Lee Kuan Yew. In earlier times he had been known as Harry Lee Kuan Yew. However, he made it clear that he did not wish to be called "Harry" Lee any longer. There had been previous elections, but they had not been full elections. If you will, they had been partial elections.

Lee Kuan Yew had gotten a law degree in London with honors and had come back to Singapore. He had created a political machine [in 1954] called the "People's Action Party" [PAP], whose logo was a great bolt of lightning. (End of tape)

Q: You were talking about Lee Kuan Yew. Was Singapore part of Malaysia at that time?

BROWN: No. In the history of Malaya the British had gone through the period of the

“troubles,” that is, from 1948 through 1960, known as “The Emergency.” Actually, the Emergency was virtually over by 1957, when the Federation of Malaya was recognized as independent by the British and by the U.S. The Emergency lasted three more years until it was officially declared to have ended in 1960. There were nine states in the Federation of Malaya. Then there was a federal center at Kuala Lumpur. Of course, they had a British Parliamentary system of government.

At the time the Federation was recognized as independent in 1957, the leader of the Federation was Tengku Abdul Rahman. He was a British trained lawyer. I think that it took him about 15 years to get his law degree. He wasn't a great student but he was a well-born member of the ruling family of the State of Kedah. He was a great figure in modern Malay history because he was a moderate and an ideal father figure.

In addition to the Federation of Malaya was Penang, which was a separate entity, originally part of the Straits Settlements, along with Malacca and Singapore. It was a free port, as Singapore was. When I arrived in Singapore in 1961, it was separate from the Federation of Malaya. It had been a British Crown Colony. In modern, historical terms, it was the first British settlement in Malaya. It was a great, commercial enterprise, sometimes known as the “Jewel” or the “Pearl” of the Orient, and sometimes as the “Big Godown” [warehouse].

The population of Singapore was more than 85 percent ethnic Chinese. It was a hot bed of left-wing activism, especially after 1955. Most of Singapore's drinking water was pumped across the Straits of Johore in a great pipe from the Federation of Malaya. Politically, Singapore went its own way.

As I mentioned before, Lee Kuan Yew, the leader of the People's Action Party, was swept into power in elections held in 1959. Lee Kuan Yew's party platform was socialism and union with the Federation of Malaya. As the PAP program ran, “We are socialists, but we cannot run this place as an independent, socialist entity.” What did Singapore consist of? It was an entrepot which did a great deal of business. The natural gas and electric utilities were state-owned anyway. The PAP said that its goal would be to come into the Federation on the right terms. Then, the PAP argued, they could agitate among those Chinese, Indian, the workers in the tin mines and the rubber plantations, industry, and so forth, and eventually take over the whole country.

As a Chinese Language Officer, I heard this line up, down, and sideways during my first days in Singapore. This was a time of great unemployment, social unrest, ferment, and ethnic tensions. Lee Kuan Yew was determined to project a unified, multicultural, socialistic approach. The national language was to be Malay, the Bahasa Kebangsaan. However, in fact there would be four official languages: Malay, Chinese, English, and Tamil [a language of southern India]. There was a tiny, five percent minority of Indian Tamils in Singapore.

Q: When you say “Chinese,” what Chinese were they talking about?

BROWN: Mandarin speaking, although most of them spoke it as a second dialect. For this reason Lee Kuan Yew, who couldn't speak Mandarin, set about to learn to speak Mandarin. In the midst of all of his many concerns, he assiduously studied Mandarin and put it to use.

We had a Consulate General in Singapore which was independent. Indeed, there were old-timers, FSNs [Foreign Service Nationals] in that Consulate General who could remember having set up a small branch of the Consulate General in Kuala Lumpur, in what was now the Federation of Malaya. That small branch later became an embassy. So there was an American Ambassador up in Kuala Lumpur, and a very senior Foreign Service Officer as an independent Consul General down in Singapore.

After World War II the British set up an Office of the High Commissioner of the United Kingdom in Southeast Asia in Singapore, under Lord Selkirk. Its headquarters were at Phoenix Park in Singapore, a major administrative entity. Constitutionally, in Singapore there was a freely elected government, on the basis of one person, one vote. Men and women were equally eligible to vote. However, as things stood, the British had the ultimate authority to revoke the constitution of Singapore and revert back to direct, colonial rule over the territory should circumstances require.

When I arrived in Singapore in 1961, the British had significant, military forces there. They had Army, Navy, and Air Force bases. Since Singapore was in significant, political turmoil, all of this was fascinating.

Lee Kuan Yew and his party were urging the establishment of a federation with Malaya, in socialist terms and with a socialist program. He had a brain trust [advisers], which was relatively moderate, and cadre [party workers] who were overwhelmingly Leftist. The PAP at this time was essentially a Leninist party in its structure. All of this was to become very important as things developed.

The British were in their East of Suez, overall pullback mode at this time. That is, they were engaged in withdrawing their forces from the area East of Suez. Singapore was being described as a kind of Chinese Cuba, a hotbed of Left Wing activity with a leader, Lee Kuan Yew, who was regarded with a certain amount of suspicion. His rhetoric jarred the sensitivities of many people.

What the British had in mind was how to pull out but yet hand things over to local leaders in Singapore in such a way as to ensure future stability, peace, and prosperity. They came up with what was known in code language as the Grand Design. That was, to persuade Tengku Abdul Rahman to include Singapore and fold its 85 percent Chinese ethnic population into the Federation of Malaya. Tengku Abdul Rahman, to put it mildly, was quite reluctant to do this. He didn't need another 2.5 million Chinese in the Federation. He already had enough Chinese in it.

Q: You might mention the role that the Chinese had played earlier during “The Emergency” [1948-1960].

BROWN: That amounted to a civil war. Chinese Leftist students and workers had gone against the British supported and Malay dominated political structure. They had taken to the bush [jungle] in the Federation of Malaya [in 1948]. For those long years between 1948 and the mid 1950s, they had a patron and supporter in communist China. These ethnic Chinese, some of them youths and some of them older than that, took to or were driven into the bush, where they were hunted down by British and Malay troops and police. This created great ethnic tension.

The British way of handling all of this was to move many of the Chinese living in areas in or near the jungle into camps, which were called New Villages. These villages were enclosed with barbed wire and fortified, to some extent. The villagers had a curfew imposed on them, usually from sunset to sunrise. Any Chinese found outside that New Village after the curfew went into effect at dusk, particularly if he were carrying food, let alone weapons, was subject to extreme measures, including execution by hanging. Malays and Indians were told that if they saw a suspicious character, which they knew meant a Chinese out of place after the curfew began, were encouraged to report him to the police.

A guerrilla war had been underway and this was the British answer. It took a long time and a great deal of effort and energy, but the British pacified Malaya by this approach. So there were a lot of bitter memories left over among the ethnic Chinese after this process was completed.

Q: And you have to admit that the ethnic Chinese were a destabilizing force in Malaya.

BROWN: Many of them were. There were also many moderates among the Chinese community, but it was a very difficult situation. Now came the idea of including Singapore in this federation. Tengku Abdul Rahman was very reluctant to go along with this British proposal to incorporate Singapore into the Federation of Malaya. He felt that he did not need additional Chinese, who would essentially be led by Lee Kuan Yew who was considered by many conservative Malays as pro-communist.

The bargaining went on, back and forth. For his part, Lee Kuan Yew subscribed to this British proposal as a chance to broaden substantially his opportunities and achieve his goal of a united, Malayan federation, ultimately to be dominated by the PAP in Singapore, with its superior intellect, expertise, and so forth. Of course, he was looking well down the road.

For three years, Stu, I attended Lee Kuan Yew's political rallies and any others that I could. It was a remarkable thing. I was the junior officer in a small, Political Section. Steve Comiskey, the chief of the Section, was a Chinese language officer. He was a very sharp guy. He said in effect to me: “Look, I've been here in Singapore for three years. It's a small place. I know it up, down, and sideways. See if you can do some biographic work.

By the way, the consular district of the Consulate General in Singapore also covers the three political entities on the North coast of Borneo: Sarawak, a British protectorate; North Borneo, a British Crown Colony; and the tiny Sultanate of Brunei, also a British protectorate, in between them. Go over there and visit those places. You can cover them as well.”

I had recently graduated from the Chinese language school at Taichung, Taiwan. My knowledge of Mandarin was at the S-4, R-4 level [Speaking, Fluent; Reading, Fluent]. My knowledge of Cantonese was pretty far along as well. So I was loaded for bear. Comiskey didn't tell me specifically what to do, so what I did was to go out into this really exciting scene and attend every rally that I could, at noon, and in the evenings. I went on my own. It wasn't a requirement of the job. I tried to build up a picture of the situation. Meanwhile, I was reading the Chinese newspapers and filing notes on labor unions, Chinese organizations, individuals, and political figures, drawn from the Chinese language press. I could read these papers fluently and I set about to build up an extensive file system.

For three years, day and night, I followed Lee Kuan Yew as best I could. It was a fascinating experience. His knowledge of Mandarin was improving. He had a fantastic ability to orate. Depending on the audience, he would speak first in English, then in Malay, and his Malay was very fluent, then in somewhat broken Mandarin. Then he would go back and sum it up in English.

To come back to the overall plan, Tengku Abdul Rahman didn't want to include Singapore in the Federation of Malaya. The British said, “Okay, we'll throw in the Borneo Territories [of Sarawak, Brunei, and North Borneo].” Well, the Tengku didn't particularly like the idea of including the rather impoverished territory of Sarawak. Sabah, or North Borneo, was more affluent, but dominated by Chinese businessmen. In Sarawak there was a virulent progressive Chinese political party, the Sarawak United Peoples Party. He didn't like that. Of the whole kit and caboodle, the one thing that attracted him was Brunei, whose population consisted almost entirely of Malay Muslims. He thought that they were his kind of people, and they were sitting on a pot of oil.

In the end, after tremendously complicated negotiations, he got everything but what he wanted most. In the end the Sultan of Brunei didn't agree to come into the Federation of Malaya. It turned out that Singapore, Sarawak, and North Borneo, also known as Sabah, were to be included in the Federation of Malaya.

As soon as Lee Kuan Yew's cadres or rank and file party workers realized what was up and that there was to be a referendum on the inclusion of Singapore in the Federation, all hell broke loose. Many of them, perhaps 90 percent of the membership, broke away from the PAP. However, since it had a Leninist party structure, they couldn't overthrow Lee Kuan Yew in party terms. They just all left the PAP. They set up something called the “Barisan Sosialis” [BS], or the “Socialist Front.”

Q: When was this?

BROWN: This was in 1962.

Q: You were in Singapore from 1961 to 1964.

BROWN: Yes. Now I was really in business. Now rallies were going on, day and night, all around Singapore. The debates were in Mandarin, although the leaders of the Barisan Socialists also spoke Hokkien, Teo Chew, and Cantonese, depending on their audiences. However, mass communications were conducted in Mandarin. I can't tell you how many rallies I attended in a white sport shirt hunkered down like everybody else. The Barisan Socialist Chinese political activists really had a machine for turning out great numbers of people. The activists were saying: "Absolutely, No" to the idea of including Singapore in the Federation of Malaya. Lee Kuan Yew was saying: "Absolutely, yes, under the right conditions which I will obtain."

Q: He was for union of Singapore in the Federation?

BROWN: Yes. The Federation was to be called the "Federation of Malaysia." Lee Kuan Yew's opponents knew what was coming, and it came. They were hounded, arrested, and incarcerated. Lee Kuan Yew was able to hang much of the responsibility for this on the British and then on the Malay authorities. He was a politician par excellence. As I heard him say, "You've got to be willing to cut your grandmother's throat in this business." I also heard him say, "Look, I've got the little gun. But behind me is the big gun," meaning the British. It was a situation where what he was implying, really, was that if the Chinese Left got too frisky or too violent, the British would conduct another security sweep and put many of the activist leaders in jail. In fact, this is what eventually happened.

It was like mowing the lawn. The British progressively arrested the leadership of Lee Kuan Yew's erstwhile colleagues who had set up the Barisan Sosialis, and into prison they went!

Q: I would have thought that we would be particularly watching the influence of communist China in this.

BROWN: Oh, yes, we did.

Q: Since they were Leninist socialists, I would have thought...

BROWN: So what then developed was an American effort, after considerable to-ing and fro-ing internally. Remember, the Ambassador in Kuala Lumpur, Charles Peterson, who was a political appointee but had once been Consul General in Singapore, thought that this was the greatest thing since sliced bread.

The Ambassador in Indonesia, Howard P. Jones, hearing the remarks made by President

Sukarno and his supporters in Indonesia, thought that the inclusion of Singapore in Malaysia was a distinctly bad idea. He thought that it would only rile things up in Indonesia which, from his point of view, should be the center of our attention in the area. Our Ambassador in Manila, also had qualms after hearing the claim made by the Philippine Government under President Diosdado Macapagal that what we called “Sabah” rightfully belonged to the Philippines. Macapagal said that this territory had somehow been confiscated from them by British slight of hand.

In Singapore our independent Consulate General was in the middle. We made our frank comments and we were very much a part of the discussion. In the end, Singapore was included in the Federation of Malaysia. When this happened, the Barisan Sosialis was essentially decimated, with its leadership in prison, following progressive security sweeps by the Singapore police.

President Sukarno of Indonesia then launched what he called “Konfrontasi” or Indonesian confrontation of Malaysia. It was not an official war, but it amounted to that. Terrorist bombings began to take place in Singapore, and all kinds of threats were made.

In the middle of all of this I had become more active in the Political Section in Singapore. I was making more and more visits to Borneo. Over there the British had been warning the local population, which was split, about the dangers of Communists and other troublemakers. The largest single group in the population was non-Muslim and indigenous to the area. They were composed of Dayaks and other tribes in Sarawak and Kadusins in Sabah.

When I arrived in Singapore in 1961, the British Governors in the Borneo Territories, in their formal, colonial uniforms, were addressing the people along traditional paternalistic lines, asserting in effect, “We hold these territories in trust for you against dark forces.” This was an apparent reference to the Chinese communists. They continued: “There is talk of independence and so forth. One need not pay any attention to this. All of this will take time, a great deal of time, and we will go at it gradually, always protecting your rights.”

Suddenly, London told these Governors: “Let's go to independence.” These same Governors then had to come out and say, “It's now time for independence.” The plurality of the voters in the Borneo territories were non-Muslim. The prospect of being taken over by a Muslim headed Federation of Malaysia was not very appetizing, except for the Muslim minority groups, which amounted to about 20 or 25 percent of the total population. They thought that this arrangement was great!

In Sabah the Chinese community was conservative and unhappy about coming under Malay domination. The Chinese in Sarawak included some moderate, conservative types, but some hot headed leftists as well. They had a party, the Sarawak United Peoples Party (SUPP) which was something like Lee Kuan Yew's PAP e.g. moderates at the top and leftist cadres. Its leaders were not as skilled as Lee Kuan Yew was. There were pro-

communist newspapers in the various little ports of Sarawak. I subscribed to and read them. They were putting out the straight, Beijing line. It was amazing.

Also, to the irritation of the British, I was getting out and interviewing the Chinese, including some of these pro-communist cadres in Sarawak. It didn't take me long to figure out that the British had a real problem. I also arranged to talk with specialists on this subject in MI-5 [British Security Service], including Chinese experts who had been brought down from Hong Kong. They were privately telling me that the situation was a lot worse than the colonial authorities to whom they were reporting realized.

So I was building up a certain expertise on the situation in Sarawak and Sabah, plus that in Brunei. Brunei was a British protected Sultanate. Its oil production was declining, but it was still a wealthy area. Brunei had a Malay Muslim population and a smaller Chinese ethnic population which was doing much of the work within a British shell.

Into all of this came a firebrand named Sheikh Azahari, an ethnic Malay. He had Indonesian connections. As Sukarno launched the Konfrontasi against Singapore, Sarawak, and Sabah, Azahari and his crowd launched an abortive, Muslim coup in Brunei [on December 8, 1962]. I had the good fortune, professionally speaking, to predict it. After home leave I had come back to Brunei where I always spoke to Chinese shopkeepers. I found that a lot of green camouflage cloth and sharp instruments were being sold.

Putting all of this together, with some other information, I came back to Singapore fresh from home leave and said, "There's going to be a revolt in Brunei." I drafted a cable about this. My boss, Sam Gilstrap, who was then the Consul General in Singapore, and Bob Donhauser, my immediate supervisor, called me in and said, "This is pretty strong stuff that you're writing about a coming revolt." I said, "Yes, I predicted a rebellion." They said, "Well, this is pretty far out. Tell you what we'll do. We'll make it an Airgram." So we wrote it up as an Airgram, sent it in, and the revolt did break out. Naturally, Washington asked "Why didn't we know about this?" Sam Gilstrap, the Consul General, was visiting Washington and said, "Well, we predicted it for you. It's all there!" [Laughter]

Q: For those people who don't understand, hot news in those days went by telegram. News regarded as less important went by Airgram, which went in the diplomatic pouch, equivalent to air mail.

BROWN: Airgrams were much slower in reaching Washington. That experience made my day. The focus now came on the area. Indonesia became militaristic in terms of confrontation. I suggested that, as a political gesture by the United States, we open a small Consulate in Sarawak. Notwithstanding the fact that, as usual, there was no money in the State Department budget, this was done. For that I can thank Governor Averil Harriman, then Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs, who somehow focused on this. When he was told that there was no money for the establishment of such a post,

he said, "Find the money!" You can guess where the money came from. In any case, the money was found, and I opened an American Consulate in Kuching, Sarawak. I arrived there in 1964. I don't know whether you can find it on the map.

Q: I was just looking at the map.

BROWN: Kuching is the capital of Sarawak, and a hot situation was in full play there. Sukarno's Army had dressed up as freedom fighters, and they were launching raids against Sarawak from Indonesian territory, some 30 miles away from Kuching.

In the middle of all of this the pro-communist Chinese Left in Sarawak was driven underground. The British moved to sweep them away. The Leftists fled to the Sarawak jungle, which was pretty formidable in places. So there was a small-scale war there. The British moved in the Royal Marines, commandos, and aircraft carriers off the shore. There was an Australian Brigade and a battalion of Gurkhas committed there. Brunei was convulsed by Azahari's attempted takeover, which was put down by the British. I still have somewhere a green, camouflage shirt, with an Azahari logo or patch on the shoulder, with a couple of bullet holes in it. The Muslim imams of the time had blessed Azahari's troops, telling them that if they wore green shirts and went through certain rituals, they would be bulletproof. I have one of the relics of this. So the situation was red hot.

I had a consular district which amounted to the area covered by France, Italy, Portugal, and Spain. It was a vast territory, with all of these things going on. Washington suddenly became interested in what was going on down there. Professionally speaking, it was a happy hunting ground. I traveled and I had access at the highest levels with people I had known when they were nobodies. Now they were cabinet ministers and power brokers. It was a very exciting time.

Q: Just to keep things in perspective, at this point Singapore was still a member of the Federation of Malaysia.

BROWN: Singapore was swept into the Federation. The Consulate General in Singapore was reduced to the status of a Class 3 post. Every nickel spent had to be approved by the embassy in Kuala Lumpur. Ambassador Peterson moved swiftly to assert his ambassadorial control over Singapore. After all, he knew Singapore. He had been there as Consul General many years before.

I was therefore reporting, not to Singapore, but to the embassy in Kuala Lumpur. Having overseen the construction of a very tiny but very modern communications room, I had excellent communications and was rather prolific in those days, grinding out all sorts of political and economic reports. I was doing some consular work as well. I had a USIS [United States Information Service] officer and another gentleman as well on my staff. These were very exciting times.

This experience put me on the map. Just before I was assigned to the American Consulate in Kuching, Sarawak, I had had an unsolicited offer to become Associate Professor in the Department of Chinese at Princeton University. When this offer was made, I was still in Singapore and I went through a terrible time making up my mind. I went to Princeton, was interviewed by the Department head, and the President, then was offered this job. It was a wrenching decision to make. After all, I had come into the Foreign Service temporarily hoping to get precisely for this kind of opportunity. And now, there it was: an offer to be an Assistant Professor at Princeton at age 32. But I turned down the offer because life in the Foreign Service in Borneo was so exciting.

Q: Did you get your Ph.D. degree?

BROWN: I had received my doctorate in absentia, as it were, from Harvard and the word had gotten around. The field of Chinese studies had exploded in the United States. Now my opportunity had come, but life had become so exciting in the Foreign Service that I turned it down.

Q: Your colleagues up in Kuala Lumpur and you, yourself, were aware of communications from the embassy in Jakarta and Ambassador Howard Jones.

BROWN: This was a delicate subject. We looked on Ambassador Jones as an apologist for the Sukarno regime. Maybe that was an injustice to him. However, later on I saw him in what was, perhaps, his first appearance after he had retired, at a major conference of Asian scholars in New York. Howard Jones was up on the podium, but I must say that he turned in a very disappointing performance. Ruth MacVeagh, an Assistant Professor at Cornell University, also appeared on this same podium. She was very critical of U.S. policy toward Indonesia.

From the reporting that we had received, it appeared to us that President Sukarno had Ambassador Jones wrapped around his little finger. I'm sure that from Ambassador Jones' viewpoint he was manfully trying to maintain American interests in Indonesia. Indonesia was a very important country and would continue to be so. Ambassador Jones pictured the Federation of Malaysia as an unfortunate development which would have unfortunate results.

The U.S. relationship with Sukarno worsened. Sukarno had been damning America in public, often with Ambassador Jones on the platform, seated near him. Economically, Indonesia was sinking lower and lower. For years people had been writing that this situation couldn't go on, but it did. It was a sad, sad spectacle.

Q: The British Army was very much committed in Malaysian Borneo. At this point the British Army was a very professional force, having gone through the Emergency in Malaya. What was their estimate of the Indonesian Army at this point?

BROWN: The average Indonesian Army unit wore uniforms like freedom fighters.

Within days of its appearance on the scene elements were captured, it and their soldiers were putty in the hands of British intelligence. Young, Chinese communists, especially the Chinese women, were very difficult to break. However, within days, as I say, the Indonesians would give the British the information that they wanted. The British quickly had a pretty good readout of what the Indonesians had committed to this struggle in Borneo. While publicly the British would refrain from expressing contempt for the Indonesians, I would say that they were pretty contemptuous of the kind of Indonesian units that came their way, as far as their fighting ability was concerned. Remember, this was rough terrain, and the British had the advantages in terms of logistics and training.

For the average Indonesian soldier, especially the Javanese, this was really wild country. He was at the end of a long, long supply line. In the middle of all of this, it was fascinating to note that my roles and relationships were changing in terms of both Kuala Lumpur, on the one hand, and Singapore, on the other. Administratively, I relied on Singapore, which was a lot closer to me than Kuala Lumpur was. However, I had to be careful to avoid being seen as a Singapore creature in the eyes of the embassy in Kuala Lumpur.

It wasn't too long before I was getting overly detailed guidance from the embassy in Kuala Lumpur. The embassy took the view that what I was reporting was all very interesting, but shouldn't I wait a while until what I was reporting could be folded into the larger picture of this new, Federation of Malaysia? I wasn't about to wait. I was firing reports on the situation off to Washington.

In the middle of all of this came an important, career decision. I think that, in terms of reputation and so forth, I was really in a hotshot atmosphere. I was reporting on interesting material. However, with my Chinese language background, I wanted to get into the big game.

So I applied for Russian language training in the hope of getting the Sino-Soviet slot in the Political Section of the embassy in Moscow. And I got it! Now begins another chapter: the descent from being the Principal Officer at a post in a fast-breaking, charged atmosphere, moving to Washington, going through Russian language training, and then going to Moscow, a major embassy at the heart of the Soviet empire. This was quite a dramatic change.

However, before I leave Borneo, let me comment on a couple of things. I wondered, at the time, whether this structure would last. The question was whether this new, Malaysian leadership, which was initially successful, under British tutelage, in administering fairly disparate peoples, would be able to survive for very long. Once it was independent, even with a significant amount of British influence and assistance, would it be able to incorporate and maintain Singapore and the Borneo territories of Sarawak and Sabah in the Federation of Malaysia?

Remember that by the time I left Kuching, the fighting wasn't over. As I said, Kuching,

Sarawak, was about 30 miles from the border with Indonesia. There were firefights taking place not far from me, as Sukarno's troops, dressed as freedom fighters, pushed into Sarawak and into Sabah. This seemed to be pretty dramatic stuff at the time, and it concerned me.

We had a virulent form of the Vietnam War going on when I left Borneo in 1965. Lyndon Johnson was now President of the United States. I thought that with wisdom and moderation, such as might emanate from Tengku Abdul Rahman, the Borneo territories could be successfully incorporated into the Federation of Malaysia.

As far as Singapore was concerned, I had my doubts as to how the relationship with the Federation of Malaysia would survive over the long term. Indeed, shortly thereafter Lee Kuan Yew was seen by the Malay leadership of the Federation of Malaysia as so rambunctious that Tengku Abdul Rahman summoned him to Kuala Lumpur and told him that Singapore was out of the Federation. Lee Kuan Yew had been preaching for a long time that Singapore's water and commerce were so intertwined with Malaysia that it could not make it alone. I had heard him make this statement on many occasions. Then, when he came back from his meeting with Tengku Abdul Rahman, he called a press conference and said, "Of course we can make it alone, and we're going to make this place really go ahead." And he did.

Now Lee made a success of Singapore as an independent entity at the expense of many other people. Anybody who got in his way, and this has always been the case, he ran over like a steamroller. I had mixed feelings concerning how long Singapore could last in this way. I still have mixed feelings on this subject. The question was whether only Lee Kuan Yew could do what was done. Did things have to work out that way, or could it not have been done in a nicer, more democratic manner? This is something for scholars to debate.

The fact is that he had many of his erstwhile comrades in the PAP thrown into jail and they did not emerge from jail until they recanted. That meant that the tougher elements among them were in prison for many years. I had a contact among Lee Kuan Yew's advisers. He was British and named Tommy Elliot. Tommy was a self-educated, self-made professor of pharmacology, a Quaker and a dedicated socialist. His name was never in the front pages because he was a white and therefore had to remain a relatively quiet member of Lee's brain trust. Since Tommy was a pacifist and a Quaker, as well as a professor at whose feet many of these socialist intellectuals had sat, he was sorely troubled by some aspects of what Lee Kuan Yew was doing.

Tommy had first hired Lee Kuan Yew on Lee's return from law studies in England and gave him his first job as a lawyer for a naval base labor union. Tommy Elliot was a British expatriate who had been on the British security black list for a long time. He told me that Lee Kuan Yew had taken him aside during the election campaign of 1959 and said, "Tommy, you're a good friend, but from now on you and I part company. I've read your file over at British security headquarters, and we have to part." Later on, although Tommy was not an economist, he was instrumental in drawing up plans for what became

the Jurong Industrial Park [in West Central Singapore] and these great, industrial sites in Singapore which we now see refining oil.

In Sarawak and Sabah there were those who had gone along with the Federation of Malaysia and who held influential positions in it. However, they had doubts about it. When Lee Kuan Yew broke away from the Federation of Malaysia, or, put another way, when Singapore was expelled from the Federation, he may have had the view that he might be able to found his own Federation made up of Singapore, plus Sarawak, Brunei, and Sabah.

Indeed, when I made my farewell call on Donald Stephens, then the Chief Minister [similar to Governor] of Sabah, he said to me: "Bill, you're a friend, and I want to ask your advice. Should I stay in the Federation of Malaysia? Lee Kuan Yew is suggesting that I get out." I said, "Mr. Minister, let's take a walk in the garden. It is not for me to advise you." Then, once we got into the garden, I said, "Donald, I know it's on your mind and I know that you and Lee Kuan Yew are in contact. However, you are Chief Minister of Sabah and federal minister as well. I ask you: what is going to be the Indonesian picture five or 10 years from now? Where will your real threat come from? If you go it alone, who knows what will happen?" That was the kind of thinking that I was going through at the time.

One didn't know where Sukarno would finally take things. Who would succeed him and what would be the outcome? Sukarno was the leader of a very virulent form of Indonesian nationalism. It was said that in Sukarno's office was a huge map showing the great brotherhood of brown-skinned peoples that ran all the way from Madagascar to Mindanao. The Indonesians had a manifest destiny syndrome at the time.

Well, this situation worked out differently. However, I often thought back on the various possibilities that might have occurred. Looking back now, I think that the Malaysians did the right thing, and they got a good deal. A lot more oil was discovered in Sarawak and Brunei, even though the wells in Sarawak had previously been regarded as having largely dried up. There didn't seem to be much oil off Sabah. The Sultanate of Brunei seemed to be facing declining fortunes. Suddenly, offshore oil wells were discovered by American wildcat prospectors, and money began pouring in to Brunei. It was a very interesting time, and it is interesting even now to look back on it.

Q: What was the role of the ethnic Chinese in the Borneo area? Were they snuggling up to Singapore or to the Federation of Malaysia?

BROWN: Economically and in many other ways they looked to Singapore. Singapore was the exciting place to be. That's where the dynamism was, and that's where their trade ties were. That's where the nearest Chinese university was. That's where a lot of dynamic Chinese businessmen lived, with whom they had familial or other ties.

From the security point of view, it had been the British who had been protecting these

Chinese. Now the British were handing over their former responsibilities to a Malaysian security establishment, with a continuing, but diminishing British presence in the background, which would be phased out. This was a matter of concern to these Chinese businessmen. They faced the alternative that, if they went against all of this, they could be at the mercy of Sukarno or fanatical Muslim figures like Sheikh Azahari. The British promised these Chinese businessmen that they would negotiate the best, constitutional terms available. The Christian missionary community was very upset. The Dayaks and the other, non-Christian and non-Muslim plurality in the Borneo territories, who had been accustomed to the idea that the British were their great protectors, were also disturbed. However, they were paid off with positions, commercial advantages, and so forth. So it worked out for them.

However, the Chinese of Sabah were very conservative and were making large amounts of money from timber, which was rapidly being cut down. Japanese interests were buying the great forests of Sabah. Cocoa was being planted, and a whole, new form of economic activity was emerging. The Chinese business interests were conservative politically and were making money. Everything looked pretty good. Sarawak was a much poorer economy. It had a virulent, left-wing underground component within the Chinese community. Sarawak had a different history. It went back to the time of the Rajah Brooke family dynasty. The first Rajah Brooke was a British adventurer who arrived in Sarawak from Singapore in the early 1830s. He witnessed Chinese rioters carrying a large pike with the head of the person who, they thought, was Rajah Brooke himself! He was not a popular figure with the Chinese. However, the Brookes continued to import Chinese workers. As in so many other situations and certainly in Sabah, the Chinese became the sinews of the economy.

Q: But the Chinese in Sarawak weren't soldiers.

BROWN: They weren't soldiers, although in Sarawak there were some Chinese who took to the jungle and waged a guerrilla type war against the British. These Chinese were militants. They were very disaffected, passionate and well indoctrinated. I'm speaking now of a small group.

One thing I want to mention before I forget it. When I came back to Washington, somebody on the Singapore desk took me aside and said, "You know, we've got a little bit of a problem here in that Washington is now very "ga ga" over Lee Kuan Yew and his success. We'd like you to do a sort of debriefing. Even though you have come in from Sarawak, you served in Singapore for three years." So I agreed and spoke to a small group in the State Department.

I said that I would offer this advice: Be very careful with Lee Kuan Yew. He's brilliant, he's effective, and, I used the expression, "He has a card file mentality. He keeps book on everybody, including his closest friends and associates. There are episodes in the U.S. and Singapore relationship which go back to the time I arrived in Singapore, which were very unfortunate. Although we've got a great relationship now, just be aware that, should

anything go wrong, Lee Kuan Yew is quite capable of embarrassing us in his own way.”

Shortly thereafter, the following episode occurred. I was on leave up in New Hampshire when I heard that an unhappy Lee Kuan Yew, who was angry with the United States for various reasons, had gone on television in Singapore and said that the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] ran an operation against Singapore which had been broken up. I called Washington when I heard this and said, “What are you going to do?” I was told: “We will follow our standard practice. We will deny it.” I said, “Don't do that. Don't you remember what I told you? This guy has a card file mentality. He's a great chess player. If you make a statement like that in rebuttal of something he has said, you're leaving yourselves wide open for him.” They said, “Well, that's the SOP [Standard Operating Procedure].” So the State Department issued a denial, and Lee Kuan Yew went back on TV with some of the details and also displayed a letter to him, signed by Secretary of State Dean Rusk, apologizing for this incident. The State Department, with its poor, corporate recall, couldn't find a copy of this letter or had forgotten about it. It was all very embarrassing.

Q: Before we finish up this session, I want to go back to something you said about the time when you left Hong Kong. You said that you had some remarks to make about being a junior officer on your first tour overseas, and all of that.

BROWN: Well, I think that I've disposed of that by now. There was a whole bunch of pluses and some minuses. I came down with amoebic dysentery in Hong Kong, which was certainly no fun. There was the introduction to a large Consulate General, which was truly very large. It was also compartmentalized, geographically and physically, which made it difficult for me to get used to.

This was still a time in the Foreign Service when the Officer Efficiency Reports prepared on an officer were CONFIDENTIAL in part. There was an UNCLASSIFIED report which was shown to you, and there was a CONFIDENTIAL report, which was not shown to you. That made me uneasy.

Q: Your wife was also rated.

BROWN: Your wife was rated. There was another troubling aspect. I had been thinking that I would put in a year or two in the Foreign Service, and then we would decide whether to continue in it. However, I wanted to get as much overseas time as I could, under my belt as it were. A Foreign Service Inspector came through Hong Kong. I remember his interviewing me. He, along with a whole line of others to follow, that is, my contemporaries, my superiors, my colleagues, and so forth, were advising me: “Go to Washington. Washington is where the action and the power are. Washington is where you plug into the Department of State. In that way, you move ahead. Don't get hung up on remaining overseas.”

Now that advice was directly contradictory to my view, which continued to be my view. I

wanted to get in as much overseas time as possible, and I did spend a long time overseas. Perhaps I later paid for it, but here I was with several years in Hong Kong. Then Hong Kong to Taiwan for language study. I didn't want to serve in the Department. Instead, I went to Singapore. I had made a name for myself as a reporting officer. I didn't want to go back to Washington. I wanted to go overseas again and go to the embassy in Moscow. That attitude remained a feature of my career. I did not put in a Washington assignment for duty until 1970.

Q: In a way it's atypical of somebody who moved ahead as you did. So often I've found that the way to move within the State Department power structure is to be a Staff Aide or Staff Assistant and to get up to the Seventh Floor. Make yourself known and get a Mentor. In my case I was a Consular Officer and I did everything I could to stay overseas. It was fun, but it may not have been the best thing to do.

BROWN: I had consular experience in Hong Kong and in Singapore, where I did double duty, that is, when the consular officer was away, I did consular work. I'll tell you a couple of consular stories.

The first story related to a Hong Kong case. The file on it was about three inches thick, and material in it had been accumulating for years. This case concerned a woman who wanted to get her British husband a visa to go to the United States. She also claimed American citizenship for her children. She had been repeatedly denied both the visa for her husband and citizenship status for her children. She had first married an ethnic Chinese in the late 1930s or 1940s. It turned out that he was a supporter of the Kuomintang [Chinese Nationalists]. This woman and her husband were in Hong Kong when the Japanese arrived there in 1941. He said "good-bye" to her and fled, leaving her in Hong Kong. She was a good looking woman and had a couple of children by him.

After the Japanese came to Hong Kong, her story was that, in order to survive, she posed as the wife of a British national. Together, they went into Stanley Prison [detention center in Hong Kong for nationals of allied countries]. She posed so well as the wife of this British subject that she bore him several children.

Q: This is carrying an act to its logical conclusion. [Laughter]

BROWN: World War II ended, and her British partner told her: "Honey, now I'm going back to my real wife," and he left her. Then she fell in love with another gentleman and bore him one or more children.

The people in the Passport Division of the Department of State examined our extremely convoluted passport law.

Q: Oh, yes.

BROWN: The passport people said that this woman, by her failure to have lived in the

United States at certain times before their births had therefore failed to confer American citizenship on her children, unless those children were illegitimate. Can you imagine that? After all of the cases that we handled, the object of which was to prove legitimacy, in this case the Department of State was saying: "No, your children are not U.S. citizens unless you can prove that they are illegitimate."

She said to me: "Your State Department says that to do this, I would have to go before a court in Hong Kong, but that would make this a full, newspaper case. I said, "Well, let's take this step by step. I inherited this case from other persons. You mentioned that your first husband was a Chinese member of the Kuomintang party. He fled from Hong Kong. Did you ever hear from him again?" She said, "Oh, yes. He's a member of the Legislative Yuan in Taipei. He's a big shot." I said, "Can you prove this to me?" She said, "Well, I know that he's visited Hong Kong. It was in the Chinese language newspapers."

From the Chinese newspapers I finally got the story about her first husband. I then raised this with the Department of State, pointing out that, since this woman and her Chinese husband had not been divorced, everything which followed was outside of marriage, and all of the children of her subsequent relationships with men were illegitimate. I got birth certificates from Stanley Prison and so forth. However, the fundamental fact in the case was that her first marriage had not been officially terminated. Her first husband had remarried, in the Chinese style, but he had never divorced his first wife.

I called her up on Easter Sunday, 1958, and informed her that the Department of State had finally relented and that her children could now be documented as American citizens. My Chinese staff in the Consulate General in Hong Kong were furious, because she was considered a loose woman.

The second case was in Singapore. I was filling in for the Consular Officer, who was on vacation. I received a distress call from a man who said that he was an American soldier on board a ship in Singapore harbor, and "they won't let me off. The ship will sail shortly, and I need your help." I said, "What's the story?" He said, "I'm in the American Army in South Korea. I went down on R&R [Rest and Recreation Leave] to Hong Kong. I talked my way onto a ship. The ship has come to Singapore, but the local authorities won't let me off, and the ship's going to sail for Colombo, [Ceylon], and the Suez Canal. I'll be AWOL [Absent Without Official Leave]. You've got to get me off this ship." I said, "Okay, let's see. Do you have your American passport?" He said, "No, but I've got my Army orders." I said, "Okay."

He had a slight accent, and I asked him about it. He said, "I was born a German but I'm in the U.S. Army." I said, "Are you a naturalized American citizen?" There was a long pause, and then he said, "No, but I'm an American soldier." I said, "I can't get you off that ship as an American citizen. You're a member of the U.S. Army, but you haven't been naturalized as an American citizen. Do you, by chance, have your German passport?" He said, "I think I've got an old one down in the bottom of my duffel bag." I said, "Get it out." He got it out and then he said, "It's expired." I said, "Hang on." I called the German

Consulate General, sought an emergency appointment with the German Consul General, described the situation, and I said, "Look, this young fellow is in desperate circumstances. Since he was never naturalized as an American citizen, would you grant him a German passport valid for a short time so that I can get him off this ship and then fly him back to South Korea?"

"Well," the German Consul General said, "we'll see." He sent a German consular officer to the ship, where he and I interviewed this young man on the ship. With considerable reluctance the Germans issued him a German passport good for a short time. I got him off the ship, and we flew him back to South Korea. Just before we flew him back, he said to me: "You know something? I was stationed in France and I once went back to Germany to get my passport renewed. Then they kicked me out of the German Foreign Ministry, and yet here in Singapore you took care of it."

The third case that I will mention, and I had many other passport cases, was one that involved an irate Congressman from New York. This involved one of his constituents, an ethnic Chinese who was an American citizen. This Chinese was loudly denouncing us for the delay in issuing a non-immigrant visa to a lady who was a teacher over in Sabah. He said that she wanted to visit the United States with him, and why were we holding this case up?

A Congressman intervened in the case, and he said, "What is this all about? Another, typical case of State Department delay," and so forth. Because of my consular background, I smelt something fishy about this case. In the course of other business I flew over to what was then the capital of Sabah, Jesselton. I went to her school and asked to see her. This was a Chinese school. One staff member turned to another staff member and said in Chinese, not knowing that I understood Chinese: "She's down in Sandakan," which is a port down the coast, near the border with Indonesia, one or two hours' flying time away from Jesselton. One of these teachers said to the other in Chinese: "She's the one who has a husband in the United States." I said, in English: "Where might she be reached in Sandakan?" They gave me the address, and I flew down to Sandakan to check this case in the course of other business, commercial and political.

I got in touch with her on the telephone in Sandakan. She came to my hotel. I said, "Look, this is what happened. You have a husband in the United States? Is this the man?" She broke down in tears and said, "Here's the story." They had met in Hong Kong and were married, Chinese style, in Hong Kong. Then they went to Brunei. They had a certificate showing that they had been married in Brunei. Then he went to the United States and said to her: "Honey, I'll come back for you later on." Then he forgot about her. He abandoned this particular lady for a while, remarried in the United States, became dissatisfied with that marriage, I guess got a divorce, and now wanted to get his first wife into the U.S. as a visitor.

I said, "The only way that you're going to be able to do this is to clean this record up." So she gave me the particulars. In the course of other business I flew to Brunei, went into the

old British Registry, got a copy of the marriage certificate there, sat down, and wrote that case up for that Congressman from New York, explaining what his constituent was really up to. That was a great case! I was able to handle this case through a combination of my being able to speak Chinese and my knowledge of consular work. So I pulled this all together. It was very educational. I treasured my consular background.

Q: We've been at this for about two hours now. Why don't we stop at this point? We'll pick it up next time, when you're just starting Russian studies.

BROWN: We'll pick it up there, in 1965.

Q: Today is December 2, 1998. Bill, why did you want to study Russian?

BROWN: Remember, at that time [1965] we were involved in the Vietnam War. The Super Powers were the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Communist China was emerging as a Great Power. China was a big problem. In the State Department there was a very small number of people whom I would call switch hitters as far as two or more of these concerns were involved.

My academic background had been initially Russian history. Then I studied the Russian record in the Far East. After that, I began to study China. During my time abroad I was also doing my Ph.D. thesis on a figure from ancient China. I felt that the question was whether I wanted to stay a medium to large fish in a small or training pond, which involved Southeast Asia and Chinese affairs at that time, or did I want to make a major, career move and get into the big time from my viewpoint. That would be into the field of Sino-Soviet affairs. So that's the long and the short of it.

I applied for Russian language training and an assignment to Moscow. My wife and I had discussed this, with its obvious risks, challenges, and so forth. However, we thought that we had figured it out. I applied for the training and was accepted. I came back to Washington in the summer of 1965.

However, before I leave Borneo, there is one thing that I would like to mention. That is, some aspects of the Chinese community in Borneo. I've told you about my time in Singapore and Indonesian Konfrontasi of Malaysia. There was a near wartime situation 30 miles away from Kuching, on the Sarawak-Indonesian border. There was guerrilla warfare with Sukarno's troops dressed in camouflage uniforms. The Chinese in Kuching and Sarawak were divided between the business community, which was conservative, as businessmen usually are, and a heavy sprinkling of progressive leftists, including a hard core of pro-Maoist young people. Many of these young people went or were driven underground and engaged in armed conflict with British and other Commonwealth troops who were conducting security sweeps and so forth.

In the tiny Sultanate of Brunei there was a Chinese population which did much of the dirty work. None of these people were Malaysian citizens. They had come to work in Sarawak and might even have been born there. However, unless they were true sons of the soil and Brunei Malay Muslims, they were not considered citizens of Brunei.

Then, the former British North Borneo was now called Sabah. There was a predominantly conservative, money-making Chinese business community. There were very few, if any, real Leftists. But in what used to be called Jesselton, then the capital of Sabah and now called Kota Kinabalu. A Chinese businessman in Jesselton commented to me in a very interesting way. That is, when China exploded its first, nuclear device in 1964, this gentleman, who was a very hard-working, self made, and conservative, anti-communist type, blurted out to me, in essence: "Now, at last, they'll recognize China and us Chinese for what we are." This was a cultural, ethnic response to the fact that Beijing had fired off its first, nuclear device. This was an interesting development in terms of its ethnicity and political outlook. I noticed this among people who had done well but who felt, and with reason, that under British colonialism they were in a sub-class that had been discriminated against. They felt that they were regarded basically as outsiders. The British held these territories in trust, as it were, for the "sons of the soil" ["bumi putra"].

Q: I'm not sure whether we covered this last time, but you were writing your thesis on a man whose name I can't remember...

BROWN: It was Wen T'ien-hsiang.

Q: It was Wen T'ien-hsiang. You mentioned how your research on him opened up some areas in the Chinese community, because you were working on this subject, and there were libraries and all of that. Did you get any feel for the Chinese ethos that made sense.

BROWN: I might say that Wen T'ien-hsiang was a paragon of the Confucian ethical ideal. That is to say, he was a man who came up the hard way through study. He scored number one in the national, civil service examination. When his father died, he dutifully retired from office. The Mongol invasion of China was the point at which he got struggled against compromising Chinese officials. He took over the reins of power, raised an army, parleyed with the Mongol generals, lost, escaped, fought and lost, and was captured. Rather than change his loyalties, and at his own request, he was executed. He came down in Chinese history, I should say, as a paragon of Confucian morality, loyalty, and probity.

When I started work on this thesis, I had not known that he had become a political symbol on Taiwan. He was a symbol of undying loyalty, even under the most difficult and unpromising circumstances. He was the kind of figure that you would find in Chinese textbooks, in Chinese folklore, and so forth. But he was unknown in the West. So my research on his life and works opened doors for me and gained me respect for having really gotten into Chinese history, culture, and so forth. It opened up my eyes, if you will, to what Confucian ethics meant, even in the contemporary world, in terms of moral

outlook and so forth.

Q: Moving to Russian studies now, I would like to get a picture of the Foreign Service at this time and how it operated. It sounds as if your Career Counselor was yourself and your wife.

BROWN: That's right.

Q: Did anybody say, "Hey, Mr. Brown, why don't you become a Sino-Soviet specialist?"

BROWN: No. On the Sino-Soviet network, Marshall Brement was the then incumbent of the Sino-Soviet slot in the embassy in Moscow. I had known him at language school in Taichung. Obviously, this kind of specialization was a way into, if you will, the big time in terms of assignment to a major embassy, getting on the map, and so forth. I just thought that this was the thing to do, and it was an exciting course of action. It was apparent to me, beginning in 1961, that a split was opening up and widening between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, and that this would bear very fundamentally on our national interest. That is, depending on how things developed.

So I put in for Russian study and got it. By this time I had pretty strong ideas about how language training should go. Once again, I was a little bit older than some of the other students, but I burned the candle at both ends under the great teacher, Nina De la Cruz. She was a magnificent instructor. I plowed ahead. I communicated with Marshall Brement, who was then on the job in Moscow. He was sending me clippings from Pravda and Izvestia. In other words I was determined that, just as I had graduated from Chinese language training, able really to read the newspapers, I wanted to be able to do this when I arrived in Moscow. I realized from correspondence with Marshall that this was crucial.

So I did extra work on the Russian language so that I would be able to read the Russian language press. Through Nina De la Cruz, I engaged an elderly Russian lady, who was not on the staff, and I really burnt the candle at both ends. This really paid off, I would say, by comparison with some other graduates from the same course. By the end of the Russian course, unfortunately, they were just barely at the threshold of being able to read the press in Russian. If they didn't get the right slot, if they got into consular, administrative, or other work which didn't require them to read the Russian newspapers, they could easily fall short, in this respect.

I arrived in Moscow in the summer of 1966, able to read Pravda and Izvestia. This ability was as important as I thought it would be, because Marshall Brement on my first day would say, "Mrs. Gandhi [Indian Prime Minister] is arriving in Moscow. Here is the Soviet press coverage of her remarks yesterday. It's all yours to prepare a report." The other thing that happened was that, either on my first or second day in Moscow, a defector got through the Soviet guards in front of the embassy and came into the embassy. He was a Chinese. I felt that I had to handle that case. It was highly potent stuff.

Q: You were in the embassy in Moscow from 1966 to when?

BROWN: From 1966 to 1968. When I arrived in Moscow, notwithstanding all of my reading and all of my preparations, it was a bit of a jolt. I was in a communist society. We were bugged, followed, and restricted, and made to feel it, even more to the point. The embassy was very hierarchical. The reports that it was putting out were top flight in terms of quality, and the editing and hierarchical process was very rigorous. It was quite a change for me, having come from my own post and suddenly being subordinated to being the low man in the Political Section.

Q: Who were the Ambassador, the DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission], and the Political Counselor?

BROWN: The Ambassador at the time was Foy Kohler, who was an old pro. The DCM at the time was John, well I forget his last name. Gene Boster was the Political Counselor. The Political Section, as usual, was divided into two units, covering Internal and External Affairs. I was in the External Unit, so I was reporting to Alex Akalovsky, who had been an official interpreter for appointments high level Americans had with Nikita Khrushchev. He had now come into the Foreign Service. This was his first assignment as Deputy Political Counselor. He was a real taskmaster.

Among my colleagues were the following: covering Africa was Allen Davis, later Ambassador; Middle East was Walter Smith; covering Latin America was Bill Price; and I had all of Asia, from Afghanistan to Japan. The biggest part of this job was following Sino-Soviet affairs.

At that time the Russians were preparing for their great, 50th anniversary celebration of the Communist Revolution in 1917. The split between the Chinese communists and the Russians was deepening dramatically. President Lyndon Johnson had moved to major escalation in Vietnam, which we were bombing heavily, occasionally striking Soviet shipping in Haiphong harbor. The Soviets would periodically call us in to protest against this or that strafing or bombing attack. I remember occasions when we queried Washington about these allegations, and the Department of State denied them. I remember one time when the Russians gave us photos of holes in ships. They said that one or two crew members had been killed. There was a great manufactured outcry in the Soviet press, demonstrations against us, and so on. So our relations with the Soviet Union at this time were about at their worst. They stayed that way during my time in Moscow.

Q: Who was the Soviet Foreign Minister at this time [1964]?

BROWN: Andrei Gromyko was the Foreign Minister. Leonid Brezhnev was the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union [CPSU]. They were settling in and rewriting the history of the CPSU. They were writing out Khrushchev and writing themselves in. That took us into the fabulous period leading up to 1967 because they were now rewriting the whole history of the Communist Revolution and who did what and so

forth. Of course, this rewriting included the Sino-Soviet aspect and the treatment of Mao Tse-tung. Mao had hitherto been written up as a great hero of the Proletarian Revolution. Now he had to be blackened, downgraded, and vilified, and I witnessed all of this process.

Meanwhile, the Chinese communists were doing their own rewriting of history. It was getting increasingly nasty during my time in Moscow. By 1968 a few bullets were flying here and there, there was some roughhousing and so forth.

Q: You're talking about incidents between the Chinese and the Russians.

BROWN: The Chinese and the Soviets, yes.

Q: Had they yet had that battle over the Ussuri River?

BROWN: No, that came a bit later. However, the Soviets were strengthening their positions along the Ussuri River. I managed to convince my subsequent Political Counselor, David Klein, who had previously been Economic Counselor, that he and his wife, and I, should travel out together to Khabarovsk. The Soviets declined to show us anything, and we couldn't arrange any appointments. David Klein was so angry that he decided that we would go back to Moscow. I said, "No, that's exactly what they want you to do. Let's continue on. We have permission to continue on to Nakhodka," (North of Vladivostok), where there was a newly-opened, one-man Japanese Consulate. This Consulate was operating out of a hotel. I said, "Dave, that's exactly what they want. They want us to give up in frustration and go back to Moscow. Let's not do that."

The only way we could continue on to Nakhodka was to travel for a very long period down that railway line. We would only have a couple of hours there in Nakhodka and would have to get on another train back. I said, "Let's do it. They want to discourage us, but let's do it." This trip was great, because it enabled me to see the enormous flow of military hardware down that line, where the Soviets were building up their position along the Ussuri River.

We also had a very useful meeting with the Japanese Consul General in Nakhodka. It was amazing what a colleague could give us in a couple of hours. He was a senior, experienced diplomat who knew his business. Although he was very restricted in where he could travel geographically, he was able to give us a pretty good picture of Nakhodka in those days.

In the professional field back in Moscow the Soviets knew what I was after, and they were not about to make life easy for me. So I could not get appointments in the Foreign Ministry. I had to resort to other means. By special, diplomatic pouch, I subscribed to "People's Daily," which was published in Beijing. It was forbidden by the Soviets to be sold in Moscow. I would compare "People's Daily" as I got it, and FBIS [Foreign Broadcast Information Service, an official, U.S. publication] as I got it. The FBIS daily

report contained a read out of Chinese, as well as Soviet broadcasts. I would read between the lines of the Byzantine Soviet press coverage.

I went to the lengths of attending the defenses of doctoral dissertations at the African-Asian Institute of Oriental Studies. Although their system was grossly distorted, the Soviets still went through the motions. The Ph.D. candidates still had to defend their theses in a public forum. One could read in the evening Moscow News as to when and where these theses would be defended along with mechanical, engineering, science, and other dissertations. The reason that I would go there would be to pick up whatever grains of information that I could.

I could see in operation the likes of Mikhail Kapitsa, who was a Professor of Chinese Affairs at Moscow University. He was also a former Ambassador and was on the Collegium of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was a big, tall, hearty man. I used to talk to him in the corridors. Kapitsa was aware of what I was up to. He had been a young interpreter between Stalin and, I guess, Zhou En-lai and some Chinese communist delegations. He would throw me the odd bone here and there. For example, an historical note. It was all slanted, of course. He would say that the Soviets knew all along what kind of fool Mao Tse-tung was, an agricultural bumpkin, an opportunist, and so forth. "Because of the exigencies of the period, we went along with it," he would say. He would say that Mao had engaged in all of these excesses and so forth. I was reading those kinds of tea leaves and engaging in extracurricular activities.

Q: Were you given any training in the fine art of Kremlinology? I spent five years in Yugoslavia, reading "Politka" and "Borba." This was not really my bag. I didn't have to do that, but when you're doing that, that is, trying to read this stuff, you really have to develop some expertise. Did you have any training in how to do this?

BROWN: We studied at the FSI [Foreign Service Institute] before we went to Moscow. There were reference books, the occasional lecture, and tapes of commentaries on Russian affairs. I did as much as I could to absorb this material. I was engaged very heavily in reading this kind of material before I got to Moscow. There was a lot of classified information on the Soviet system as well.

However, there's nothing like on the job training. We also had the benefit of a few other people there in other embassies. The British and the French were very interested in Sino-Soviet relations, and so were the Japanese. I used to meet in the various "tanks" [secure conference rooms] at the Japanese and American Embassies. On a confidential basis we would share information.

Mind you, you couldn't exist on this alone. We were expected to handle other affairs as well, on an ad hoc basis. I actually welcomed this. I traveled through the various republics of Soviet Central Asia. I traveled there with an Australian embassy officer. I also traveled to the Ukraine and the Caucasus with our Agricultural Attache. I volunteered to do that. That was a real eye-opener as far as Soviet agriculture was concerned.

Q: Can you talk about this, because this was just about the time that Khrushchev opened up the virgin lands of Soviet Central Asia. What was our impression of Soviet agriculture that we were picking up?

BROWN: Of course, agriculture was an enormous subject in Soviet propaganda and central planning. The Soviets knew that the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Government more generally, wanted to know everything that we could about their agriculture. They were not about to tell us. As a result we sent people to the Soviet Union like Bryce Meeker, a career agricultural expert who followed developments in the Soviet Union and China as a specialized, reporting officer.

He would dutifully go into the Soviet Ministry of Agriculture. Essentially, they wouldn't give him the time of day. They would say, "You know more than we do," and that kind of thing. By now we were beginning to get satellite coverage of the state of Soviet agriculture. By now Bryce Meeker and his predecessors over the years had developed a system for covering the country. They were severely limited in their travels and couldn't get to the virgin lands, at least not easily.

However, the bread basket of the Soviet Union remained the Ukraine and South into the Caucasus area. These guys developed a system of taking an embassy car and driving for enormous distances, always with a partner. They were always looking for someone to travel with, because of Soviet provocations and so forth. So I put myself on the list to accompany them.

There were plots of land which they and their predecessors had selected years ago. They had notebooks, and we would drive as fast as we could. Then we would slow down as we passed a designated 10 kilometer stretch on the right or left hand side of the road. Sometimes we would just cruise slowly past these Ukrainian or Caucasian fields and note the state of the crops. Occasionally, we would stop, get out of the car and take a little stroll in the fields, and so forth. We were under constant surveillance. The Soviet security people following us would get out and look at what we were doing. We would stay the night in hotels. The Soviet security people in essence selected the hotel and picked the room as well! They would run provocations if they could, involving some nice-looking young lady.

For me this was a real eye opener as far as the backward plight of Soviet agriculture was concerned. I think that that was very influential for my overall education on the Soviet Union. It came in as a kind of radar in other incarnations. I got to see parts of the Soviet Union that my job normally didn't call for me to visit, but that was useful, too.

In this way I got to visit the capitals of Kazakhstan, of the Kirghiz SSR [Soviet Socialist Republic]...

Q: Whose capital was Frunze.

BROWN: Yes. We were trying to get as close as we could to the Chinese border with the Soviet Union, and the security police were always closing us off from it. I think that they knew that I was a Sino-Soviet specialist. There were also other reasons. So much of their nuclear production, launch facilities, and nuclear pollution were taking place precisely in those areas.

Q: Also, there were aircraft facilities there.

BROWN: Oh, yes. I was a Sino-Soviet watcher, but I was also getting a first class, hands on education on the way things ran there.

Q: How did you feel about this? Later on, some 29 years later, the Soviet Union collapsed essentially because of its economic deterioration. Somehow, we had had the impression that the Soviets were 10 feet tall.

BROWN: I'll raise this point because in 1972 I was in the National War College. I got into a very interesting discussion with a very senior guy from DIA [Defense Intelligence Agency], who rose to a very high position in that agency. I was telling him how primitive Soviet agriculture, their cities, and city life were. From my viewpoint, and speaking as a non-economist, the whole Soviet economy was very limited. This man said, "Okay, Bill, but I'm telling you that they put up first-class missiles. That's why, in a sense, they can put up some first-class satellites with these missiles."

For me this represented the great dichotomy in the Soviet Union. They were sinking so much of their money into that. (End of tape)

Q: You were saying that they put so much of their resources...

BROWN: They were putting so much of their resources into a competitive arms race, satellites, and the whole range of military equipment. At the same time they were so pitifully backward in so many other areas. Even during the great, 50th anniversary celebration of the foundation of the Soviet Union [1967], when they boasted of producing so many tons of steel, so many tons of grain, and so forth, it was apparent that they remained significantly backward. I would say that the Soviet system was almost literally rusting away. If you saw one Soviet city, you'd seen them all. These cities were very drab and certainly not exciting.

There was a great deal of alcoholism and absenteeism from work. The shortages of food were really something to behold, apart from the staple foods. Bread was there in the stores. For the 50th anniversary celebration, in 1967, they tried to do some window dressing in the more fashionable stores, and so forth. However, Soviet food consumption was pathetic as far as meat was concerned.

So, as I said, I went to Moscow as a Sino-Soviet watcher, but I got a much broader

education than that. It was a difficult situation. Work in the embassy was difficult. I was convinced that the Sino-Soviet split was far worse than had been depicted. I tended to describe it in more dramatic ways than some of my superiors were prepared to accept. However, of course, that's life.

Ambassador Foy Kohler was replaced by Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson.

Q: Ambassador Thompson was returning to the Soviet Union, wasn't he?

BROWN: He was returning to the Soviet Union. He had played a major role in previous administrations and in the negotiation of the neutralization of Austria.

By now the Vietnam War had deepened to the point where its impact on Soviet-American relations was worsening all the time. Ambassador Thompson was sent to Moscow in no small measure to wait to see whether the Soviets under Kosygin and Brezhnev would be willing to play a fruitful, productive role in ending the war. Alas, it was not to be.

We had many visitors in Moscow. This was a rather fascinating point. One visitor was a gentleman named Richard Nixon, the former Vice President of the U.S. and later the President. I believe that he came to Moscow in 1967 as a private person, having been defeated in his gubernatorial campaign in California [in 1962]. We tried to make appointments for him. He wanted to see Brezhnev, the Politburo, and so forth. Richard Nixon could not get a single appointment in the entire Soviet apparatus! Not even an appointment with a dog catcher. We were embarrassed and so forth, but that's the way it was.

We sent him out to Kazakhstan on a side trip. When Nixon returned from there, Ambassador Thompson, obviously in an effort to make Nixon feel better, held a session up in his office. Nixon held forth on NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization], the world, and so forth. I was a dyed in the wool closet Democrat, but I must say that I was impressed with Nixon's handling of that session. I was very impressed, indeed.

Let me say a word at this point about the man I called my KGB [Soviet Secret Police] handler whose name was "Nick." Most of us had a contact who was a KGB officer, whether we wanted one or not. Nick had served in the Soviet embassy in Washington and maybe in the Soviet UN Mission. He was always affable and an easy-going guy. He worked out of the "House of Friendship." Nick was the kind of guy who would say, "How's the work going? Are you getting appointments? Can I help out in any way? I know it's difficult," and so forth. Occasionally, we would get together. I dutifully and immediately reported contacts with Nick. Nick was a KGB Colonel, as it were, and co-author of a book on "How to Subvert American Officers." When you talked to him, you knew when you were hearing things. [Laughter]

I said, "You know, Nick, Nixon is in Moscow." He said, "Yes." I said, "Well, he's been unable to get a single appointment." He said, "Oh?" I said, "You're making a big mistake,

Nick.” He said, “Well, you know, his reputation as a hardliner,” and so forth. I said, and remember this was 1967 when I said all of this: “Nick, obviously we’re going to have Lyndon Johnson reelected President. A Democrat will be the next President, no question about it. Johnson has made a lot of progress with promoting the Great Society and so on. But you never know with this kind of individual. You people would be well-advised to take out a little insurance policy and be nice to Nixon.” Or words to that effect. Well, it was not to be, and Nixon did not get a single appointment during this visit to Moscow. He got on the airplane and flew directly to Bucharest, [Romania].

In Bucharest President Ceausescu rolled out the red carpet, wined and dined Nixon, and he never forget that.

Q: This relationship with Ceausescu really made an impact on Nixon.

BROWN: Years later, when I was in New Delhi, President Nixon flew through with Secretary of State Kissinger. I was the motorcade officer. The next stop was to be Bucharest. There President Ceausescu did everything, with the red carpet, salutes, dancing, and everything. Nixon responded very well for Ceausescu's earlier graciousness.

Anyway, another visitor to Moscow was Henry Kissinger, that is, Professor Henry Kissinger. I had word that I should meet him and take care of him, because he was connected with David Rockefeller [President of the Chase Manhattan Bank]. I remember driving out to Sheremeytvo Airport, which is a good distance outside of Moscow. I was sort of muttering to myself: “I’m a Harvard man, and all of that, but what am I doing meeting a Harvard Professor, driving him in to Moscow, putting him in a hotel, and so forth.”

I think that Kissinger was attending a Pugwash Conference, or a Pugwash-like Conference. In addition...

Q: You might explain what Pugwash was.

BROWN: “Pugwash” was the name of a place where a series of meetings of good thinking people on various sides got together informally. They included people in and out of government who discussed the possibilities of arms control and disarmament. A very prestigious crowd of people on all sides.

Kissinger had another agenda as well. That was with a Japanese outfit which had arranged with him that he would meet with and debate a Soviet figure named Zhukov. Zhukov was an old, ideological hack from “Pravda.” The subject matter was scheduled to revolve around Asia and the world. I’ll never forget Kissinger saying to me: “I’m making tapes of this and I want you to send these back to Washington for me through the diplomatic pouch. I want to make sure that I have, on the record, exactly what I said.”

I said to myself: “Who does this guy think he is? Using the diplomatic pouch? He’s just a

private citizen.” Well, the next time I saw him, I was holding the door open for him.
[Laughter]

Another visitor to Moscow turned out to be Chester Bowles. Bowles was coming through Moscow as Ambassador to India, en route back to his post in New Delhi from consultations back in Washington. He and his wonderful wife, Steppy, routed themselves through Moscow on the way back to New Delhi. At that time we were between Ambassadors in Moscow. Toby Swank was the DCM and the Charge d'Affaires. He didn't like Bowles. Bowles had carried out a mission to Cambodia, while Swank was stationed there. Swank's nose was out of joint as a result. Swank called me in and told me: “Chester Bowles is coming to Moscow.” I said, “Yes.” Swank said, “You're the Asian affairs expert. You handle him.” I said, “Yes.” Swank said, “I'm just awfully busy, so I want you really to take care of Bowles.” In other words, I was to entertain and take care of him. So I did.

Bowles' departure from Moscow was delayed for an extra day, so we had him on our hands for something like three days in all. He and his wife were a charming couple. I had always idolized him as a great, American figure. As we sat in the VIP lounge in Sheremeteyevo Airport, prior to his leaving, Bowles said to me: “You know, you're just the kind of guy I need.” I thought: “Wouldn't it be great with Lindsey Grant covering communist China!” Bowles said that he would like to have me also replace Roger Kirk, (later Ambassador to Romania), as his Soviet specialist. He added that he would like to combine this because a personnel reduction in force was taking place at the time in the Foreign Service. So I would be both a Soviet and Chinese Communist specialist. Ambassador Bowles said, “Why don't you come to the embassy in New Delhi?” I said, “Mr. Ambassador, I'd be delighted, but I've never served substantively in Washington. Everybody tells me, including Foreign Service Inspectors, peers, and superiors, that I'm headed for Washington. I don't think that it's possible to do a tour in New Delhi at this time.” He said, “Well, let's see what I can do.”

A week later a cable came in to Moscow, ordering me transferred to New Delhi. So I left Moscow. I had witnessed the great, 50th anniversary celebration of the Communist Revolution and all of that hype. It was really something to see that the Soviets really wanted to celebrate this anniversary. I had also witnessed the deepening of the Sino-Soviet split to the point that I went down to the train station and saw Chinese students departing for Beijing. These students had deliberately fabricated scuffles with the Soviet police so that they could go back to Beijing, with apparently bloody bandages on them. They knew what they faced in the Cultural Revolution, which was then at its height. The Cultural Revolution was an ideological and almost religious phenomenon, something like the Salem Witch Trials in American history. It was amazing.

At the train station I saw the Chinese Charge d'Affaires and his senior staff, standing in a semi-circle, holding copies of Mao Tse-tung's “Little Red Book,” looking at a bunch of Chinese students who were extra bandaged, having manufactured the scuffles with the Soviet police. Some of the students were in stretchers and some of them were heavily

bandaged. These two, semi-circles faced each other. It was like something right out of a religious service. Somebody would say, in a low voice: "Turn to page such and such." And someone else would read: "You cannot sail the seas without a helmsman." Then someone would say, "Chairman Mao is our great helmsman. See page such and such," and someone would say, "Our Great Leader, Mao Tse-tung, says," and so forth. It was like a church service. And off the students went on their way back to Beijing.

As the students' train pulled out of the station, some of them leaned out of the last car and shouted out in Russian: "Long live the friendship between the Great Soviet and the Great Chinese peoples!" And surrounding the train was a bunch of Soviet police goons yelling at the Chinese students: "Svoloch" ("Bastard!") [Laughter]

As I looked back on it, the assignment to Moscow was painful, and it was hard work. We suffered the rigors of family separation. Two of our daughters were in their early teens, and they had to be put in school in Vienna and later on in Copenhagen. That was a big wrench for us at the time. Obviously, I hated the Soviet system. I didn't like, and no one would like the office layout of the embassy, along with all of the restrictions and provocations. However, it was a great experience.

Q: Were you personally provoked at all? Did you get any attempts at personal attacks at all?

BROWN: When we were on the road, as I said, some nice-looking women would come up and try to interest us. My wife would get provocative behavior from Soviet women. They would ask her: "Is your husband unhappy?" There were times when one might pick up the phone and hear one's own voice. Or the phone was clicking in such a way that you knew you were being bugged. It was tough to serve at the embassy in Moscow.

Q: In the Political Section what was the prognosis for the Brezhnev and Kosygin regime at that time? They were fairly new on the scene.

BROWN: They were new on the scene. They were busily trying to strengthen the Soviet system. As I said, among other things, they had the benefit of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Communist Revolution. So, in a sense, they were in charge of the sacraments. They could pull off, and did so, a great, world communist gathering, to which even the Cubans and the North Koreans sent delegates. This effort was obviously structured at the expense of the Chinese communists.

However, the Soviets were experiencing increasing difficulties, of course, in dealing with the European situation. There was the Yugoslav phenomenon. By the way, some of the best diplomats I ever ran into in those days were specifically the Yugoslavs.

Q: I remember that both in China and in the Soviet Union the Yugoslav diplomats were often our best sources of information.

BROWN: They were first class. They spoke excellent Russian. They knew the system and they had a certain amount of entree by virtue of their communist credentials. After all, a Yugoslav Ambassador would feel that he was entitled to meet significant, Soviet Communist Party figures, and not with the shadows that we met with, such as government bureaucrats. They would meet with communist party officials. That's where the real power was. Of course, they were trying to work this status for their own benefit. So there were a lot of fascinating things about the Yugoslavs.

One thing I would like to mention before I leave this account of my time in Moscow, was the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli War in 1967.

Q: This was also called the Six-Day War.

BROWN: At the time there was a very small but active Israeli embassy in Moscow. By this time I was getting used to demonstrations. There were anti-American and anti-Chinese demonstrations. It was interesting to observe the way that the Soviets mounted them, these so-called spontaneous demonstrations. I remember getting a phone call from a journalist who said, "The Soviets are about to mount an anti-American, anti-Israeli demonstration. It's going to come right down Tchaikowskava Boulevard later this morning."

So I passed the word and, sure enough, all the traffic on the street was diverted. First of all many water trucks were deployed in semi-circles around the Israeli and American Embassies. Then hundreds of police goons appeared in trenchcoats around the Embassies. The traffic stopped. Then a long line of heavy military or police trucks appeared on Tchaikowskava Boulevard, a very wide thoroughfare, and parked opposite our embassy, bumper to bumper. These trucks were loaded with police. In the trucks and behind were police officers with radio equipment. At long last came the demonstrators, predominantly Arabs and with a sprinkling of Afro-Asian, Third World protestors, with their Soviet keepers along with them.

They were still very far away, but opposite our embassy they found that the scene was not quite what they expected. Between themselves and the embassy was an enormous amount of space, with all of these water trucks and hundreds of police goons protecting us. Then there was the long line of police cadets or troops, armed, and riding in these trucks which were parked, bumper to bumper. Their own people were locking arms and guiding them. In other words, they couldn't stop. So they went past us on a guided route, turned the corner, and headed for the Israeli embassy, where they did the same thing. I became well acquainted with spontaneous demonstrations during my time in Moscow.

Q: Didn't they have a demonstration where ink bottles were thrown against the front of our embassy? Some of the windows were broken, and the Soviet Government ended up paying for it. I'm sure that the Soviet feeling about African and Arab students must have been...

BROWN: I had a fascinating, introductory experience to this kind of feeling. My wife, Helen, and I, together with our family, chose to come into the Soviet Union by a route that was very rare for those days. I deliberately chose to come in on what I think was the "KRUPSKAYA," a Soviet vessel which went from London to Leningrad, via Copenhagen and perhaps Stockholm, although I'm not sure of that, and Helsinki. Then we took a train into Moscow. We debarked and spent several hours in Helsinki. At this time I assisted a dark-complexioned gentleman who was an Indian. He had a lot of baggage to take care of. He was so grateful for my help. He said, "How can I repay you?" I said, "Don't worry about it." We struck up a conversation. It turned out that he was a graduate student at Lumumba University in Moscow.

Anyhow, he said that he wanted to invite us to visit Lumumba University. I said, "Look, you should know that I'm going to be a Political Officer in the American embassy in Moscow. You're an Indian student. I don't want you to feel uncomfortable about this." He said, "No, no. I don't care. I'm independent and I'm in my last year at Lumumba University." So I said, "Fine." Well, by golly, some time later he got in touch with us. He came and had Thanksgiving dinner with us.

He also invited us to visit Lumumba University: Helen, myself, and our two older daughters, who were then in their early teens. He got us into the university, past the guard and so forth. We went up to his room, which he was sharing with a Latin American student and an African from Kenya or some place like that. At the sight of us the word went out, and suddenly, the room was filled with black students from different parts of Africa. They were pouring out their hearts on the terrible experience of being black students in Moscow. Their difficulty was, as they put it, the more Russian they learned, the more they could understand the insults which were thrown their way, and so forth. This was a real revelation.

Q: I interviewed a whole group of African students who had attended the University of Sofia, [Bulgaria]. They were tired of being called, "black monkeys."

BROWN: On an agricultural trip in Orel, South of Moscow, between Moscow and Kiev, I was traveling with the American Agricultural Attache and a Canadian. This Canadian was a French-Canadian who fancied himself as a liberal. After the first night in Orel he was becoming a very strong, conservative, anti-Soviet person.

Well, you know the Soviet system. There are very few bars outside of Moscow. In those days drinking alcoholic beverages was done in hotel restaurants, and heavy drinking it was. The whole system was set up. Your room had been set, and your table was already designated. As we came down, we found that the diningroom was crowded to overflowing. Every seat was taken, and every table was occupied except one that was empty. On this table was the American flag! [Laughter] The three of us sat down at this table. Our colleague was a Canadian, and I felt that it was sort of insulting to him. So I took the American flag and put it aside on a radiator, or something like that. The maitre d. came over, picked up the American flag, and dramatically placed it in the center of our

table. After a while, through the doorway appeared a black man. He made straight for our table. Efforts were made to intercept him, but we said, “No, no. Let him sit down.” Here we were in the provincial city of Orel which, by the way, had been overrun by the Germans during World War II.

We struck up a conversation with this black man, who turned out to be the brother of Tom M'Boya of Kenya.

Q: Tom M'Boya was a labor leader. He was a science major, wasn't he?

BROWN: I'm not sure. I'm not sure whether he became Prime Minister or not, but he was a very high-ranking person. I said to him: “What in the world are you doing here?” He said, “They stuck me here. You don't know what it's like. Children come up to me and say, 'Why don't you wash?' People call us 'monkeys.' Can you get me out of here?” This was the cry of many black students at the time. They asked us for help in getting out of the Soviet Union. We would say, “Look, you have to get a Soviet exit visa. We can't do that kind of thing for you.”

It turned out that this man had had an argument with his brother, Tom M'Boya. Tom got so fed up with him that he said, “I'm going to send you to the United States,” or some such place, “on a student program.” He was so angry that he went across the street to Tom's bitter rival, Oginga Odinga. He said to him: “Send me to Russia,” which was arranged. It was amazing! We had amazing experiences in the Soviet Union, especially on the road there.

Before we move on to another subject, this trip gave me a chance to visit Vilnius, Lithuania, and Riga, Latvia, with my wife and my boss, the Political Counselor. These places were under Soviet occupation, of course, but it was remarkable that the tone and atmosphere were so different from the rest of the Soviet Union. The Lithuanians and the Latvians were just dying to get out of the Soviet Union. I couldn't imagine at that time that they would finally make it, as they did. It was a remarkable and great learning experience.

I then went to India.

Q: Let's go into a couple of additional questions about the Soviet Union. We had seen the Sino-Soviet split, which was getting bigger and bigger. At the same time, by 1968, we were deeply involved in the Vietnam War. Both the Soviets and the Chinese communists were supporting North Vietnam. You must have been looking for splits there and trying to start something.

BROWN: Yes. Among other things the Soviets and the Chinese communists were each charging the other with selling out North Vietnam. The Soviets were saying: “We're sending goods to North Vietnam. They have to travel on Chinese railroads, but China is holding up these shipments.” The Chinese would say, “That's rubbish. Besides, you're not

sending the right materials. You're only paying lip service to proletarian internationalism," and on and on. This enmity between Soviets and Chinese reached the point, and this was a tell-tale sign, that the Soviets began to make public exposes on Chinese intelligence.

I remember reading an article in "Za Rubizhjon," a weekly Soviet publication. Its name means "Overseas." It was a relatively more sophisticated, journalistic vehicle for Soviet propaganda. This publication carried an expose of the Chinese communist intelligence apparatus in, let us say, Switzerland. I took this article to a colleague and said, "Wow! When they go so far as to start attacking each other's intelligence service, then you know that it is really bad news." Usually, that kind of material is kept...

Q: These countries are still members of the communist community...

BROWN: Service in the Soviet Union was a great experience, professionally. It was tough in many, many ways. However, it armed me for a whole series of upcoming tasks.

Q: What were you getting about the Cultural Revolution in China? You were there at the embassy in Moscow from 1966 to 1968. What information were you getting about Sino-Soviet relations at that time?

BROWN: What we were getting, of course, was what the world press and our own press were saying about this. We got U.S. commentaries on it. As a Sino-Soviet specialist, I was getting material hot off the press in "People's Daily," which was published in Beijing. I received copies of that, under a special subscription, one day after publication in Beijing. So I was not trailing very far behind events. There was remarkable stuff in it.

FBIS [Foreign Broadcast Information Service] was giving us their take as well. I was also reading "Pravda," "Izvestia," and special pieces that the Soviets were putting out on the horrors of the Cultural Revolution. The Soviets pictured the Cultural Revolution as destroying a communist society, as they had known it, and as we all had known it. I was getting an awful lot of information on it.

Of course, I couldn't be in touch with Chinese diplomats in Moscow. However, there were other sources of information as well. I would go past the Chinese embassy occasionally and would learn that there was to be a spontaneous anti-Chinese demonstration in front of the Chinese embassy. Following this advance warning, I would position myself outside the Chinese embassy and, sure enough, loads of trucks would appear on side streets filled with Soviet security police. First would be the plain clothes police, then uniformed police, and then factory workers. These people would be trucked into Moscow and provided with loudspeakers.

I remember one case when these workers were provided with a chainsaw. These workers sawed down the exhibit which the Chinese communists had just set up within the Chinese embassy grounds on the latest successes of the Cultural Revolution. The exhibit had some

anti-Soviet propaganda in it, so the workers in this spontaneous demonstration came with a chain saw and just sawed the whole thing down! I'll never forget what a little old lady did. She was just passing by, but these little old ladies can be fearsome in such circumstances. Never underestimate the power of women, and particularly little, old ladies! I remember an old lady standing next to me and yelling: "Chornaya Neblagodorzhnost" ("Black ingratitude"). In other words, she was indignant that the Soviets had given the Chinese billions of rubles in aid when, after World War II, the Russians were so down and out, and "Look what the Chinese have done to us," and so forth. Feelings like this ran very deep.

Q: What were you getting in terms of what the Cultural Revolution was about, at that particular point?

BROWN: Of course, I was getting information on the Cultural Revolution from American and European sources. I got the Chinese version of what they were saying about themselves. I was getting a deliberately distorted Soviet version of events in China. I was in touch with the Japanese, French, and British Embassies.

Q: At that time the French had just recently opened relations with communist China. Of course, the British had always maintained their embassy in Beijing. The Yugoslavs also had their embassies in both Moscow and Beijing. Sometimes it was a little difficult to understand the reason for the Cultural Revolution. We now understand that it was Mao Tse-tung trying to tear everything down and start all over again.

BROWN: Yes. This reminds me of something else. It was in Moscow that I received a pitch, if you will, a real feeler from a Mongolian. This was interesting, very interesting. He was from "MONSANTE," which was their equivalent of "TASS," the official news agency. I don't recall exactly how it started, but somehow this guy accidentally bumped into me at a reception, or something like that. He said, "Look, I'd like to get together with you. I'd like to have you over to my apartment." His kids were wearing the kind of clothes that my daughters were wearing. You know, high collared boots and mini-mini skirts. [Laughter] They wanted hi-fi and so forth. He said to me quietly: "You know, don't you think that it's time to open up diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Mongolia? After all, look at the crazy things that are happening in China. You know how we feel."

I dutifully reported this conversation. Nothing came of it immediately, but something was to come of it later on. This was a feeler.

Q: I think that when President Kennedy first came into office...

BROWN: As I said before, J. Stapleton Roy and Curt Cameron, both distinguished American diplomats, were given Mongolian language training at the FSI [Foreign Service Institute], or through the FSI, in the United States. However, nothing happened. Now, I'm speaking of 1967 or 1968, I got this feeler from this Mongolian guy a couple of times. It was abundantly clear that this was a directed feeler for U.S. recognition of Mongolia.

However, Washington had other things on its mind at this point. In any case, this stuck with me, and it had a direct relevance later on.

Q: How about Soviet relations with India at this particular time? We'll get to India later on, but...

BROWN: The Indians were warming up in their relationship with the Soviet Union at this time. You have to remember, and we'll talk about this later, India had suffered a horrible, humiliating defeat in the Himalayan War with China of 1962. The war was short and very sharp, and the Indians were thoroughly humiliated up in those high mountain engagements. The Indian Army was not a mountain Army. The units of the PLA [People's Liberation Army] which faced the Indians were a mountain Army.

Secondly, there was continuing tension between India and Pakistan. Pakistan was increasingly linked with China.

Thirdly, Mme. Indira Gandhi had come to the fore as Prime Minister. I think that she was a graduate of the London School of Economics [LSE]. Whatever else you want to call it, it tended to be a Fabian Socialist type of institution. Mme. Gandhi had a soft spot, to put it mildly, for the Soviet Union. This was infuriating to President Lyndon Johnson. On the one hand she was taking hundreds of millions of U.S. dollars in U.S. aid. At the same time she was transiting Moscow and making increasingly critical statements about U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, and what she called colonialism, and so forth. She made these statements at a podium in Moscow, obviously aimed at us. The Johnson administration was understandably furious with Mme. Gandhi. This was another thing that made New Delhi sort of spicy as a place to serve.

Q: By the way, the French, had rather recently arrived on the China scene. I think that this was in the period of the mid-1960s. Did the French seem to be getting anything out of their contacts with China?

BROWN: A little bit, but remember that, like all Western Embassies, they were terribly restricted. Their embassy had been opened fairly recently. They really didn't pick up much from the Chinese. I can't remember specific details, but the French were appalled, as all of us were, at what was going on in China, in human terms. Yet France was conscious, like all of our NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] partners, of the enormous Soviet threat and the fact that there was some utility in having a relationship with the People's Republic of China.

Q: By the way, speaking of the Soviet threat, when did you leave Moscow in 1968?

BROWN: I think that I left Moscow in the spring or early summer of 1968.

Q: Was Czechoslovakia playing any role by the time you left Moscow?

BROWN: That raises a fascinating question. The Prague Spring was in full spate as I was getting ready to leave Moscow. It was a remarkable thing, locally, to see the reactions among Czech diplomats.

My wife and I had an argument at the time. She said, "The Soviets are going to invade Czechoslovakia." I said, "Now, Helen, you have to realize that there are enormous stakes here." The Soviets had just celebrated the 50th anniversary of the communist revolution, and there was a great spell of brotherhood, and so forth. Obviously, the Soviets were very unhappy about what was going on in Czechoslovakia and how it could impact elsewhere in Eastern Europe, including Poland and elsewhere. I said to my wife: "Granted all of that, but I can't imagine that the Soviets would invade Czechoslovakia at this time." She said, "Well, you may be the expert, but I'm telling you that the Soviets are going to invade Czechoslovakia!"

I remember one foggy night in Moscow, coming home after midnight after a very late social function. Suddenly there appeared, overtaking my car, a very strange, military vehicle. It was one of these large armored cars. It was not a tank track vehicle. It had a great, white stripe painted down the back. It appeared and then it was quickly gone. I said to myself: "I just wonder whether there is some sort of maneuver going on that might have some relevance to Eastern Europe." Naturally, I reported this incident to our Defense Attache. They grilled me and so forth, but I told the Defense Attache that I did not think that the Soviets were going to invade Czechoslovakia.

Well, we arrived in India. I held the Sino-Soviet position in the Political Section. I replaced both Roger Kirk and Lindsey Grant. Those two jobs were combined into one. The Political Section was very interesting. One of the things that Ambassador Bowles had done, contrary to standard, Foreign Service practice, was that he had re-jiggered the Political and Economic Sections, so that they were to be Political/Economic External and Political/Economic Internal. So I was to cover Economic External Affairs, as well as Political External Affairs. I was unprepared for this.

Tony Quainton was already assigned to the Political Section. His job covered India-Pakistan-Nepal-Afghanistan matters. That neck of the woods. Tony invited me to dinner with the Czech Charge d'Affaires at Tony's home. This Czech diplomat was interesting. He was older than we were and was a product of the old school in the Czech Diplomatic Service. Now, the "Prague Spring" had developed to the point where things were getting pretty exciting. I said to this Czech diplomat: "Well, how do you feel about this situation, with the Soviet Union and so forth?" He said, "You have to realize that, notwithstanding the difficulties, it was the Soviets who liberated us from the Germans," which is not exactly true. There were American liberators in Prague as well.

Q: General Patton and the Third U.S. Army.

BROWN: The Czech diplomat continued: "They liberated us and they gave us fraternal assistance and so forth. We must remember this at all times." Within a few days

thereafter, the news came that the Soviets had invaded Czechoslovakia. I rushed down to the Indian Foreign Ministry, where the Czech diplomat, with whom I had spoken, was leaving, with tears in his eyes. He was getting the news as to what the Soviets had done and were doing. It was a rather dramatic experience.

At about that time I was also notified that, in addition to my regular duties and as a result of a Reduction in Force [RIF], the job of the long-time Refugee Officer, Bob Paige, or a name something like that, was being abolished. Bob had been an AID [Agency for International Development] officer specializing in refugee affairs in New Delhi for five or six years. I was to take on this function, in addition to my other duties, since I was the Asian specialist in the Political Section.

I was told that this additional function would take up 1/10 of 1 percent of my time. It turned to be much more than that. It was fascinating. Among other things I went along with Bob on his farewell call on the Dalai Lama. I introduced myself and my wife at a lovely meeting up at Daram Sallah with His Holiness, the Dalai Lama. He radiated a spirituality which a hardened, Political Officer like me found was really something to run into.

Of course, the Dalai Lama was all eyes and ears about the situation in Czechoslovakia, what had happened, and so forth. He wanted to know what I could tell him. He was a magnificent figure. I found that the whole job of dealing with the refugees, which theoretically was not to have been a political position, was most rewarding in many respects.

Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands had gone to call on Dean Rusk, the Secretary of State, and asked for support in a multinational effort to clean up the refugee situation involving Tibetans. We put up a couple of million dollars in matching funds as part of a 12-nation consortium, or something like that. But we were the biggest donors. As a result, Swiss agronomists were hired to teach the Tibetan refugees in their totally new environment in different places around India. They were taught how to farm and how to use tractors. (End of tape)

Q: You were saying that you were going out with these Swiss contractors...

BROWN: The Swiss contractors were engaged in Tibetan Resettlement Rehabilitation. This was not supposed to be a job in the Political Section. I was not supposed to be doing political reporting while I was doing this job. Rather, I was supposed to see how these Tibetan refugees were making out, how the program was being administered, how our money was being spent, and so forth. It was a great eye opener, in so many ways, on the plight of these more than 100,000 Tibetan refugees, who were scattered from the foothills of the Himalaya Mountains, all the way down to hot, interior India.

My Ambassador was Chester Bowles. My work was fascinating. One aspect of my work involved Chinese communist affairs. That was my main job. Here I met a professional

China watcher at the Indian Foreign Ministry, who had been trained academically in the United States. He deemed it in his interest, as I deemed it in ours, to have regular, scheduled meetings, handling controlled reporting materials which we had been authorized to share. We would meet weekly and would take turns in raising subject matters. I would say, for example, "You lead. What's been happening in Beijing. What is your view of it?" Reports on these meetings were very much valued back in Washington.

The other, major subject matter I handled involved Soviet affairs. Here I ran up against a very taciturn figure in the Indian Foreign Ministry, who was not about to give me anything I asked about, unless he had to do so. What was developing, secretly or not so secretly, was the burgeoning of Indian-Soviet relations. In what we might call sensitive traffic, after a while one began to read references to "the document." Eventually, this was to come out in 1970 or 1971 as what amounted to the Indian-Soviet military pact by another name.

The Soviets were pouring aid into India, under a false barter-exchange arrangement. Soviet tanks and aircraft were coming into India in large numbers. Soviet aid was propping up India's state steel and other state companies. The Soviets were expanding their presence in India. We were pouring in hundreds of millions of dollars in aid. A lot of it was in the form of Indian rupees which had been generated in past aid transactions. The rupees were down in the vaults of the American embassy in New Delhi. However, this was real aid. We had a very large aid program. We had a very significant USIS presence, with branches around the country. This was all big stuff, and Ambassador Chester Bowles was a very important American diplomat and a very unusual one.

The difficulty was that Washington was increasingly furious with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, and understandably so. Ambassador Bowles was in the position of saying to Washington: "Yes, but." He would say that, if only things were handled in the right way, maybe we could get over the next hill or mountain range. He felt that there were solid, national interests at stake. We should "bear with the problems," "keep our hand in," and so forth. Of course, the more he reported and wrote, the more his views were discounted in Washington. He was conscious or semi-conscious of that, but he then tried to overcome it with more rhetoric. It didn't work.

Q: This was also true of Ambassador J. Kenneth Galbraith. We had some very prestigious Ambassadors in New Delhi, but they were seen by many people in the Foreign Service who didn't serve in India as becoming captives of India's very attractive Prime Minister.

BROWN: Now, Ambassador Bowles had recently infuriated the Indians with the Svetlana Stalin case, which happened just before I arrived in India. I had been in Moscow and I have described the very restrictive circumstances under which I worked. I first heard of the Svetlana Stalin case at a lecture in a hall in Moscow, where the Soviet public could meet the press. This happened once every month, or something like that. You had to pay a small fee to get in. I would attend and watch the questions being passed down to the

podium, where they were stacked on a table. There were three speakers to answer them. I saw this great mound of paper building up. That is where I first heard of the Svetlana Stalin case. The appointed Soviet speaker said, "Oh, yes, in this week's news, Svetlana is reported to be in Italy" or something like that. Someone in the audience couldn't restrain himself, because he shouted out from the second balcony: "Why?" That's how we got the first Soviet acknowledgment of this matter.

As you know, one day she walked into the American embassy in New Delhi, and a Marine Guard received her. The next thing we knew was that Ambassador Bowles shot off a cable to Washington, the thrust of which was: "I can get her out of India. Unless I hear to the contrary, I'll get her out of India on the next plane, accompanied by an embassy officer." Washington apparently didn't answer Bowles' cable in time or there was no answer at all, perhaps due to typical, bureaucratic paralysis. So, out Svetlana flew, accompanied by an American embassy officer. She first landed in Italy, then Switzerland, and then appeared in the headlines.

So Ambassador Bowles had that problem, but he was a man of great prestige who loved India. It was his second Ambassadorial assignment there. Many years before he had been in India during the heyday of U.S.-Indian friendship. However, U.S.-Indian relations were going sour, and in the middle of all of this came the Presidential elections of 1968, when Richard Nixon became President of the United States. So Chester Bowles, as a Democratic, political appointee, packed up and left India.

The next Ambassador was former Senator Ken Keating, a Republican from upstate New York. He arrived in New Delhi, already in his early 70s, I think. The difference between the two Ambassadors was like day and night. Ambassador Keating didn't know anything about India, although he had enough sense as a politician to know that he didn't know anything about running an embassy. Therefore, he relied on his DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission]. Dick Viets came out of the Political Section and became his staff aide. Ambassador Keating had a burning desire to visit as many states in India as possible. He liked to give speeches. Len Lefkow, of USIS [United States Information Service], was his speechwriter. Between Viets and Lefkow they kept Ambassador Keating very happy and busy, flying around India and delivering speeches. They had the Air Attache aircraft flying up to the various Indian states, and occasionally I would go along.

I'll never forget one occasion when we were down in Bhopal [State of Madhya Pradesh], which is the site where Buddha was born, according to tradition, and the sacred tree was located. Since Ambassador Keating was a vain man, he arranged for Lefkow, his speechwriter, to type his speech in super large script. The speech was placed on the podium, and Ambassador Keating could read it without glasses, the letters were so big. Keating was an expert in handling this kind of thing. He was an old pro. At a certain point he would say, "As Abe Lincoln said," and he would pull his glasses out of his pocket, put them on, and go through the motions of reading a small quote, when, in fact, the whole speech was all typed out for him.

I'll never forget the introduction which Ambassador Keating was given that evening by the local Governor, Mayor, or whoever it was. He said, "Ladies and Gentlemen: we are so fortunate this evening in having as our guest speaker a great lawyer, a great, American lawyer. I would say, in world terms, a world class lawyer." However, his pronunciation was such that to an American ear is sounded like "liar." [Laughter]

Q: I'd just like to get one thing clear. You were in the embassy in New Delhi from 1968 until when?

BROWN: From 1968 to 1970. At this time, let's review what was happening. President Nixon had written an article in the quarterly publication, "Foreign Affairs." For someone like myself, who was reading the tea leaves at the time, this was a very important article. It contained a clear hint of a possible breakthrough in U.S.-China relations. Nixon had in his pocket, as it were, President Ceausescu of Romania, an enemy of the Soviet Union and fairly well disposed to the Chinese communists, in terms of the tactics of the time. Nixon probably had very little use for Ceausescu otherwise, but anything that played all right was acceptable.

We had a burgeoning war in Vietnam. Our casualties were getting dramatically higher, and the anti-war movement was growing in the United States. We could observe a growing Indian-Soviet relationship which was really getting close now. It was increasingly clear that this relationship was gaining momentum. Tension between India and Pakistan was rising. The Indians had an embassy in China, but the Sino-Indian relationship was also becoming more tense. The Chinese and the Indians had an outstanding border controversy, featuring conflicting claims to territory along the frontier. A few, short years before, in fact six years previously, there had been a Sino-Indian War [1962]. The Indians had rearmed with our help and had deployed armies up in the Himalayas. This was all serious stuff.

As I said, I found myself in a fascinating position. Here we had been stonewalled, politely stonewalled, but nonetheless stonewalled by the Soviet desk of the Indian Foreign Ministry and welcomed by the Chinese desk. We were getting good information. I was reporting on Tibetan refugee affairs, which brought me to strange places in India, including Buddhist areas. Ambassador Keating dearly loved to travel. One of the key places that he wanted to visit was the forbidden Shangri-la of Bhutan.

"Tiki" Kaul, an experienced, high level Indian diplomat and former Ambassador to the Soviet Union, was, by now, the Foreign Secretary [most senior civil servant] in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. India had a Foreign Minister, who was pro-Soviet. I don't recall his name. Tiki was referred to by the British Ambassador to Moscow at the time as "that snake in the grass." [Laughter] I'll never forget that Tiki Kaul invited Ambassador Keating to call at the Foreign Ministry, and I went along as note-taker. Tiki was gracious and well-spoken. He said to Ambassador Keating: "I understand that you're getting around the country and are getting to see places." Ambassador Keating said, "Oh, yes, it's wonderful to see your country," and so forth. Tiki said, "I have something that you

possibly might be interested in. How would you like to go to Bhutan?" Nominally Bhutan was an independent country, but you couldn't get there except with the help of the Indians. They kept an iron grip on travel to that restricted area.

Ambassador Keating's face lighted up. He was just delighted at this prospect. Tiki said, "It's difficult to get you in, but we could provide you with a helicopter. If the weather's all right..." By this time Ambassador Keating was on Cloud Nine. The hook came later in the conversation. Tiki said, "You know, you have an awful lot of USIS branches around India. They're nice people. However, we've been thinking that the Soviets are fairly restricted, as things stand now. You'll probably be seeing more Soviet information offices in the future." In other words, he was saying: "Grin and bear it. The Soviets want to expand, and we're going to let them expand." That was the real purpose of the invitation to Ambassador Keating to call on Tiki Kaul.

Off I went with Ambassador Keating and Len Lefkow in an Indian helicopter to Bhutan. This was later on in my tour in India, after I'd been there for a while. By this time APOLLO IX had landed on the Moon. So we carried with us a speck of Moon dust, a fragment of the surface of the Moon. Having learned some Himalayan ways myself, I drilled Ambassador Keating on how to greet the King of Bhutan. I was first coached by the Chief of Protocol of Bhutan on what to do. Then I got a white, silk scarf and took Ambassador Keating into a side room to practice handling it. Remember, Keating was a man in his 70s. He was expected to toss this scarf and spread it with his hands. He was having difficulty doing this. So I said to Ambassador Keating: "Imagine that it's opening day at Yankee Stadium and you're tossing out the first baseball. Toss the scarf like this and spread it," which he finally did.

On the side we got an earful, from the Bhutanese, about Indian imperialism, colonialism, and domination. The Bhutanese were the recipients of Indian money, defense assistance, and so on, but the Indians kept them under very tight control. The younger, nationalistic Bhutanese resented the way they were treated.

The King and Queen of Bhutan were estranged. They had separate palaces and we stayed at the Queen's palace I remember that there was a beautiful, full moon that night. We had the film of the APOLLO moon landing with us, which we projected for a group of Bhutanese monks, using a projector owned by a Japanese agronomist. The monks would look at the film and then at the full, bright moon. They had trouble believing that astronauts had landed on the moon. It was truly a magic setting for the projection of the film.

We then flew from Bhutan to Sikkim [another kingdom North of India]. We were wined and dined by the ruler of Sikkim, Palden Thondup Namgyal and his American wife, Hope Cooke, a graduate of Sarah Lawrence College.

I soon realized that we were in a setup to some extent. She had arranged a program, which they reviewed for us in a cursory manner. Ambassador Keating was nodding

politely. However, I was uneasy to learn that there was to be a side meeting to meet Sikkim civil servants, at the Palace but without the royal presence. I knew, from what I had read, that there was a certain amount of anti-Indian agitation in Sikkim. I was very concerned about this, but the program had been laid on, and we had to go through with it.

From the palace we went to a function hosted by the Indian High Commissioner. I went straight to him and said, "Something bad has happened, and I want you to know about it." I knew that he was aware of it. I said, "We here to make courtesy calls. We don't wish to become involved in domestic politics. The American Ambassador has no knowledge of local politics, and we don't want to become involved in it." The Indian High Commissioner said, "Thank you very much. I'm aware of what you're talking about. You have to realize, Mr. Brown, and please tell your Government, that a half hour's flight away, as the crow flies, are 50,000, heavily armed, Chinese troops. This is strategic territory for us, and that's why we are here. We suffered what we did in 1962, and we're not about to let that happen again. If His Majesty (as he sarcastically called the King) wants to have democracy (which the ruler had said that he wanted) he can have one man, one vote." From this I inferred that the High Commissioner was hinting that India could easily put enough Hindus in Sikkim to throw out the ruler in an election.

That night there was a celebration. His Majesty got drunk and made some inappropriate remarks. In her own way Queen Hope Cooke was always sarcastically knifing the Indians in our presence. These remarks were duly related to the Indians. So, some years later [1975], I was not surprised but I was saddened to hear that both the King and Queen were tossed out of Sikkim and Sikkim was annexed by India.

Those trips gave me the visual, hands on feel for what China looked like, from an Indian strategic point of view. The Indians considered this a very serious matter. That was part of the explanation for the kind of relatively open exchanges on China I had with the Indians.

In this regard, by 1969 or 1970 Paul Kreisberg, the outgoing Director of Asian Communist Affairs in the Department, which is a different name for the non-Taiwan China desk in the Bureau of East Asian Affairs, came to see me in the course of travel elsewhere. In a very secretive manner he called me aside and said, "Bill, the Warsaw Talks between ourselves and the Chinese have reached a stage where, I believe, a breakthrough can take place if American leadership is strong enough and courageous enough. We're going to bring you back to the Department to be Deputy Director of that office. So bear that in mind."

Meanwhile, all kinds of things were happening in India. For instance, through another channel I heard that the Dalai Lama wanted to make a visit to the United States. I said to those who told me this: "I don't think that this is going to work out." They said, "What do you mean? We have a very special relationship with the Tibetans," which they did. I said, "Well, I don't know about that. I haven't been involved in political relationships with the Dalai Lama, if you will. I have been in contact with him on refugee rehabilitation matters.

I can tell you that I don't think that Washington is going to be in the mood to receive him in the United States.” However, I dutifully cabled back to the Department of State that the Dalai Lama was interested in visiting the U.S. Shortly before I left India, I received an instruction saying that I should go to the Dalai Lama's brother, who was then up in Darjeeling, India, and tell him that it would not be opportune at this time for the Dalai Lama to come to the U.S. The brother was the eminence grise of the Tibetan cabinet.

So I flew from New Delhi to Calcutta and took the train up to Darjeeling. I was given a sumptuous feast by the Dalai Lama's brother and then, as diplomatically as I could, had to break the news that now was not the time for such a visit. The brother took it with a wooden face, as he was my host. He said that he understood. I got on the train and came back down to Calcutta. I felt very sad because I had great affection for the Dalai Lama. However, I sensed that something was afoot in U.S.-PRC relations. And it was.

Q: Would you explain for the historian why, from the Washington point of view, this proposed visit by the Dalai Lama to the United States was not considered opportune?

BROWN: The Dalai Lama was and is the spiritual leader of the Tibetan people. He fled from Tibet to India in 1959 and has lived in exile since then. U.S. support for the Dalai Lama and his movement was one of the many bones of contention between ourselves and Beijing. For its part Beijing had crushed the efforts by the Tibetan people to achieve independence or resist Chinese domination. The Chinese communists brutally overwhelmed the country, had the territory firmly in hand, and were going through the process of destroying Buddhist monasteries, subjecting the Tibetan people to Chinese rule, and stationing Chinese cadres in the country. Now, on top of it all, in the mid-late nineteen-sixties they applied the Cultural Revolution to Tibet, so that the destructive and vindictive aspect of the Cultural Revolution was in full force there.

However, much as I sympathized with the Dalai Lama and Tibetans more generally, I felt that Washington would not be in a mood to receive him in the United States at that time. And Washington wasn't in the mood to receive him because President Nixon and Henry Kissinger were looking for a breakthrough in U.S.-PRC relations [Addendum: For a perspective of U.S. covert operations - some of which involved cooperation with Chiang Ching-kuo's security apparatus on Taiwan - to assist Tibetan resistance to the Chinese Communist takeover of Tibet, see Jay Taylor, The Generalissimo's Son, Harvard University Press, 2000. See also Thomas Laird, Into Tibet: the CIA's First Atomic Spy and His Secret Expedition to Lhasa, Grove Press 2002 which is about Douglas S. Mackeiran, who had been stationed under cover as a Vice Consul in Urumchi, Xinjiang, aided a Kazak rebellion against the invading People's Liberation Army, escaped to Tibet and was mistakenly killed by Tibetan border guards in 1950 while attempting to cross into India. In this latter connection, while in New Delhi I was contacted by a Kazak who described himself as the “Dalai Khan,” leader of some 600 Kazaks who had fled to India in 1950 and a colleague of Mackeiran. I helped arrange the transfer of these Kazaks for resettlement in Turkey.]

I sensed an ongoing tension between India and Pakistan. I am no expert on Pakistan but I sensed that another Indo-Pakistani War would come. The situation between the two countries was getting that tense.

While I was in India, some other things happened. We developed a very close friendship with the Polish Ambassador to India, Romuald Spakowski, whose son was in the graduating class at the American International School in New Delhi. As fate would have it, the young man fell in love with our eldest daughter. She didn't really reciprocate this feeling. She was willing to be good friends, but no more. The young man, who was called "Kay," committed suicide just before we left India. Literally, a day or two before our departure from India we went over to his parents' home, and there was Kay's dead body resting on a block of ice. His parents were almost beside themselves. We had to bid them farewell. It was one of the most emotional, traumatic occasions in my diplomatic career. Kay's father was a professional diplomat who had been Polish Ambassador to the United States. He was a member of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party.

The Ambassador's son hated the Gomulka regime. He was now 21 and was of an age to be drafted into the Polish Army. He didn't want to go back to Poland and was doing increasingly strange things, to the point that his parents had us over to dinner "en famille" because Kay was beginning to dispose of his personal possessions. He was beginning to express himself in strange ways. This was disturbing, but it didn't occur to us that he was about to commit suicide. However, Kay's death happened shortly thereafter.

So, on a personal basis, we left India very, very distraught. Ambassador Spasowski was later assigned Ambassador to the United States for a second time. He defected in Washington in 1981, saying, in effect: "Let Poland be Poland." [See Romuald Spasowski, The Liberation of One, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986]

All in all, it was a very exciting tour in India. I got to see parts of India, thanks to the Tibetan refugee job, and travels by Ambassador Keating, which no American diplomat ever saw. Although I had a specialty area, that is, Sino-Soviet affairs, I had a much broader education in so many ways.

Q: I have a couple of questions. From what you said, I gather that Ambassador Kenneth Keating, in a way, was all right. Here was an Ambassador who really wasn't involved in political affairs. Your job was to keep him happy. He wanted to travel. So it was almost as if he was out in his own playground or something like that.

BROWN: Not really...

Q: I've used the wrong term. The point is that he really wasn't very much engaged in India.

BROWN: If Ambassador Keating were here, he would say that he visited so many of the Indian states and so many Governors, he gave so many speeches, and he got around a lot.

He would say that he went to see Madame Gandhi when the occasion arose, and so forth. However, the fact of it was that we had a big, well-functioning embassy. He was an older man. He was to go on to Israel as Ambassador, after he had completed his tour as Ambassador to India. I think that he was wise enough to realize: "My goodness, I have this finely honed staff here in the embassy in New Delhi. They know India and will do the right thing by me and will 'program me' in the right way. So why not?"

Q: I wonder if you could do a little comparison here. You went from a highly professional embassy in Moscow, which has always been considered a place, even before World War II, for real professionals. Did you find the situation comparable in any way in India? India is a big power. There are Americans who feel strongly about India, and yet, much to India's dismay, Indian relations with the United States have remained on the back burner. What about the staff of the embassy in New Delhi and how they handled things?

BROWN: The staff of the embassy in New Delhi was top level at the State Department professional level and at the AID [Agency for International Development] level. We had top notch people there. It was a very large Mission. AID had a budget worth hundreds of millions of dollars. It had a very large staff, branches, and so forth. USIS [United States Information Service] had a large operation. Ambassador Bowles had his own newspaper, a bi-weekly or monthly. It was incredible. This publication had a readership estimated at over 500,000. We could take on the Soviet Union in the Ambassador's corner or column.

Ambassador Bowles was a political appointee, riding a great wave of his past accomplishments, including friendship with India. India was a democracy. India's leadership at the time was increasingly characterized by having a chip on its shoulder, in terms of the United States. In a sense, this was understandable in the sense that Indians both took and resented our aid. However, India had a free press, to which we had access. We traveled the length and breadth of the land and invested a lot of money in India. We had specialists there, including a Science Attache who was busily engaged with the Indians on scientific business. In that connection, I began to feel a bit disturbed when I saw that we were cooperating, in fact, with the Indians on a small weather satellite missile program. Pretty soon the Indians were asking for access to the Lincoln Laboratory and its missile gyroscope facility in Massachusetts.

We were also a bit concerned about the workings of our nuclear agreement with the Indians for peaceful uses of atomic energy. The Indians had a CANDU nuclear reactor, a Canadian reactor. There were increasingly troublesome signs that spot inspections were not doing so well. Somehow, it seemed that our inspectors did not quite get there in time to carry on truly spot inspections and were made to feel not very welcome. They were asked if they could postpone their inspections for a couple of days, and there was that secret aspect of the Indians' nuclear and missile work in connection with weather satellites and related missiles. This attitude was disturbing. However, the momentum of such cooperation continued. So it was a mix of attitudes.

We had a Consulate General in Calcutta which was dealing with a popularly elected,

communist-controlled state government, which promptly named the street in which our Consulate General was located, "Ho Chi Minh Street." We had a flourishing Consulate General in Bombay. We ran into the phenomenon to which you alluded. Some people who visited India came away with less than favorable impressions, shall we say.

I was to run into that attitude when I returned to the U.S. and called on the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Winthrop Brown. In the past he had been DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] in New Delhi. When I mentioned India, he launched on to a very negative monolog.

Q: Well, despite the fact that India is a democracy and all that, I think that Dennis Kux wrote a book called, "The Strange Democracy." Some people fell in love with India, but I would say that there was not much warmth in the attitudes of other Americans toward India, back in Washington.

BROWN: As you said, some Americans fell in love with India. This was during the Vietnam War and the period of the flower children. Some of the graduates of the American School in India went into their experimental stages, and so forth. There were Americans who were living in "Ashrams" [student dormitories], dressing like Indians, and seeking the guidance of Indian gurus. India was often described as the world's largest, parliamentary democracy.

The fact was, and is, that India had a sense of its manifest destiny. Indians felt frustrated. They felt that they were THE power in the area and that they ought to be respected and dominant and treated as such. Instead, we were balancing an India-Pakistan relationship. We were selling arms to Pakistan. Later on, there was the feeling in the U.S. that Pakistan was accommodating us, first in SEATO [Southeast Asian Treaty Organization], and later in the breakthrough to communist China. You may remember that it was from Pakistan that Dr. Henry Kissinger flew into China, using a Pakistani aircraft. The Pakistanis helped in all of this. During the Indo-Pakistani War in the fall of 1971 we saw Madame Indira Gandhi fabricate the further dismemberment of Pakistan. This very significantly contributed to the breaking away of the Eastern portion of Pakistan, which became Bangladesh.

Q: What impression did you get from the people who were dealing with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi at this time?

BROWN: The American Government was very upset with her.

Q: Both President Nixon and President Johnson before him.

BROWN: They were very upset with her, but she was upset with us. I'll give you an example. President Nixon had come to India in the summer of 1969 and then went on to Romania. It was his first, worldwide trip as a president. I know that he visited Southeast Asia and India. I've forgotten whether he went on to Pakistan but I think that his next stop

was Romania. Not too long thereafter, during the autumn of 1969, we had the trip by the APOLLO Astronauts to India. They visited Bombay.

By now I had been the Motorcade Officer for the President Nixon visit, and I was to be Control Officer for the visit of the APOLLO Astronauts. I went to the Indian Foreign Ministry to notify them that a major visit was coming up. We would bring the Astronauts to India to visit Bombay. We found that Indian noses were out of joint. They asked why the Astronauts weren't visiting New Delhi and why hadn't the Indians been consulted on this. New Delhi was the capital of India. How about the Astronauts coming to New Delhi? I had to shift around and say that Bombay had been selected. I got an earful. In fact, Mrs. Gandhi's nose was out of joint. She objected to the way this visit came across. We told her government that there was going to be a visit by the Astronauts, and this is the city that they are going to come to.

I had quite a time dealing with these objections. As an embassy staff officer, I had to work my Ambassador into the program. I went down to Bombay and called on the authorities there, having first called on the Chief of Protocol, who was a very supercilious, senior Brahmin [high caste] diplomat, an ex-Ambassador. In Bombay I also called on the Police Commissioner, who promptly informed me that he was well aware of the details of President Nixon's visit to New Delhi, but this was Bombay, and the visit of the Astronauts was not going to be handled in the way the Presidential visit had been handled. He said that he, the Police Commissioner, would be in control. We were most welcome, but the communications arrangements would be under his control. He would also control the motorcade and the whole thing. I had to inform him, as diplomatically as I could, that we were looking into all of this, but there was an American capsule around the astronauts including our own communications and our own security. I said that in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, even as we spoke, enthusiastic crowds were breaking the lines. Enthusiastic crowds had broken the lines in Kinshasa, [Zaire, at the time; now Congo]. We had real, security concerns.

Twirling his British-type moustache, he lectured me. He said, "I've handled the Pope and other dignitaries here. I have over 10,000 Police officers, and this will be done my way." I said, "Thank you very much, but it will also be done THIS way." The negotiations on arrangements went right down to the wire.

We have a very peculiar, American style. Later, as an American ambassador I was to get an earful on how high-level visits are handled. The trip to India by the Astronauts turned out to be a fabulous visit in terms of crowd turn-out. There were half a million people on the great public park in Bombay and the streets and sidewalks along the astronauts' routes were jammed. However, I went right down to the wire on program details.

Half an hour before the Astronauts landed, the Indian Chief of Protocol informed me that it would be inappropriate for the American Ambassador to speak, as he was scheduled to do, in introducing the Astronauts at this great gathering. I said, "Look, he's the American Ambassador. It's only proper that he introduce" the astronauts. The Chief of Protocol

said, "It's all a political show. You set this visit for Bombay, where Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's political opposition is located. This is a political, trumped-up show." I said, "Sir, if that's the case, I'll use my short wave radio and call off the whole visit. We are not involving ourselves in any political show whatsoever. If you consider this a political show, I'll scrap this visit right now, and the Astronauts can fly to Dacca," which was then in East Pakistan.

He said, "No, no." I said, "I want to get it very straight from you, sir. This is not being handled as a 'political show' visit." He said, "That's right." I said, "Therefore, the American Ambassador can introduce the Astronauts," and that's the way it worked out. But we got into real hardball with the Indians in this respect.

I learned from both visits by President Nixon and by the Astronauts of the special atmosphere that pervades, when you get a really high level visit. I'll never forget how we learned of the Nixon visit. The then Charge d'Affaires (Ambassador Keating either hadn't arrived in India or was out of town.) called a whole bunch of us into a room. He said, "I want to introduce Mr. Ron Walker from the White House staff. We're going to have a visit by President Nixon. This matter is still SECRET right now, but Ron Walker is the advance man. Walker, in his southern accent, said, "You all have been chosen to work on the preparations. I don't care about your rank or anything else. You're considered the best in this embassy. You're going to be my team. Our mission, ladies and gentlemen, is quite simple. We're going to turn this town on for Richard Nixon, the President of the United States." And that's how it went.

That was the occasion for my second meeting with Henry Kissinger [at the time, President Nixon's National Security Adviser] at the airport. The temperature was 110 or 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Some of my officers were fainting from heat exhaustion. I sprinted across the field and called out: "Dr. Kissinger! Do you remember that I handled you in Moscow? Here, sir, is your limo. Please get in." He said, "Yes. Maybe the next time it will be a visit to the Antarctic."

I watched how that visit was handled from the inside. It was a model for a Presidential or other high level visit. It was awesome to behold. A key player from the Embassy was Herb Hagerty.

Q: From your recollections and those of your colleagues, what was the chemistry between President Nixon and Prime Minister Gandhi?

BROWN: It was cool. Nobody ever made a state visit to New Delhi in July. It just wasn't done. The temperature is scorching. Everybody goes to the mountains. However, India was on President Nixon's route, and the Indians went through the motions of civility. Madame Gandhi was civil. I doubt whether they conducted any serious business. The Indians were pretty sharp. They saw this visit for what it was. It was a stop en route elsewhere.

Q: What was the real concern about the Indian-Soviet alliance that was developing? Did we see it as likely to go anywhere in particular?

BROWN: We saw it as against our interests. Of course, India was a significant, regional power, appearing to line up with the hated, Soviet empire. There was the question of the Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean. Were we going to have access visits to Indian ports by U.S. Navy ships, as opposed to visits by Soviet Navy ships? Would the Indian Ocean become what the Indians wanted, an Indian lake? Or perhaps an Indo-Soviet lake? There was the question of the status of Diego Garcia, a British base established especially for the convenience of U.S. Navy visits to the Indian Ocean (later, a staging bases for B-52 missions against Iraq). We were concerned that one result of this possible, Indian-Soviet alliance might be the dismemberment of Pakistan. That would not necessarily be in our interest. We were concerned about the impact of an Indian-Soviet alliance might have on the Non-Aligned Movement, of which India was still one of the three co-founders. You may recall, the Non-Aligned Movement was established by India, Yugoslavia, and Indonesia. A further slide of the Non-Aligned Movement toward the Soviets would be deleterious to our interests.

We were very unhappy about the trend of events. Remember that we considered India quite a prize.

Q: Well, India was and is the largest democracy in the world.

BROWN: Yes, and India had a potential impact on its smaller, weaker neighbors. Quite clearly, India had larger ambitions in the area of the sub-continent and the Indian Ocean. India had a significant military establishment, which one could not dismiss. It was weak in many ways but strong in others.

In the emerging scenario, which I sensed was coming, that is, a breakthrough in U.S.-China relations, where would India fit in such a situation? First of all, what would be the result of a war between India and Pakistan? Secondly, if Pakistan were defeated, and China were to go to war with India, where would that put the U.S.? Thirdly, where would all of this fit within the big game, the Sino-Soviet-U.S. triangle? Where would India fit in such a case? So this was an area of considerable concern.

Q: What were you getting from your Indian colleagues about events in China at this time?

BROWN: I was getting a professional assessment of the situation there, and the Indians were open to questions. In other words, if we had a question, we could pose it to them, and they would do their best to answer it. Like everybody else, they were terribly restricted in their embassy in Beijing. (Remember, at this time we had no mission in Beijing.) However, they were considering, as we were, what the effect of the Cultural Revolution would be. What power cliques were emerging in the Cultural Revolution? Where was the Cultural Revolution taking China? What did this mean in terms of

Chinese military strength?

Here, now, we were getting into a sensitive area. Sensitive for both sides. What would the Cultural Revolution mean in the Sino-Soviet context? One had to be very careful there, because we knew that our Indian contacts were professional analysts and that their colleagues were very interested in developing, at the request of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, deeper relations, including military relations, between India and the Soviet Union. And this would be done, at our expense.

Q: Were we at all considering the idea at this time that maybe China was interested in normalizing relations with the United States? This might happen, and what would be the effect on India? Or was this pretty far-fetched?

BROWN: When the new, Nixon administration entered office, and even during the dying days of the previous, Johnson administration, there were these periodic meetings called the Warsaw Talks between the U.S. and China. As Paul Kreisberg confided to me in great secrecy at the time, the Chinese communist representatives at those talks were beginning to use language for the professional readers of Chinese tea leaves which gave people like Kreisberg a sense that an evolution of U.S.-China relations was a possibility.

Whether the State Department, at a higher level, fully understood this was something else again. Maybe in the next session we'll consider that. I doubt that William Rogers, the new Secretary of State, had any feel for this or any inkling of this. Even at the level of Marshall Green, the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs, and his principal advisers, as well as others in between, such as the Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs and so forth, this remains to be examined. However, in the view of Paul Kreisberg, the Director of an office in the Bureau of East Asian Affairs, or Don Anderson, an officer like myself who had been China-trained and Chinese language-trained, the material for progress in U.S.-Chinese relations was there. By now Don Anderson had reached the level of an interpreter at the Warsaw Talks. Don replaced me as the Sino-Soviet specialist in New Delhi. Kreisberg, Anderson, and I felt that this material ought to be examined.

At the time I left the embassy in New Delhi, the Third Indo-Pakistani War had not yet taken place. However, a renewal of hostilities was looming, and we were thinking about it. As soon as I got back to Washington, I was among those who argued that we had to think, in very real terms, about what would happen if another Indo-Pakistani War broke out? The professional estimate was that India would defeat Pakistan, as it had before, by virtue of India's military might and the strange configuration of Pakistan between East and West Pakistan, with India in between the two sections. So we thought that the Indians would defeat the Pakistanis. The question then was: would the Chinese communists join in the fight to save the Pakistanis? If they did, would this precipitate an armed confrontation between India and China? If so, where did the U.S. stand?

Remember, that in the 1962 Indo-Pakistani War, J. Kenneth Galbraith was then U.S.

Ambassador to India. The U.S. rushed to India's aid.

Q: Oh, yes.

BROWN: We armed the newly-formed Indian divisions up in the Himalayan Mountains. Commitments were made by the U.S., and so forth.

Q: We moved a lot of equipment up there.

BROWN: Yes. However, already the memory of that support was fading, and India was looking elsewhere for assistance, in the wake of the meeting with Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin in Tashkent. I have already alluded to the development of this relationship between India and the Soviet Union.

The China aspect was very much a dynamic factor in India's moves. The situation was moving, and for a reason. It wasn't just a casual move. It related to India's fear and loathing of the Chinese communists.

Q: Did you sense, from where you were sitting in the Bureau of East Asian Affairs, any disquiet or unhappiness with this relationship between India, Pakistan, and China might be orphaned by developments in the Palestine area? Did you perceive anything of that nature?

BROWN: Do you mean while I was there in the Bureau of East Asian Affairs?

Q: Did some of your colleagues express disquiet or concern about the prospect that the Department of State might lose sight of the relationship between India, Pakistan, and China because of developments in Palestine?

BROWN: There was a whole cadre of Middle Eastern specialists. Developments in India and Pakistan came under the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs [NEA]. There were people such as Haggerty and others who were trained in Hindi or in Urdu, such as Tony Quainton. They had made a significant investment of their time in learning the language and were significantly respected in this regard. They were professionals in their field.

As long as I served in India, I was nominally under NEA, as an embassy officer in New Delhi. However, I had this special field of concentration. I was working for somebody else, as well. They weren't rating me on this, as least as far as Officers Efficiency Reports [OERs] were concerned, but that's where I was heading. That's where I saw the future and that's what I was looking forward to. I had some special lines into that field.

Q: That's your own interest. However, were your fellow officers saying: "Those guys in NEA are so focused on Arab-Israeli affairs that we're not getting answers or information..."

BROWN: No, I don't remember that. At the time I remember that the Desk Officer for India was Howie Schaefer. Howie would give you an instant answer...

Q: He is being interviewed right now by Tom Stern.

BROWN: Well, give him my regards. Here was a guy who was on top of the situation and who served in both Pakistan and India. He was very much involved in it. He may have been frustrated about attitudes above him in NEA. However, at my level, as far as attention to India and Pakistan was concerned, I can't remember hearing any complaint about getting attention from Joe Sisco [Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs] because Joe Sisco had his attention directed elsewhere.

Q: Well, I thought that we might stop at this point. We're now up to 1970, and you were going back to Washington.

BROWN: I went back to the Department of State to be Deputy Director of the Office of Asian Communist Affairs (ACA) in the Bureau of East Asian Affairs. Because the China desk handled Taiwan affairs, it was a separate entity from the Office of Asian Communist Affairs. The ACA desk handled what we now call the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, Macao, and Mongolia, as a separate area.

Q: You served there from 1970 to...

BROWN: 1970 to 1972. It was a very exciting period.

Q: Absolutely. We'll pick it up there.

Today is December 9, 1998. Bill, who did what in the Office of Asian Communist Affairs when you arrived there in 1970? Where did your job as Deputy Director of this office fit in?

BROWN: First of all, let me make sure that I bridged this segment correctly. You will recall that I was in the embassy in New Delhi as a Sino-Soviet specialist. My formal chain of command ran through the embassy to NEA [Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs]. However, in fact I considered that I was working primarily for what we called EAP [Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs] and, to a significant degree, the Soviet or EUR [Bureau of European Affairs] side, as well.

I think that I outlined how I worked with the Indians. On the one hand the Soviet side of the Indian Foreign Ministry was polite but distant to me, for reasons that one could well appreciate. They were secretly developing a tighter relationship with the Soviet Union. This meant that large amounts of aid, military and otherwise, were provided by the Soviets to India, and at favorable rates of exchange. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was

increasingly pro-Soviet, or, if you will, anti-U.S. in her statements on Vietnam and other aspects of the international scene.

On the other hand, the China side of the Indian Foreign Ministry was very amenable toward detailed and formal exchanges with the Americans. I would meet weekly with Ramanathan, my principal contact in the Indian Foreign Ministry. With Washington's knowledge we would exchange a considerable amount of information on what the Chinese were doing, and the two sets of bilateral relationships. That is, U.S.-China, and India-China relationships, bearing in mind that each bilateral relationships had sensitivities.

So for me, professionally, this was a very fruitful period. Toward the end of my tour in New Delhi, I received word that I was to be assigned as Deputy Director of the Office of Asian Communist Affairs, of which Paul Kreisberg was the outgoing Director. Don Anderson was also assigned to this office, and he had been an interpreter at what we called the Warsaw Talks with the Chinese communists. Don and I had known each other previously. He was to replace me in the embassy in New Delhi. Kreisberg was to be assigned elsewhere. Al Jenkins, whom I had not met before, would replace Kreisberg, and I would be Jenkin's Deputy.

Q: Al Jenkins.

BROWN: Yes. As we approached the date for my transfer to Washington, I had received information that something was afoot. The first thing was President Nixon's article in Foreign Affairs.

Q: It was written prior to his becoming President.

BROWN: Yes. However, to me, as a reader of the tea leaves, it gave me a feeling that here was a man who would move on China if circumstances permitted it.

The second thing was conveyed to me in person by Paul Kreisberg, who was then passing through New Delhi in the spring of 1970. He said that the Warsaw Talks had reached the point where the ball was now in our court. That is to say, if I recall correctly, language had been used indicating that the Chinese would accept a high level emissary. That, given the background of the Warsaw Talks, was a breakthrough, as Kreisberg saw it, and so did I. The next question was what would the U.S. side do. So, as I came back to Washington, I was prepared for the possibility of a breakthrough in the normalization of U.S.-PRC relations.

Q: Could you explain, for people who will be looking at this interview, essentially what were the Warsaw Talks about?

BROWN: The Warsaw Talks had originally begun in Geneva in 1955. We had fought the Chinese communists and North Koreans in Korea where we had lost some 50,000-plus

American soldiers killed, wounded and missing. We had killed about 500,000 North Koreans and Chinese communists, including a son of Mao Tse-tung. We had drawn a cordon sanitaire, if you will, between mainland China and Taiwan. The Korean War had led us to beef up a previously weakened Chiang Kai-shek regime, which had moved over to Taiwan [in 1949]. There were Prisoners of War to be accounted for and released.

There were very strong feelings on both sides. We were affected by a type of Cold War mentality vis-a-vis the Chinese communists. I mentioned that we couldn't call their capital "Beijing." We had to call it "Beiping." We couldn't say the "People's Republic of China." We had to say, "Red China" or "Communist China." For its part, Beijing regularly blasted us as American hegemonists and the number one enemy of the Socialist Camp.

We had embargoed trade of any kind by American citizens with communist China. Earlier, as a young Commercial Officer, I had been involved in that situation in Hong Kong. We even black listed foreign nationals who dealt with communist China in certain cases. So relations were very frosty, or hostile, if you will, on both sides.

In the context of the Warsaw Talks, our Ambassadors met periodically, every six months or thereabouts, first in Geneva, and then, later on, in Warsaw. Prisoners of War were released on both sides, following the Korean War.

However the Chinese communists had not released some American citizens. I'm thinking in particular of Downing and Fecteau, who for years were described in U.S. official statements as "civilian employees of the Army who were missing on a flight from Seoul to Tokyo." This was, of course, a cover story. They were CIA employees. Their aircraft had gone down in the course of operations over Manchuria. The Chinese communists were holding them. In the releases of Prisoners of War, following the signature of the Korean Armistice Agreement, they were not included. So they were in Chinese communist prisons. Red Cross parcels could be delivered to them. The same was true of Bishop Walsh. We would demand their release, but there was a whole cluster of problems which was impeding any progress.

Therefore, when, in early 1970, the Chinese communist side signaled that they would be willing to receive a high level U.S. emissary, This struck Paul Kreisberg, and me as well, as a very important signal from the Chinese communists. However, although the State Department had initiated the suggestion at the Warsaw Talks, it turned out that the State Department Leadership became very cautious over how we should respond. [Addendum: for the White House positive reaction see John Holdridge, Crossing the Divide: An Insider's Account of the Normalization of U.S.-China Relations, Putnam & Littlefield, 1997. A senior Foreign Service Officer (later Assistant Secretary for EAP and subsequently Ambassador to Indonesia) Holdridge as a member of Kissinger's NSC staff accompanied Kissinger on his secret July 1971 trip to Beijing and later President Nixon on his February 1972 visit to Beijing.]

Now, when I went back to the Department of State to that Office of Asian Communist Affairs [ACA], Al Jenkins was just now coming on board as Director. In the structure of the Department, the China Desk was located in an entirely different area from that of ACA. That desk was headed by Tom Shoemith, and it handled our relations with our treaty ally, Taiwan, which was called the Republic of China. They were physically and significantly around the corner and down the corridor in the State Department. Maybe they were on a different floor, although I am not sure. We were that far apart. This had all been set up before I came on board. ACA handled the People's Republic of China; Hong Kong, as our key post looking into China; Macao; and the Mongolian People's Republic as a very small office.

Q: Who handled North Korea?

BROWN: Let's see. I think that, somehow, it came under the Korean desk.

Q: It should, but it's kind of related to Asian Communist Affairs.

BROWN: I frankly don't remember who precisely handled North Korea.

Now, the chain of command ran up to the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs. In these circumstances, it was Winthrop Brown, a career Foreign Service Officer who, had been DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] in New Delhi. I think that he had been Ambassador to some place like Laos. He was an elderly gentleman and a fine man with great probity and integrity. Above him was Marshall Green [Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs], who was a sparkling personality, full of wit and humor. He was a great punner who had had a distinguished diplomatic career. He started, I believe, as an aide of Ambassador Joseph Grew in Japan.

Q: Wasn't Grew interned there after Pearl Harbor? Grew sent Marshall Green back to the U.S. in August, 1941, due to the deteriorating situation in Japanese-American relations.

BROWN: When I returned to Washington after serving in New Delhi, I would say that I was bright eyed and bushy tailed. Having had this tip from Paul Kreisberg, I was eager to see movement, action, and so forth.

I found, however, at least from my viewpoint, that the atmosphere in EAP [Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs] remained, shall I say, unchanged. Life went on as usual, and there was no apparent movement, apart from a series of U.S. moves to loosen the restrictions on trade and travel to China. On China, at my level, one had no sense of direction down from the top. That is, from Secretary of State Rogers, the Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, or anyone like that. Yet here was Nixon, during a toast to visiting Romanian President Ceausescu in October 1970, referring for the first time to "the Peoples Republic of China."

The work was hard, and there was always a lot to be done. Things began slowly to perk up as we liberalized our trade and travel restrictions. One day, during Al Jenkins' absence, I got a phone call from someone describing himself as the representative of the U.S. Ping Pong Team. This man said that the team had received an invitation from China. My wife tells me that I came home that evening saying: "This may be the end of my job." She said, "Why?" I said, "In Al Jenkins' absence, I simply said to this man: 'Go ahead.'" In other words, accept the Chinese ping pong invitation. I was sure that this was the proper response even though I had not cleared with a senior official. I can't remember telling my wife this story, but that's what she says I said. In any case, the U.S. Ping Pong Team did go to China. Obviously, this trip was cleared later on, and the White House was in on that. The Ping Pong Team went and, ever since then, we had what has been called the beginning of "Ping Pong Diplomacy."

Here was another sign of the kind of signals that the Chinese communists were giving.

Q: I would think that, if you were a political analyst, looking at "Red China," as we called it then, the Cultural Revolution was in full swing, wasn't it? The "Little Red Book," and the whole thing.

BROWN: Oh, yes.

Q: In a way this was a time of great, "political correctness," as we know this term today.

BROWN: In the 1950s the Chinese communists had gone through the Great Leap Forward, which was disastrous.

Q: They had the Let 100 Flowers Bloom, or something like that.

BROWN: Yes. The Great Leap Forward was followed by the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, which was wreaking havoc in their international relations and in their domestic affairs. Mao's regime was greatly weakened, internally, by all of this self-imposed turmoil. Chinese communist relations with the Soviet Union had plummeted to the point where there were armed clashes along the Ussuri River, as I mentioned before. There was great hostility. The Chinese communists were slugging it out with the Soviets ideologically and rhetorically all over the world. They were throwing mud at each other. They were mouthing, of course, ongoing support for North Vietnam in the context of the whole, Vietnamese conflict.

It was a time of great turmoil, including turmoil in the United States. I would hazard the guess that the upper reaches of the Foreign Service were mindful not only of erratic Chinese communist behavior at the time, but also very mindful of the great damage done to the China service within the Foreign Service by Senator Joseph McCarthy and so forth. I can understand why senior levels of the Foreign Service were cautious under the circumstances. Remember that as consul general in Hong Kong Marshall Green had earlier recommended a gradual relaxation of trade barriers, but the idea had been blocked

in the State Department. Remember also, that in castigating the Soviet leadership for its revisionism, the PRC was also targeting us as the main enemy of the Socialist Camp.

I recall paying a courtesy call on Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Winthrop Brown. Win was an astute man, for whom I had great respect. I was a bit stunned by a portion of our initial conversation. I said something like: "I think that it's time to move forward on normalizing relations with Beijing." He said, "What do you mean?" Remembering what I had heard from Paul Kreisberg, I said, "I mean a breakthrough for further talks, for sending someone to Beijing." I don't know whether Win Brown was in the know, but he said, "What in the world would we talk about?" I said, "We could talk about improving relations between the two countries." I can't recall more than that but I suppose that I laid out a rationale that we ought to exploit this great, strategic opportunity.

Both the Chinese communists and we were separately obsessed with the Soviet Union, our strategic enemy. This was a natural development, although the partners were so different from each other.

Other signs came from Beijing, and I have to be cautious here because my recollection of time is not precise. I didn't keep a diary or anything like that. The PRC released Bishop Walsh who had been in detention for years. In the U.S. at about this time progressives began to get invitations to go to communist China. I can't exactly place this, but sometimes people would contact us because they wanted to be careful. Travel to communist China was restricted, although we were loosening the restrictions on a case by case basis. A couple of Yale professors, not scientists, but members of a liberal, progressive group, received an invitation to go to communist China.

They came to Washington after their visit. I met them in Washington. I was with them when they met members of a medical group within the National Academy of Sciences. They spoke with great enthusiasm about their trip, the fact that they had seen high level Chinese figures, and that they had witnessed acupuncture used in very serious operations. Major surgery, in fact. Disbelief was written on the faces of the senior, American doctors in the National Academy of Sciences who listened to them. I heard the word "mesmerism" used to describe what they believed the Yale people had seen.

Other invitations were beginning to come out, on a selective basis, for individuals...

Q: We didn't have a ban on travel to communist China.

BROWN: We had restrictions and rules, but they were beginning to loosen up, on a case by case basis. However, there was an absolute ban on purchasing Chinese goods. So I worked on such matters, with Al Jenkins, in an increasingly busy period.

Now I will leap forward to a day in July, 1971, when my son was at home. I was playing tennis with him. The kitchen phone rang, and it was Mr. Sato Yukio, one of the Second Secretaries in the Japanese embassy in Washington who was also a China watcher. He

said in a very solemn, muted voice: "I wonder, Bill, if you could fill me in." I said, "I'm sorry, but about what?" He said, "Henry Kissinger is in Beijing." I said to him, "Sato-san, you and I are good, professional colleagues, and there's something that I want to impress on you right away. This is the first I've heard of a Kissinger visit to China. I don't want you to think that I knew about this. I didn't know anything about it. I'm being honest with you, but I'll get what I can today."

I then called Al Jenkins. Al's remarks to me were to the effect that: "Bill, whatever you do, do not convey the impression that Marshall Green, didn't know about this." He said that we had to protect Marshall. So we went through a couple of rough days. Prior to that, Green had been so ebullient, so gregarious, and so forth. Now he just sat therein his office, blankly watching a television screen. He just seemed broken. I believe that Kissinger's office had told him an hour before or after the announcement.

Suddenly, we were deluged with inquiries, requests, and so on. We had to deal with them. This was now July, 1971. The fact of the matter was that we were still cut off. The whole thing had been done without us in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, and it took a while to develop a line, or, should I say, a thread into the White House.

Then one day Al Jenkins asked me into his office and said, "Look, I have been over to see Henry Kissinger [then National Security Adviser to the President], at his request. We are to prepare papers for his next visit to China and beyond, on a super SECRET basis. We're not to tell anybody. Henry will call me from time to time and tell me what he wants. We will do what he asks us to do."

At that time a good, personal and professional friend of mine, Roger Sullivan, had joined our office. This is still 1971. I had already been working in the Office of Asian Communist Affairs [ACA] for a year and was looking forward to being reassigned elsewhere. Roger was a very good officer, with a background in Japanese and Chinese affairs. He replaced me in Singapore and obviously had a good future ahead of him. The deal was roughly that Roger would be assigned to ACA on an overcomplement basis, more or less as an equal to me, with the understanding that he would ultimately succeed me.

Roger and I set up a secret office on the Seventh Floor of the State Department. I guess that this office was next door to the office of U. Alexis Johnson, the Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs. We worked in utter secrecy. We did not tell our office [ACA] what we were doing. This meant, in many cases, working through the day in our regular office, which was now very busy, following the announcement of the Kissinger visit to communist China. Then, particularly in the evenings, we would go up to this secret office on the Seventh Floor and be at Henry Kissinger's beck and call, grinding out these papers.

Q: I assume that you were preparing briefing books or background papers...

BROWN: We were in such a super SECRET status at that particular point in time that we

had to rely on our experience, our background, and our knowledge of Chinese affairs, although we had not previously been on the mainland of China. For my part, I had already served in Asia, Moscow and in New Delhi. Roger Sullivan had also had important assignments in Asia as well. We just worked at our job, without the benefit of staff and very carefully.

I seem to recall that one night we were faced with an urgent request from Kissinger. In fact, anything that came from Kissinger was urgent. Al Jenkins just gave us the topics to prepare papers on. The subject could cover anything. For example, "China and the Soviet Union" or "China and India." One subject was "Blocked Assets." I seem to recall going into the State Department Library through the guard, who opened it up at night. I pulled out the volume of "Foreign Relations of the United States" and another book which had to do with Maxim Litvinoff, the first Soviet Ambassador to the United States, who came to Washington in 1934 or 1935. This was during the first Roosevelt administration. One of the key matters covered in these volumes was how we handled assets that had been blocked [or frozen] by the U.S. and the Soviet Union. I used that as a model. I'm not an economist, but I ground something out along those lines.

So we went. We turned out these papers. Al Jenkins would give us the topics assigned by Kissinger and we would prepare them. Roger Sullivan did most of them, but I did a significant part. Roger was working on these papers far more extensively than I, because in the daytime I was running a large and very, very busy office in ACA. Sometimes we would work until 2:00 or 3:00 AM, turning out these papers and duplicating them on the side. Then we would give them to Al Jenkins, who would take them over to the White House. That was it. I never saw anything come back. I never heard any feedback.

At the time I imagined, and subsequently learned, that Kissinger had asked other people to do similar things, compartmentalizing his requests within the government departments around Washington. He would edit and distill this material and give it to President Nixon as his product. That was far, far above my pay grade.

Al Jenkins went with Kissinger on the next visit to Beijing. This was the second, Kissinger visit. After that, we were much more open, and we began really to grind out material as the office of ACA, in preparation for President Nixon's visit to China. Again, this was very largely a one way street. They didn't send material back to us, corrected or anything like that. We just ground out the material. We opened up an office in the Operations Center [of the State Department], as the President's visit to China neared.

Then we finally arranged for Charles Freeman, a brilliant, Chinese language officer who had reached interpreter level, to go along as an add on, if you will, for the Presidential visit. Kissinger's style was very compartmentalized. In all of this Secretary of State William Rogers made no contribution at all, at least as far as I could make out. For a long while, at the working level, our only thread into the White House was through Al Jenkins. That was it.

We ran immediately into all sorts of bureaucratic tangles. It was extremely difficult to deal with government departments elsewhere in Washington, particularly in the U.S. military establishment. After all, China was backing Hanoi, and we were engaged in the struggle in Vietnam, in Cambodia, and in the so-called “Secret War” in Laos. We were involved in all of that. It was really very heavy work, and it involved a lot of inter-agency tangles in Washington.

Unwrapping the embargoes on American business with China was difficult, particularly when elements in the Defense Department would say, “Aha. This is an item which will immediately be shipped down to Vietnam by the Chinese communists and used on the Ho Chi Minh trail.” We would have to cope with that and say, “No, this is a dump truck.” Then the military would say, “Well, a dump truck could be used” for this or that purpose, and so forth. We ran into this kind of problem frequently, and it was very challenging to work on so many fronts at the same time.

It was during the early part of this period that the Indo-Pakistan War [of 1971] broke out.

Q: This was what led to the independence of Bangladesh.

BROWN: Yes, in 1971. I had been on the ground in India and had seen the coming signals of hostilities before that. We couldn't be sure, but it certainly looked as if a war were coming. We were then faced with policy questions as to what to do. We had a special relationship with Pakistan. This relationship warmed up greatly under Kissinger.

We had a formalistic relationship on the Himalayan front with the Indians, since that humiliating defeat they had suffered at the hands of the Chinese in 1962. We had largely re-equipped the Indian Army to make it a mountain army. We had been the supporters of the Indians in their hours of need, in 1962. Now they had tilted, if you will, toward the Soviets.

The question before us all was: “What if war broke out between India and Pakistan?” The assumption was that the Indians would prevail, once again, given their enormous strength and the tremendous, geographical and logistical advantage which they had against a Pakistan divided into two parts.

Another question was what would the situation be if India trounced Pakistan and China entered the war on behalf of Pakistan? We worked on the assumption that China would not do so, and would provide only rhetorical support to Pakistan. We thought that, whatever happened, would happen quickly.

Another sign of the kind of difficulties that we were in, was that, when I came back to Washington, I learned that Winthrop Brown, [Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs], had been invited to a special viewing of a film on Tibet. I was invited to go with him. It was projected at the headquarters of USIA [United States Information Agency] to a very small, select audience which included Win Brown, John Holdridge

from the National Security Council staff, and other senior officials. The producer of the film was introduced. He had won a substantial prize for a previous film which he had produced on Czechoslovakia. It was called...

Q: The Prague Spring.

BROWN: It was a magnificent film on the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia [in 1968]. This gentleman had then been commissioned to do a film on Tibet. The lights were dimmed, the projectors went on, and here came, in magnificent color, a wonderful film on the plight of the Tibetan refugees. Included in this film were real clips from film taken by the Chinese People's Liberation Army [PLA], showing the PLA assaulting Lhasa, bombarding it, overrunning it with their bayonets, and so forth. The film eloquently portrayed Tibet as the victim of Chinese savagery, the occupation of Tibet, and the plight of Tibetan refugees in countries outside of China.

The film ended, and the lights came on. If I recall correctly, there was applause. The producer was complimented on the film. The moderator of the program asked: "Any comments or questions?" I waited and waited, but nothing really was said, except that it had been a wonderful film. Finally, and almost in desperation, I raised my hand and was recognized. I identified myself and said, "This is a magnificent film. It's one of the most moving films of its kind that I have seen. It's especially moving for me because I've just come from New Delhi, where I dealt with Tibetan resettlement and rehabilitation. I called on the Dalai Lama. I really have a deep feeling for these people in their plight. Perhaps to me it's even more moving than it would be for others. It's a magnificent film, but it should be killed."

There was a stunned silence. The moderator said, "Well, what do you mean?" I said, "It's a magnificent film, but it would enrage the Chinese communists, with whom we in the United States have important business to transact. They are extremely sensitive at any time regarding our stance on the Tibetan issue, on our stance with India regarding the Tibetan issue, with the United Nations and so forth. There is a long, bitter history on this subject. The public showing of such a film would enrage the Chinese, at a time when we..."

Q: I would emphasize that this film, if and when it was released, would be identified as a U.S. Government film.

BROWN: Yes, a USIS [United States Information Service], U.S. Government film. It might be distributed around the world. Then someone asked: "Win Brown, what do you think about the film?" He said something like: "Well, I don't know. Perhaps we could consider its impact on the Chinese." It was a typical, cautious statement. He continued: "Maybe we could start by just showing it to our Embassies around the world." I said, "Well, as long as this is not shown to any foreign audiences." That's the last I heard of it. I think that that was the end of the matter, at least for then.

Q: I assume that this was the kind of film which was probably contracted for three or four years previously.

BROWN: Yes. Let me give you another example, a big one. That was the question of the China seat in the UN. The Chinese communists were pressing to evict Taiwan [the Chinese Nationalists] and take the seat formerly occupied by the Republic of China. We, as always, were mounting an effective attempt to block this effort. No less a person than George Bush [later President of the United States and then U.S. Ambassador to the UN] was brought in to head our effort on this matter. He had a very capable task force to deal with it. I was asked whether I wanted to go up to the UN at this time. This would have required financial resources that I didn't have, so I didn't go. Harry Thayer and Harvey Feldman went up to the UN to organize and run the show for Ambassador George Bush. Feldman did a magnificent job, given the fact that the Republic of China gave us nothing to work with. They would not give us any ammunition to counter the Chinese communist efforts to evict the Republic of China from the UN. What we needed was a timely OK from Taipei, of a deal whereby we would let the PRC take the China seat in the Security Council and General Assembly, but maintain a seat for Taiwan in the General Assembly. Taipei would not agree until it was too late. (End of tape)

Q: We were talking about which government was to occupy the UN seat for China.

BROWN: This was in the fall of 1971. We ran into considerable conflicts as we tried to pursue an opening with communist China, while still serving our national interest in maintaining relations with the Republic of China on Taiwan. Given the mood of the country and the strong feelings that were expressed in Congress and in the public [against communist China], it was difficult to see how we could dance through all of this. So in this particular case we mounted a big effort at the UN, under the leadership of George Bush, then our UN Ambassador. Harry Thayer was involved in this effort, as was Harvey Feldman, who went up to the UN in this connection.

The thrust of our effort was to try to work out a solution so that the Republic of China on Taiwan could stay in the UN and yet Beijing could also enter the UN. As I said before, Taiwan gave us no help in this effort. The Chinese Nationalists were adamant that they should keep the seat for China, both in the Security Council and in the General Assembly. Beijing, of course, would accept nothing less than total victory over the Chinese Nationalists. Ambassador Bush mounted a tremendous effort, largely implemented by Harvey Feldman, on contacting people and capitals all over the world, as well as in the United Nations, in the hope of leaving the door open for the kind of outcome I previously mentioned.

At one point the situation was such that Henry Kissinger was back in mainland China for his second visit, this time with Al Jenkins and Marshall Green. So I was the acting head of the ACA desk. I learned, to my astonishment, at the close of business one day, that the office of Marshall Green, [Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs], had approved a formula for instructions or guidance to go to our UN Mission in

New York. In my view these instructions would have been terrible or disastrous because they reeked of a two Chinas solution.

In desperation I called Dick Solomon in the White House. I had previously been very loyal to the State Department chain of command and so forth. I saw no other way out, so I said to Dick Solomon: "These instructions have to be canceled, because they will be disastrous. I think that Henry Kissinger ought to know this in Beijing." That's the last I heard of those instructions. I can't remember what the formula or guidance ultimately was. I mention this to illustrate the kinds of things that I ran into as a working bureaucrat, in connection with clearances inside and outside the State Department as we dealt with different constituencies.

Q: Our Secretary of State, William D. Rogers, was not taking the lead on this.

BROWN: Not at all.

Q: Tell me, Bill, when you were dealing with this matter, I keep coming back to the fact that you were sort of in the eye of the storm. Mao Tse-tung and Zhou En-lai were being nice to Henry Kissinger. Meanwhile, the Cultural Revolution was going on at the same time. Not too long ago I finished reading Dr. Lee's book on the life of Chairman Mao Tse-tung. In reading a book like that, you come to realize what was going on, the back biting, the court intrigue, and all of that. Where you were sitting in the Department of State, did you have any better information than reading the reports from the Consulate General in Hong Kong?

BROWN: We were getting reports from the British and others. Remember, other countries were moving toward normalizing relations with communist China. This takes me to the discussions which Roger Sullivan and I had as we were preparing the papers for Henry Kissinger. It wasn't long before Roger Sullivan and I, without instructions from anyone, were saying to ourselves: "If there's a Presidential visit to communist China, there's likely to be a communique. What should be in the communique?" Here was the great obstacle of Taiwan to overcome. So we went back and forth in dealing with this.

In my capacity as Deputy Director of Asian Communist Affairs, I was watching what other countries were doing. Indeed, I was cautioning them to be extremely careful in how they formulated their positions for opening relations with china, because all of them had an impact on each other. The communist Chinese would use what they got from one country against another, including us.

Therefore, I was very upset with one aspect of the final product. The final product, which was called the "Shanghai Communique," used a formula which said, "The Government of the United States acknowledges that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China. the United States Government does not challenge that position." In Chinese, the word for "acknowledge" is "ch'eng jen." It is a very powerful verb. We said that we "acknowledged" that all Chinese

on both sides hold that there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part thereof. As I looked at this formula in English and then looked at it in Chinese, I thought that it went too far.

First of all, it was a basic untruth. Not all Chinese, at least on the Taiwan side, necessarily believed that they should again be a part of China, whatever they were saying publicly. In Taiwan 90 percent of the population was composed of Taiwanese. They were ethnically Chinese but they spoke a dialect which was unintelligible to most northern Chinese, as well as to many of the people in their neighboring ancestral provinces. They were the product of an insular situation which had developed over the centuries.

The last thing in the world that the people of Taiwan wanted was to be part of communist China and among them the basic desire of the overwhelming majority of Taiwanese was for independence. Therefore, this phrase was basically not true. It was an artificial expression. I thought that the matter should not have been formulated in that way.

You can say that this is quibbling over a minor, semantic point, but to me at the time this was very important.

Q: Well, the meaning was very important. It was thrown in our face in 1998.

BROWN: Yes.

Q: It doesn't go away.

BROWN: One has to bear in mind the pressures that President Nixon and senior officials were under at the time. This formula was to have an impact when we come back to the period of the Carter administration, and later. [Addendum: John Holdridge (p.75) writes that Kissinger borrowed this formula from State Department language which had been used from early in the Warsaw talks. Maybe so, but I still believe it was the wrong formula to have been used in our negotiations with the PRC.]

Now, as of 1972, we were in the stage of the follow-up to President Nixon's visit to mainland China. President Nixon's visit to mainland China took place in February, 1972. Then began the clamor about who goes next. First, Mansfield went to China...

Q: Former Senator Mike Mansfield [Democrat, Montana]...

BROWN: A distinguished Senator. Then an invitation was extended to Congressman Hale Boggs [Democrat, Ohio], the Democratic Majority Leader of the House of Representatives, and to Congressman Gerry Ford [Republican, Michigan], the Republican Minority Leader, along with their wives and entourage, to go to China. After 16 years of waiting to go to mainland China, I accompanied them on this trip.

We went to China in June, 1972. In preparing for this trip I would talk with Al Haig,

[Deputy National Security Adviser] by phone. I think that he was then an Army Brigadier General. I found myself carrying on a lot of diplomatic effort between Congressman Boggs and Congressman Ford. Obviously, the staff of each wanted to be ahead of the other. Congressman Ford wanted to be treated equally with Congressman Boggs. If anybody had an idea on one side, the other side wanted at least to be able to equal it. They each ended up bringing TV teams. They brought their intimate entourage and some friends, including family members and other acquaintances.

I worked out with them an itinerary which would take them not only to Beijing, where I expected and hoped we would meet with Zhou En-lai, but also a couple of other places, including Shenyang [in Manchuria] which, in the old days, was known as Mukden. We flew in a Air Force Special Missions plane assigned to the White House. The itinerary ran from Washington to Hawaii, Guam, Shanghai, Beijing, Shenyang (also known as Mukden), and then down to Canton. I persuaded them to stay an extra day so that they could say that they were the first Americans in a generation to celebrate July 4 officially in China. They liked that idea. So they were in China through the morning of July 5, 1972. Then they came out to Hong Kong by train.

I was the only person with the delegation who could speak, read, and write Chinese. It was fascinating, to say the least, first of all to see how the Chinese handled us. Since we didn't have diplomatic relations with China, our host was a trumped up Committee of Friendship. The Chinese Acting Foreign Minister, Qiao Guanhua, was an honorary member of this Committee. So we saw him in that capacity. They ran us up through several levels, so that they could get a complete readout of what was on our minds, distill it, and then send it up to the top of the Chinese Government, so that they would be well educated when they received us.

There was an agonizing wait before we saw Zhou En-lai, because the Chinese would not tell us until just before the meeting took place. We were told to go about our schedule and hold ourselves in readiness for the possibility of an important meeting without its being said that it would be with Zhou En-lai. On a sultry evening, at 10:00 PM we finally met with Chou at a banquet at the Great Hall of the People which lasted for several hours. I had prepared the Congressmen and their families how to act and so forth. After the toasts, Zhou En-lai said, "Shall we go inside and talk?" We were with Zhou En-lai for a total of 5 ½ hours, till 3:30 AM.

Q: Good God!

BROWN: It was really exciting for me. I hadn't slept for 24 or 48 hours, I was so keyed up. Zhou En-lai handled the Congressmen like a Mandarin. Remember that the Cultural Revolution was theoretically over, but, in fact, it was still going on. Zhou En-lai was suffering from cancer but never let on that this was so. He was very thin and looked very tired. Madame Bandaranaike, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, was in Beijing, and Zhou En-lai had been meeting with her while we were in Beijing. His manners were exquisite. He was well briefed and he handled the Congressmen very well. It was a remarkable

performance.

Remember, we were bombing Hanoi. Indeed, when we landed in Guam, en route to Beijing in our white civilian plane, the bombers in war paint were returning to their base in Guam from their daily bombing raids over Hanoi. The next morning, as we took off on this peaceful flight to Shanghai and Beijing, B-52 bombers, loaded with bombs, were taking off to attack Hanoi. So those were the circumstances in which Kissinger and President Nixon had negotiated and, indeed, under which we made this visit to Beijing.

Under those circumstances Zhou En-lai had to bridge different matters. He had to cover his flanks. So the way he did it was to say, "Mr. Congressmen, I see that you have Dr. Brown, a China expert, with you. He can confirm some of what I am about to say. You know, we were the aggressors in Vietnam centuries ago, in the 13th century. Is that right, Dr. Brown?" I said, "Yes, Premier Chou." Chou continued: "We had a general whose name was Ma. He kept saying that if only he were given more troops and more supplies, he could win this campaign. But the war went on and on, and he couldn't win. Right, Dr. Brown?" I said, "That's right, Premier Chou" Chou said, "In fact, years later I went down and paid homage in a temple in Hanoi to two young heroines whose statues stand there as symbols of Vietnamese national resistance against imperialism. Right, Dr. Brown?" I said, "Yes, Premier Chou."

Q: Were these the Trung sisters?

BROWN: I've forgotten. Chou said, "Similarly, we Chinese were imperialists in Korea. We occupied and dominated Korea. However, it couldn't last because the Koreans, after all, were a separate nation and deserved to have their own government. We learned the hard way. Right, Dr. Brown?" I said, "Yes, Premier Chou" Then Chou said, "I remember, turning back to Vietnam, that it was President Eisenhower himself who sent John Foster Dulles, the great Secretary of State, to Geneva in 1954. Right, Dr. Brown?" I said, "Yes, Premier Chou." Chou continued: "We met there and we hammered out an agreement. I thought that it was only suitable that, since there stood the great Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, I should go over and shake his hand. But the great Secretary did not deign to shake my hand."

Chou continued: "Dulles did, however, have something that he wanted to convey to me, so he sent his great assistant, General Walter Bedell Smith, to approach me elsewhere down in the cafeteria or somewhere like that. Obviously, the great General Smith was instructed not to shake my hand. Therefore, as he approached me, he held in his right hand a cup of coffee or tea. So that's the way it was back in 1954. Even Eisenhower had said that if there were to be a free referendum or election in Vietnam at the time, the majority of the people would vote for union with Ho Chi Minh and North Vietnam. Right, Dr. Brown?" I said, "Yes, Premier Chou." As I said, the conversation went on until 3:30 AM. Chou was magnificent in those circumstances.

Again, I had to handle things very delicately. My Chinese counterpart for this trip was a

diplomat under a different name. I think that he had been Chinese Charge d'Affaires in Stockholm. However, he was nominally the Executive Secretary of the Committee for Friendship with Other Countries. Since we didn't have diplomatic relations with mainland China, this was the committee which was our host. I leveled with this gentleman from the moment we landed in Shanghai.

The Congressmen were so uptight at the moment we landed in Shanghai that they sent me down the boarding stairs first to get the lay of the land and see whether they could set up television crews and so forth. So I went down and onto a red carpet, met this Chinese official, explained the situation, and then leveled with him as I did throughout the whole trip. That was terribly important because there were some little surprises. I'll give you an example.

In Congressman Gerry Ford's entourage was a tough old journalist, a Republican who later became either chief of staff to Ford when he was President or had a very senior job in the White House. He had gone from Japan to Manchuria in the 1930s. He was a hard Right Wing person and a very intelligent guy. I sensed that he had a chip on his shoulder. Another member of Ford's entourage was a press secretary. As we were flying from Guam into Shanghai, he was tapping away at his typewriter. Since I sat next to him, I said, "What are you doing?" He said, "I got Gerry Ford accredited as a correspondent during his stay in China, and this will be his first release as a correspondent." I said, "Oh? Would you mind letting me look at that?" He said, "Yes." So I looked at it, and there it was, in the name of Gerry Ford. The story went: "Today I saw Prime Minister Zhou En-lai and got his agreement to call on Downey and Fecteau and deliver a special package from my good friend and colleague, Congressman..."

Q: Congressman Walter Judd?

BROWN: No. He was a Congressman from the Middle West, Findley. I was appalled. This was to be filed in the name of Gerry Ford, a guest of the Chinese Government? So I went to Congressman Ford in the back of the plane. I sat down next to him and said, "I've just come across this draft. Gerry, you can't do this. It would be explosive to file something like that. Downey and Fecteau are very high on our agenda in the State Department. I certainly think that you ought to raise this in a diplomatic way, but do not ask to meet them and deliver a package. That's not the way to handle it." So Congressman Ford said, "Look, Bill, you're supposed to be the China expert on this trip. These guys are on my professional staff. They're doing the best they can, but I'll listen to what you say. Don't take umbrage at this." I said, "No, I don't take umbrage, but you just can't do this." That did not make the Congressman happy.

Later on in the trip, this hardline gentleman said, in essence: "Look, you won on that one, but we have books that we have brought along which we are going to distribute. (They were the biography of Abraham Lincoln.) Surely, you have no objection to our doing that." I said, "Are they in Chinese?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Well, could I see copies of them?" Sure enough, they had been printed in Taipei, Republic of China. I suppose that

they were innocuous enough, but the very idea of our distributing something that had been printed and published in Taipei, under the rubric of the Republic of China, would inflame the other side. So I said, "We just can't do this."

Toward the very end of the trip, during the last few days, Congressman Ford called me in and said, "Bill, we followed your advice, but I have this package from Congressman Findley to deliver to Downy and Fecteau. I cannot go back and tell him that I didn't deliver this package. We've got to deliver it, one way or another. You have your Chinese counterpart, and you've just got to work it out."

So I went and had a private meeting with my Chinese counterpart. We were then down in Guangzhou, Canton. I explained the situation to him. He looked at me impassively and said, "As you know, there's a channel for this. Those packages should come through the Red Cross." I said, "That's right." He said, "You know, that's the proper way to do these things, but let me get back to you." After some time, maybe it was overnight, he came back to me and reminded me of our conversation. He said, "You're leaving tomorrow for Hong Kong. There is a channel for such a package. It could be given to a person in Hong Kong for delivery." I said, "I get it." So that's what I did. I took the package back out to Hong Kong, put it into the designated channel there, and then Congressman Ford could go back home, saying: "The package is being delivered," and there we were. That's the kind of thing that we ran into, and a lot of them were handled on an ad hoc basis.

The atmosphere was very strange in mainland China, particularly outside of Beijing. We were the first Americans to visit Shenyang, [in Manchuria]. The Chinese communists hadn't yet cleaned Shenyang up. They had cleaned up the anti-American posters in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou. However, these anti-American posters were still up in Shenyang. They consisted of huge Chinese characters saying: "Down with American Imperialism!" and so forth. Also in Shenyang several very stark, anti-Soviet posters were still on display. They showed Chinese soldiers with bandaged heads in snowy terrain, defending the border. We ran into all kinds of surprises. We went to Sun Yat Sen University, outside of Canton. I could see the ravages, first hand, of the Cultural Revolution. I went to the library there. Nothing new had been published recently, either archeological, medical, scientific or anything else. They had lost 10 years. The Cultural Revolution had been devastating in academic terms.

At Sun Yat Sen University we were finally introduced to a student leader, and he parroted the Maoist line, as we found elsewhere. They all spouted the Maoist line. The main points which they made were: "Before 1949 there were misery, imperialism, colonialism, and despotism. After 1949, under the leadership of Chairman Mao, there were some difficulties caused by renegades within the Party," and so forth. They continued: "However, under Mao's great leadership, we have made great progress," and on and on. Beyond that, if you tried to take the conversation further, as to their studies and so forth, you just ran into a stone wall.

This visit was very useful to me, professionally, to demonstrate the kinds of ongoing

turmoil that the Chinese communists were experiencing internally. This was now June and July of 1972.

Q: Did you get any feel for Madame Mao and the Gang of Four?

BROWN: It was no surprise whatsoever to me to see no references to the Gang of Four. However, remember that we had the episode of Lin Piao, Mao's closest comrade in arms, who had been in the forefront of publishing the "Little Red Book." Suddenly, he flew off, and his plane crashed in Mongolia. Whatever the true story was, it was obviously a case of a palace coup or a countercoup, intrigue or counterintrigue, and so forth.

Things in China remained in great turmoil, notwithstanding this Mandarin facade which Zhou En-lai used to mesmerize his visitors. The Chinese communists had real internal problems and breakdowns, in addition to ongoing strife.

Q: You had been in the Soviet Union, so you were well keyed to seeing an economy in disarray. Did you see a parallel to this in China, or was the situation different?

BROWN: It was different. China was so much more primitive than the Soviet Union. Here's an interesting example. I referred to the fact that the delegation of the two Congressmen and their staffs were run through these stages. Congressman Hale Boggs had on his staff a Mr. Thoreau, a brother of the author. This brother was a lawyer, a Democrat. He and another member of the entourage were beginning to work on the environment. Of course, the Chinese communists already had huge environmental problems. As we started at the lower level of our meetings with Chinese figures, we got the standard line. It ran: "Environmental damage is caused by capitalistic, profit driven economies. Ours is a socialist economy, of the people, by the people, and for the people. So we don't have that kind of problem, here in China, which you have in a profit driven, capitalistic society."

So it went until our meeting with Zhou En-lai. Chou said, "Of course, we have problems, severe environmental problems. We also have a great shortage of money, resources, and so forth. We are making some initial efforts to deal with these environmental problems." Of course, after that, the party line changed completely. In their conversations with us the bureaucrats fell into line. It didn't take me long to figure this out. As I stood, looking at the skyline of Shanghai, I could see a number of factories belching out black smoke from their chimneys because they were burning soft coal. This was just part of the manifestation of terrible, environmental pollution, which has since been further revealed.

By now I was a real short timer, and I went to the National War College.

Q: Before we start on the War College, I would like to ask a question about Congressman Gerald Ford, the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives and who later became President of the United States. What was your impression of him in this really difficult situation? There was no reason to expect that he had been prepared to handle a situation

like this.

BROWN: They had been briefed, and I had met with them several times before we left for China. They were on their good behavior. From the minute that we landed in China, my predictions were fulfilled. That is, the Chinese went all out to make them feel at ease. The Chinese gave them drinks. They showed flexibility regarding the program, and so forth. They really wanted this to be a successful visit, and it was.

Of the whole group the smartest was the wife of Congressman Boggs. Lindy Boggs was really sharp. She struck me immediately by the questions she asked me, and the way she handled herself. She was shortly to be widowed, for a few months later Congressman Hale Boggs disappeared on a flight while campaigning for a Democrat in Alaska. She then took the seat of her late husband. Congressman Gerry Ford became President of the United States. Meanwhile, I'd gone off to England to study Mongolian.

Congressman Gerry Ford was a decent listener. I had some advice to give him that maybe he didn't appreciate too much, but he appreciated the fact that I was a so-called "China expert." Notwithstanding the fact that some of his staff were disgruntled with my interventions, he handled himself in such a way that we got over all of those difficulties.

As guests and visitors to China, both Ford and Hale Boggs were very good, but there were some interesting moments. Our last night in Canton was July 4. The weather was swelteringly hot. To show you cultural differences and political sensitivities of that time, I negotiated with my Chinese counterpart the circumstances under which we would celebrate July 4, the first Official American delegation to do so in 25 years. An old mansion was used for this purpose. I said that we would like to have Chinese and American flags displayed on the dinner tables and above on the wall. I said that the Congressmen would like to make speeches. They would like to have fireworks, which were a traditional part of the celebration of this American holiday. My Chinese counterpart said that he would consult with the Center and come back to me. His advice was to tone down the celebration. Flags on the table were fine and appropriate, but "Neighbors in the vicinity of the house might misunderstand the fireworks." I said, "Well, you produce a tremendous amount of outstanding quality fireworks." He said that he understood that, but perhaps fireworks weren't appropriate on this occasion. So we adjusted to this.

Congressman Hale Boggs had on his staff Harry Lee, a tall, robust, Chinese American born in Louisiana. Harry's father, an immigrant, had given me a memorial in Chinese, addressed to Zhou En-lai. I think that he had arranged to have some letter writer write it in the old, archaic style, asking that his son, Harry, be allowed to visit the ancestral village outside Canton where the father had been born. I arranged that with my Chinese counterpart. As soon as we landed in Canton, Harry Lee went to this village by special transportation arrangements. Meanwhile, the rest of the party did other things. Harry Lee rejoined us just as the July 4 dinner was concluding. Congressman Hale Boggs talked with him. Then, in his white, panama suit, and looking into the TV camera, Hale

addressed the people present, including the official party and our Chinese hosts. Now, Hale liked to crack jokes. He liked to pull little surprises. So he began by expressing to our Chinese hosts our thanks for the warm hospitality which we had been displayed to us throughout the visit. He recalled the words, "My Country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty." Then he mentioned that he had just had a chance to talk with Harry Lee, the first Chinese-American magistrate. Now a magistrate in Chinese in the old times was a person who administered a county. He was the Emperor's administrator, prosecutor and judge. Everything, all wrapped in one. He was a very prominent figure. The word magistrate comes out as...

Q: Something like a French prefect.

BROWN: Yes. Whereas in Louisiana, a magistrate is a gentleman who issues duck hunting licenses and who is also a marshal. At the time of the Democratic Party Convention Harry could put on his marshal's insignia. Anyway, Hale Boggs said, "Harry Lee has just visited his father's home village. He has reported to me on the hospitality he was shown there. He met his relatives and found that they were a group of 'revisionists, revanchists, and capitalists.'" The whole American delegation broke out into raucous laughter, because they thought that this was a great joke. The Chinese all joined in laughter even though the interpretation had not come across. The interpreter was a young lady, who turned pale and just stopped in the middle of this. Hale Boggs, sensing this, said, "Go ahead. Tell them that it was a joke!" She then translated what he had said. The smiles froze on the faces of the Chinese. Imagine their reaction to the reference to Chinese of that village as being "revisionists, revanchists, and capitalists!"

Later, flying over the Pacific on our way back home, Hale, who liked his whiskey, lurched up to me and said, "Bill, I will never in my life forget the expression on your face when I joked about Harry Lee's relatives." He said that my jaw had dropped down to my chest. That's the kind of thing that you don't do with the Chinese when you meet them officially. We had a lot to learn about each other.

Q: As you were doing your job, arranging for the trip and working out the details, did the problem come up which sometimes occurs with Americans? That is, this great euphoria about things Chinese? You can push this button, but sometimes we find that we end up drooling over things Chinese. We never would do this with any other country.

BROWN: I might mention an acupuncture episode. During our visit to China we saw three, major surgical operations where acupuncture was used. We had with this Congressional Delegation the Congressional Physician. He was a U.S. Navy Captain who was about to be promoted to Rear Admiral. He began watching this procedure with great skepticism. By the time it was over, he asked me, since I spoke Chinese, why and how they did it. I passed this on to our Chinese hosts, who were duly modest. They said, "We don't necessarily know why. All that we know is that it works." I said, "I've seen acupuncture practiced among Chinese living in Southeast Asia. In time-honored style they flicked their fingers across these acupuncture needles to make them vibrate."

America went “ga ga” over the reopening of contacts with China and over things Chinese. As professionals we had to work as best we could to keep things in perspective, without being sourpusses. I recall reporting my trip to China to my classmates in the National War College later in that summer of 1972. I was one of eight or 10 State Department officers in a group of Army colonels and Navy captains who were expected to be in the next crop of brigadier generals and rear admirals. There were a couple of other people in the class from other U.S. Government agencies.

The military members of my class were bedecked with service ribbons. These guys had been field commanders in Vietnam. Several of them had had several tours in that country. Many of them had also served in Korea. It was fascinating to see their mindset regarding Vietnam. Remember, by that time the die was pretty much cast for our withdrawal from that country. However, many - especially those who had most recently served in Vietnam - still clung to the idea that with our latest smart bombs and other high-tech weapons, the precursors of the things we used in Iraq, we could have won in Vietnam. Indeed, we saw classified films at the time of what some of these weapons would do to a tank or the small aperture of a coastal artillery bunker.

I brought to the class an account of my recent experience involving China. In this connection I ran a sort of optional, side seminar. I remember bringing in the latest White House draft I had with me of the President's annual message to Congress. It was no longer a State of the Union address. It was a State of the World address.

In this draft, which had come over to us in the State Department from Henry Kissinger's office, was a section on China which I read to this small group of officers in my class, compressing it to some extent. I said, quoting from this draft: “We desire a China that is (blank).” I asked them how they would like to fill in the “blank.” They discussed various possibilities for a while. Then I said, “The draft says: 'We want a strong China.' I have respectfully submitted, in place of that, the words, 'a China which is on the road to democracy and at peace with its neighbors.’”

My classmates were outraged. They found the draft language unbelievable because they had been raised in the U.S. military culture, particularly those who had served in the Far East, in which China was the great enemy, along with the Soviet Union. China had been the backer of our enemies in Korea and Vietnam.

Q: We had fought a very major war with China in Korea.

BROWN: In terms of attitude, it was fascinating. I'll give you another example. Among our distinguished lecturers was former Secretary of State Dean Rusk. I could not resist, with my recent background, when the question and answer period came around, saying: “Mr. Secretary. I'm a State Department officer. I work on Chinese affairs. My question for you in this closed forum is: 'Did we have to wait for Richard Nixon to reopen contacts with mainland China? Did we have to wait, and, as the White House would have you

believe; could only a Republican President, only Richard Nixon, could do this? Couldn't this have been done in your time, during the administration of John F. Kennedy?"

Rusk answered this way: "I'll tell you of an episode, when there were stirrings in the State Department on revising our China policy. During one of my calls on President Kennedy in the Oval Office, as I was finishing and starting to leave, President Kennedy said to me: 'Listen, Dean, I hear that there are stirrings over in the State Department about our policy on China. I don't need this. I've had a rough time with the Bay of Pigs [U.S. support for an abortive invasion of Cuba by Cuban exiles in 1961], I have my hands full with Khrushchev [Soviet Chairman, 1957-64]," over the meeting in Vienna and so forth." President Kennedy continued: "Every major appropriations bill that comes through Congress has bipartisan, legislative riders condemning China. I don't need this."

So that was Rusk's answer. I suspect that Secretary Rusk was so loyal to President Kennedy that he went back to the State Department and quietly quashed these stirrings himself, rather than making it public that President Kennedy didn't want a change in China policy. Rusk was that kind of a guy.

Q: I've heard stories, though I don't know how true they are, that President Eisenhower had private discussions with President-elect Kennedy at the time Kennedy's term was about to begin. These discussions weren't particularly friendly. President Eisenhower reportedly said, "I'll support you on foreign policy, but don't change things with China. However, on the rest of foreign policy issues, you'll have my support."

BROWN: I don't know whether that's true, but I would believe it, as American public opinion felt so strongly on the China issue.

So, in any case, that was the mood among my classmates at the National War College on such subjects. It was a great, educational experience for me. I've often argued and proposed to younger officers in the State Department to avail themselves of the chance to go to the National War College, at what is now called the National Defense University. I felt that it was terribly important that officers should be exposed to the Pentagon culture and mentality. After all, if State Department officers wanted to rise to the senior reaches of the Foreign Service, these future generals and admirals could be important interlocutors, and they were for me, in some cases. I felt at the time that this was terribly important, given the kind of experiences I had gone through.

One other story that I would relate as far as military cultures were concerned at the time: Among our other distinguished speakers was the then Deputy Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Lewis Wilson. He was 6' 4" tall and a Congressional Medal of Honor winner. He was a movie image of what a Marine Corps officer ought to be. As an old Marine, I was looking forward to his lecture.

I think that we had about eight African-American officers in our class. Our class was composed of about 130 officers. One of these African-American officers was a Marine.

He was not a full Colonel. He was Lieutenant Colonel Frank Peterson, a pilot. As we were going into the lecture hall to hear this lecture by General Wilson, Frank Peterson said to me: "Bill, I want you to ask a question, the answer to which I know. However, even so, I want you to ask it. For the last four years I've been Equal Opportunity Officer of the United States Marine Corps..." (End of tape)

Lieutenant Colonel Peterson said to me: "Ask him how many African-American generals there are in the Marine Corps." So, after the Commandant's lecture, I raised my hand, stood, and was recognized. I said, "General, congratulations. I'm happy and proud to see you as Deputy Commandant of the Marine Corps. I served in your battalion when I went through basic training at Quantico twenty years ago, when you were a Lieutenant Colonel. I would like to ask you a question after all of these years. How many African-American generals and full colonels do you have in the United States Marine Corps at this juncture?" Gen Wilson answered: "None, but I hasten to add that there is no discrimination in the Marine Corps. With the passage of time this will change as merit shows itself."

That was the state of the United States Marine Corps in the summer of 1972. Its highest ranking, black officer was Lieutenant Colonel Frank Peterson, who had been passed over for promotion a couple of times on previous promotion lists. I might add that seven years later [in 1979] I picked up a copy of "Stars and Stripes," and it contained a headline: "Frank Peterson: First Black Brigadier General in the United States Marine Corps." He retired as a three-star general [Lieutenant General].

But that gives a little insight into some aspects of the military culture of that period.

Q: Particularly at that time. My experience when I was in Vietnam was that the Marine Corps had a hell of a lot of black men.

BROWN: But in 1950, when I first reported to Quantico as a Midshipman, headed for the Marine Corps, the only blacks you saw were cleaning pots and pans and sweeping the sidewalks. The Korean War [1950-1953] forced a great change in that situation, and black Marines became line troops. The officer cadre of the Marine Corps, as of 1949, was back to about 75% officers from the South. The Corps had its traditions, and there you were.

Q: Before we leave your experience at the National War College, by this time [1972-1973] the Vietnamization of the war had pretty much taken place. American participation in the war was pretty much over.

BROWN: Wait a minute. The signals were clear, but in June, 1972, we still had forces in Vietnam.

Q: However, the Vietnamization process had started. By 1970, when I was in the embassy in Saigon, there were still about 500,000 American troops there. What were you getting from your classmates who had gone through the trauma of Vietnam and how things were

going? Did they feel that they had been sold down the river by the politicians, the State Department, and so forth?

BROWN: These officers were achievers. These were men who had usually been well decorated, and rightly so. Some of them had done one, two, or three tours of duty in Vietnam. Marines often served three tours in Vietnam. They served under a commitment. Whatever their private views may have been, and, of course, it was a big class, I don't recall anybody criticizing our involvement and our escalation in Vietnam. My memory, and it may be faulty, is that they were heavily committed to what we had done, that they had tried hard in what they had done, and that they believed in the rationale which had been offered for our involvement.

Some of my classmates during my time at the National War College still believed that, somehow, Vietnam could be saved from a communist takeover. They were bitter about what was going on, in many respects. That is, the process of Vietnamization and the pillorying, if you will, of the military. These were trends which were bubbling up in the United States at that time. Remember that Senator McGovern [Democrat, North Dakota] was running for President against President Nixon in the 1972 elections. One of my colleagues at the National War College was shocked that I had a McGovern sticker on the bumper of my car. I think that my kids had put it on. My classmates were conservatives, and they were achievers. That was their attitude.

Q: I was wondering. Were they expressing concern about the state of the U.S. armed forces? Discipline was believed to be declining.

BROWN: Yes. I can't remember the specific aspects but I do remember their concern being expressed. They were concerned as to where this trend would take us. They were not particularly happy with the way we were handling China in all of this. Yet they had enough of a strategic sense or perhaps even an exaggerated sense of the extent of the Soviet threat. The big picture at the National War College at the time remained what to do with the Soviet Union and worldwide Soviet efforts against the United States.

Now, a strange thing happened. Roger Sullivan had succeeded me as Deputy Director of the Office of Asian Communist Affairs in the State Department. I had been arguing for some time within the bureaucracy, within house, as it were, that we ought to open up a relationship with Mongolia. My argument was that, when we were making this move to broaden contacts with China, why not make a similar effort with Mongolia, which is really remote but which offered an extra, little window into the Soviet Empire? It was a Soviet satellite, and the Russians ran things. The Mongolians were independent, but they were very much under the domination of the Soviets.

Expanding contacts with Mongolia had been discussed in the 1960s but had not gone anywhere. There had been various efforts made at the UN, but these had come to nought. Stape Roy and Kurt Kamen had been trained in the Mongolian language in about 1964, but nothing had happened. Now this matter was under discussion within the

administration again. Roger Sullivan informed me in about November, 1972, that the decision had been made to move ahead. He asked me whether I would like to pick this up, study Mongolian, and be prepared to open an American embassy in Mongolia. I accepted. Although it was very much against tradition and so forth, I went to the Commandant of the National War College and asked him to let me leave the course and begin studying Mongolian. He was very reluctant to do so but he eventually let me go.

So, in the very beginning of January, 1973, I flew to London and then went up to the University of Leeds, which was the only place at that time where the State Department could locate a live teacher of Mongolian. His name was Urgunge Onon. There was a Mongol George Hangen at the University of Indiana who might also have been able to teach me Mongolian, but he was on a sabbatical and was unavailable at the time. Also studying Mongolian with me was a young woman, Allan Nathanson. Urgunge Onon taught his classes in the bowels of a brick building at the University of Leeds in northern England.

We arrived in Leeds in early January, 1973. I left my wife Helen and four children behind. The program was to take three months of intensive instruction in Mongolian and then get ready to open up an American embassy in Ulan Bator, the capital of Mongolia.

Arrival in Leeds was one of the most depressing experiences that I have ever had. Leeds in January, or at least in January, 1973, was a miserable place. It was cold, dark, and wet! No grass, nothing. Leeds was a relic of the great industrialization program of the 19th century. The buildings were black with coal smoke. The sheep wore what appeared to be a dark blanket of wool. There was a smell of diesel oil and coal in the air. Leeds had a miserable climate. Our accommodations were spartan, but we were filled with enthusiasm.

I didn't know initially that our instructor, Urgunge Onon, was an American citizen. He had been one of three Mongols whom Owen Lattimore, in his waning days at the State Department, had managed to bring out of Inner Mongolia, as the Chinese Nationalist Government had collapsed. Lattimore brought out a Buddhist lama [priest or monk] and two, Mongolian laymen from Inner Mongolia, who were members of a Mongolian minority within China. Owen Lattimore then hired these people as his sources, if you will, whom he used to start up Mongolian studies in the United States. One of them, John Hangen, gravitated to the University of Indiana, where he finally obtained tenure. I believe that he just died a year or two ago.

Urgunge Onon followed Lattimore to Johns Hopkins University. When the McCarthyite campaign began in the late 1940s, Lattimore was no longer allowed to teach, but he was still being paid. However, Urgunge Onon was out on the street. The poor man sold encyclopedias, washed dishes, and did what he could to survive. Years later Owen Lattimore, although he was in bad odor in the United States, was in good odor with the British liberal, academic community. Lattimore got a job involving the opening of a Chinese Department at the University of Leeds, and he brought Onon, by now an

American citizen, with him. Then, the year before I arrived in Leeds [1972] Lattimore retired and went to live in Paris. Onon was teaching Chinese in Leeds. He was also fluent in Japanese and Mongolian. He set about to try to teach us what he could of the Mongolian language, during a period of three months.

Q: What was your partner's name?

BROWN: Allen Nathanson. She was a younger, State Department officer.

Q: What was she slated for?

BROWN: She was primarily interested in Chinese and Soviet affairs. She had worked previously in INR [Bureau of Intelligence Research]. She very much wanted an assignment to study Mongolian and got it.

So, in these grim circumstances we set about to study Mongolian and await the word as to what was to happen next. Three months passed, and there was no word as to my assignment. I contacted the State Department in Washington. I learned that Stape Roy had gone up to talk to the Mongolian Ambassador to the UN, who was overjoyed at this American probe. He said that he would pass it right away to the Mongolian capital. Since I had now served in the Soviet Union and had some experience in how to structure such an approach, I said, "Let's not bobble this the way so many of our Eastern European missions had been bobbed." In several cases we had established missions and then, having lost our bargaining power, we then set about bargaining on housing, office space, diplomatic couriers, and so forth. I said, "Let's try and do it the right way at the beginning. Let's negotiate a package whereby we will mutually recognize each other. This would be accompanied by an administrative agreement covering the chancery [office space], housing, courier routes, communications, and so forth. On the side we could do a consular agreement and wrap it all up while we have some leverage."

Although the Mongolian Ambassador reacted with joy to Stape Roy's initiative, three months went by, and nothing happened. We made inquiries with the Mongolian Ambassador at the UN, and he said, "Well, I think that my message must have been misrouted elsewhere. We'll inquire." Further time went by. We continued our studies. Gradually, it dawned on us that nothing was going to happen.

We tried to keep low profiles, but the press was on to the fact that two Americans were now in Leeds, studying Mongolian prior to opening an American embassy. Anyway, this matter dragged on and on. Allen Nathanson and I just kept at it. Finally, we spent a little over a year in Leeds, studying Mongolian.

After about four or five months I figured that something was not right. Nevertheless, I decided to do something positive. So I said to my instructor, Onon: "Look, we've gone about as far as we can with this introductory textbook. The FSI is willing to let us stay a while longer. Why don't you and I try to do something useful?" This idea had originally

been proposed by Owen Lattimore. Lattimore visited us from Paris. During this visit we talked about this project. I would take the official Mongolian communist history, the first of its kind, published in Mongolian, and translate it into English, with the help of Onon.

Owen Lattimore thought that this would be a wonderful idea, as this history was the first of its kind. That's how I spent seven to nine months, working 14 to 18 hours a day, grinding out a translation into English of this official, communist history of Mongolian, doing the best I could. Of course, the text was very formalistic. It was an official, communist publication. It was very ideological in its approach. It was a communist textbook. Each morning I would take my draft to Onon. He would correct my translation and comment on it. I would then re-draft the translation. I went at this, day and night, seven days a week, for something like seven to nine months.

I finished that job in the spring or summer of 1974 with a book manuscript. I persuaded Harvard University to publish it. It had a beautiful, red cover, because the Mongolians loved the color red. The cover also had lovely, gold characters in the old, Mongolian script. Owen Lattimore wrote a magisterial review of it in the Sunday Times of London. That was my contribution to Mongolian studies. It ended up, I was told, under a glass case, as an exhibit at the Mongolian Academy of Sciences.

It probably is in another receptacle now, that is, a trash can, because of its hackneyed approach to the communist history of Mongolia, although it also contained about 100 pages of my own endnotes which sometimes referred to non-communist materials. Producing it was a great educational experience for me. I discovered that it mimicked the revisions which were going on in Soviet historiography. Pages that involved Stalin had been cut out, rewritten, and then glued in. Then further deletions had to be made when Khrushchev was ousted from power in 1964. It was finally published in 1966 two years after Brezhnev came to power. It was a fascinating document in terms of gaining insight as to how communists publish and rewrite history.

Q: What was your reading as to why the Mongolians did not permit the U.S. to open up an embassy?

BROWN: My reading was, and is, that Moscow didn't want us to open an embassy. They wanted us to recognize the Mongolian People's Republic [MPR] but they didn't want us to open even a small American embassy in Ulan Bator, the capital of the MPR, at that time. The Soviets knew what we were about. What we were about was to open up another window looking into the Soviet Empire, and they didn't want that.

Q: You mean that they were having enough trouble with us messing around with China.

BROWN: Yes, this would have been like our embassies in Communist Eastern Europe. Again, our relations with the Soviet Union at the time were bad. The Mongols were in a very delicate position. They couldn't say "Yes" to opening an American embassy and they didn't want to say "No." So they resorted to all kinds of tactical games to avoid saying a

straight “No,” when they couldn't give us a “Yes.” To this day I haven't visited Mongolia. It's my ambition to go there, and I'm delighted that we have a small embassy there now. It opened up much later.

Q: But we did not yet have full agreement to opening an embassy.

BROWN: Not during my time.

Q: I talked with Joe Laytri, either the first or the second Ambassador. They were working in an apartment. They would put a plywood board on top of the bathtub. That was the space for their duplicating machine. His wife was acting as DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] and General Services Officer.

BROWN: Well, accommodations were very limited to begin with. My experience, having served in the Soviet Union, was that we had to begin with a negotiated comprehensive package. After that, the opportunity to get concessions from the Mongolians would be gone.

Therefore, I found myself during the summer of 1974 walking into the Office of Personnel in the State Department. I had never gone there before in my career. The officer in charge of my rank of officers was, I think, Don Norland.

Q: He was later Ambassador to an African country. I interviewed him.

BROWN: Yes. Don received me and said, “Have I got a job for you!”

Q: Oh, oh!

BROWN: That was my initial response. He said, “Jack Perry is being named as our Charge d'Affaires in Prague, Czechoslovakia. Jack has just finished a magnificent tour, working for Russell Train, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency [EPA], running the U.S.-Soviet Environmental Agreement. Jack thinks that you're just the person to succeed him. Here's your chance.” I said to myself: “My God! I've been off the personnel radar screen for over a year now, having studied Mongolian at the University of Leeds. I'm in my early 40s. Now they propose that I go over to the EPA and fall at least as far off the personnel radar screen there.”

So I was concerned about this. However, I talked to Jack Perry, who assured me that it was a fascinating job. In the end it was arranged that I would have an interview with Russell Train, the Administrator of the EPA. The interview ran this way. Train was terribly busy, as always, but he was visiting the State Department in his limousine. He picked me up and told the driver to drive to National Airport, from which he was flying to the Mid West. The interview took place in the back of his limousine. He asked a few questions, made a few remarks, and concluded: “Okay, you've got the job. If you 'screw up,' you're fired. When you really need me, let me know. Remember that this is a good

agreement. We meet annually, both in Moscow and in Washington. I had a wonderful trip to Moscow when I accompanied President Nixon to sign the environmental, as well as other agreements, in 1972. So run it. If you get into trouble, come and see me.” That was the interview. I accepted the job, and that was that.

No sooner was I assigned there when I was called in by Winston Lord. You may not remember this, but he was then the Director of the Office of Policy Planning. He called me into his office and said, “I’d like you to go to work for me, with your background. I hear that you’re a ‘good guy.’” I said, “Thank you very much, but I have just accepted a commitment to Russell Train in the EPA. I don’t think that I should break that commitment.” He said, “Oh, we can take care of that.” I said, “No, I gave my word and I think that I should stay with it.” So I did not go to work for Win Lord. I went to work for Russell Train.

I worked at the EPA from June or July, 1974, until two years later, in 1976. This job was fascinating. First of all, I had to sort out my position within the EPA bureaucracy. I had been seconded to the EPA, with my salary paid by the State Department. Immediately, I had to fight off the efforts of Fitzhugh Green, the Associate Administrator of EPA for Foreign Affairs and International Relations, who wanted to fit me into his office. Bearing in mind Jack Perry’s advice, I said, “With all respect, I am working directly for Mr. Train.” EPA had two towers, East and West. I moved into the other tower, set up my own, tiny office, and had my own stationery printed in Russian and English with the logo, “The U.S.-Soviet Environmental Agreement.”

This was a big program which survived the distinct, subsequent downturn in U.S.-Soviet relations. We had an agreement that covered vast functional and geographic areas. For example, air and water pollution; earthquake prediction and analysis; and industrial, biological, chemical, and maritime pollution. On paper this agreement also covered the Arctic area, although the Soviets had said that this was on paper only. Also covered were the effect of noise, historic preservation, and a whole gamut of agricultural and pesticide pollution problems. There were hundreds of delegations that went back and forth between the two countries.

At the top of this joint commission we had Russell Train, for the United States, and Prof. Yuri Antonovitch Israel, the head of Hydromet, which studied the hydrological and meteorological surfaces of the Soviet Union. Dr. Israel was a man in his early 40s. He was a doctor of the Soviet Academy of Sciences and a distinguished atomic scientist. As I say, he was also the head of Hydromet, which had a staff of at least 100,000 people, its own airplanes, and its own researchships.

I was Executive Secretary on the U.S. side, and Boris Kuvshinikov was my Soviet counterpart. He was a professional. For someone who had worked, as I did, under the terrific restraints applied by the Soviets against the American embassy in Moscow, this was a whole, new ball game. I was keenly conscious of the Soviet system, hated it, and was aware of the restrictions and limitations. What a joy it was to be able to expand one’s

work, so that whenever we met in Moscow, I was able to move into their offices with an American secretary, our own typewriters, and work on their premises. That was simply unheard of in those days.

Obviously, down the hall from my office in this Soviet building was a KGB [Secret Police] officer. However, the atmosphere was collegial and cordial. They were pleasantly surprised that I spoke Russian adequately. The Soviet officials I dealt with spoke good English. We were determined to make this system work.

Q: What was this system?

BROWN: The system covered an agreement for environmental protection which was signed by Podgorny and President Nixon in June, 1972, as I recall, along with seven other agreements. The purpose of the agreements was to work together, academically and scientifically, to analyze, ameliorate, and try to head off, as much as possible, the deleterious effects of environmental pollution, in two, big, industrial and agricultural societies. These were very different societies.

Jack Perry had worked with the Soviets to set up this system. Jack along with Lee Talbot had been a member of the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), when Train had first headed CEQ. Then Train became the second head of the EPA. Jack then faded out, and I was the first to work over at EPA in this capacity. I was not a member of the CEQ. We had dozens of U.S. agencies involved, and the private sector also participated in our work. The Soviets had hundreds of different groups involved. It was fascinating to see the workings of the Soviet bureaucracy and the feudal nature of their bureaucracy in this respect, vis-a-vis our own.

I could relatively easily jump the spark from where I was to the Departments of Agriculture, State, Interior, other U.S. Government agencies, or, indeed, wherever I needed to go. As I was representing Train who represented the President, I could make a phone call and go over and see somebody, even a senior USG official, on short notice. When I dealt with Russell Train, wearing his hat as co-chairman of the U.S.-Soviet Agreement, but also as head of EPA, I could usually get some money out of him. There was no separate budget for this program. The money required for a given activity would have to come out of the hide of a U.S. Government agency.

The Soviet bureaucracy was entirely different. In fact, Soviet bureaucrats would tell me, allegedly in confidence, that they couldn't do this or that. They would sometimes even say, "Could you try to work this matter up this way (in this Soviet ministry), over here (in another ministry), and then down?" They simply could not do certain things, except through us. The Soviet system was very stratified and stultified, like a series of feudal bureaucracies.

At least twice a year the co-chairmen of the U.S.-Soviet Agreement would meet, alternating between Moscow and Washington. High level delegations in all of these

different fields went back and forth between the two countries. My job was to follow up these meetings and minimize trouble. There were inevitable clashes and differences, as the two sides got into the nitty gritty details of these programs.

In short, the situation was like this. We were 15 or 20 years ahead of the Soviets as far as the gadgetry, that is, monitoring equipment and the hardware were concerned. The Soviets were well behind us and were ashamed of it. In certain areas, however, they had made significant progress in analytical modeling. For example, I found out through our own U.S. Geological Survey, which was the U.S. counterpart of a Soviet organization, that the Soviets had such high quality earthquake modeling that if you ran our earthquake data through it, you could have predicted the earthquakes in California and New York. That was really something! They didn't have as good quality seismographs as we did. They didn't have our level of wind tunneling experimentation on air pollution. They didn't have anything like the kind of physical model of Chesapeake Bay that we did. However, in terms of modeling theory they were very good at predicting the flow of a plume of smoke from a smokestack which would go hundreds of miles, hither and yon.

The Soviets were embarrassed to bring us into their laboratories. Probably, they had an additional problem, in that these laboratories did both military and civilian work. They would often entertain us. The table would groan with food and liquor. They would take us to cultural events. However, they were hesitant about taking our guys into their laboratories, although our people very much wanted to get into their laboratories. So there was a constant tension in this respect.

Dr. Israel, the Soviet co-chairman of this binational organization, was a distinguished, atomic scientist. Russell Train was, and is, a wonderful gentleman from the old, East Coast establishment. He was a dedicated environmentalist who had specialized in the protection of wild life, and so forth. He was not himself a scientist. However, Train had something which the Soviets didn't have. That is, he had an ability to apply environmental law to a given subject. It was remarkable to learn from Russell Train, when he was asked by the Soviet chairman of the Committee on Science and Technology, a very powerful apparatchik: "What can you do? What can you really do?" I was with Train at the time. Train said, "In dire circumstances I turned off Birmingham for three days. In other, dire circumstances I turned off the production of an metal processing plant on the Great Lakes." The Soviet committee chairman was astounded to learn that, in circumstances, Train could do this, even though this would have an immediate downstream economic ripple effect. That plant would close, and a lot of other plants downstream would close.

The Soviet committee chairman said that in effect they had no power like this, at least in practical terms. So the Soviet environmentalists were fascinated to see us operate and to see Train's EPA apparatus in operation. This was particularly so in terms of law and the administration thereof. They were fascinated with everything.

In connection with this environmental work, I got to places in the Soviet Union which I, as a diplomat, could never have otherwise visited. I was very careful in those days. We

kept the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] out of our work. We were concerned to keep this activity untarred by intelligence activity in any way, even though I knew that the KGB, on the Soviet side, had an eye on what we were doing. KGB people would come along with us as sort of watchdogs. I kept this strictly a matter of business. I would brief my project and sub-project leaders and say, "Don't get into politics. If you're not a drinker, stay away from booze. Otherwise, you'll go under very quickly. When these Soviet people visit the United States, don't try to put on the dog. Take them to your homes, but don't put on lavish affairs. Take them to a community hot dog barbecue or something like that. They have a little *per diem* money that we have apportioned to them. Treat them as regular people, because that's all that you need to do. That will be the greatest story ever."

It was fascinating to see these Soviets and Americans dealt with each other, both in the Soviet Union, when our guys were traveling there, and occasionally when I accompanied their delegations around the United States. What a really choice experience that was!

I'll give you an example. A delegation of very senior Soviet officials, including Dr. Yuri Israel, came to the United States in the fall of 1974. At that time Expo 74 was being held in Spokane, Washington and there were Soviet and U.S. environmental exhibits. It was arranged that they would first come to the EPA and attend conferences in Washington. Then I accompanied Dr. Israel and this high-level group out to the opening of the Soviet Pavilion at Expo 74. The shell of the exhibits is still out there. My son lives in Spokane, Washington, and I've seen it. It's now an empty shell.

The two exhibits were fascinating. The U.S. exhibit dealt with environmental protection. A huge, teepee-like structure had been put up, in which a clock was very audibly ticking. It told the viewers that every so many seconds so much forest was disappearing, so many rivers and so much air were being polluted, and so many other bad things were happening to our environment. Over in the Soviet exhibit was a huge bust of Lenin and another of Brezhnev. Then there were dreamy films of geese flying over the Siberian landscape. Upstairs was a magnificent exhibit of Scythian gold, pre-Christian Scythian gold, because that's what people wanted to see.

The contrast between the two exhibits was extraordinary. There were some official functions. As I was accompanying the Soviets down to an outdoor amphitheater, I saw people tailing me closely. I realized that they were local members of the Jewish Defense League who were about to try to get on the stage and mount a demonstration. So I spoke with the security people, and they blocked the Jewish Defense League off from the amphitheater. The demonstrators then ripped off their shirts, and all of them had anti-Soviet tee shirts on. At the end of a major Soviet reception when all of the guests had left, I was left alone with the Soviet Delegation. The Soviet guides to the exhibition were beautiful Soviet women who had been working there for months. One of them said to me in Russian: "What's the matter with the Americans? All of them were asking about the whales, the killing of the whales. We've got problems of disarmament and other, global problems. And all of these Americans keep coming up and saying: 'Stop killing the whales! It's crazy.'" Here you saw the contrast between two different cultures.

I arranged to send an ornithologist, Bill Sladen, who is still alive, to the USSR Wrangel Island in the Arctic Ocean. I went to Nunivak Island off Alaska with U.S. and Soviet specialists in snow and ice. We caught and boxed 40 Musk Oxen on Nunivak Island off Alaska. It was something right out of Jack London, right out of a film on the Arctic. I ran into an incident with local hunters in Alaska, who were furious that we were taking these animals away. They had been protected on a federal reserve. In exchange for something that we were doing, we would fly them to the Soviet Union and where they would be re-introduced into the Soviet environment. We had a big fuss about this, and a local sheriff came out with a big .45 caliber pistol and, on the basis of a local judge's order prohibited the Soviet aircraft from taking off. I had to get somebody from the Department of Justice involved in this, on an emergency basis, and get an order from a judge in the middle of the night, vacating the previous order, and so that we could fly the Musk Oxen out.

When I arranged to have them flown out, I had two U.S. Air Force officers who spoke Russian on that flight. They landed in the Soviet Union, at some of the northernmost forbidden bases in Soviet Siberia, places where you couldn't get anybody permission to visit. They were wined and dined and passed from one Soviet Arctic base to the other. The insights that this gave me on the way the Soviet system worked were just extraordinary. So it was a marvelous assignment.

Q: You were talking about the environment. At this point we were fairly early on in this connection. We didn't admit that there was such a thing as acid rain.

BROWN: We were beginning to do that.

Q: President Reagan hadn't yet come on the scene. What I mean is that we were beginning to do some things. However, the Soviet Union today is an absolute, environmental disaster. There was continuing leakage of petroleum from oil fields.

BROWN: And the Soviets were gilding the lily, to put it mildly. However, as our people got around the Soviet Union, over time we began to learn of the disasters that were taking place across the board in the Soviet system. We did not know the full extent of the disaster but we could see that bad things were happening on many different fronts. We could see that some of the Soviets, as dedicated scientists, were really concerned. They were trying to capture what they could from us in a positive sense and then work it into their system.

We had to be careful to avoid overkill. We did not know the full, terrible extent of the environmental disasters taking place in the Soviet Union, but we had quite a few revelations.

Q: I would think that one of the problems with something like this would be to have your delegations come back to the United States and talk about the disasters of the Soviet economy and the environmental problems that existed.

BROWN: I think that a greater problem was keeping this agreement going. Soviet-American relations were taking a downturn. When President Nixon resigned [in August, 1974], I was visiting CEQ with a Soviet delegation. Gerald Ford was sworn in as President. The Soviet-American relationship was not in good condition. Relations were already deteriorating. The Soviet-American Environmental Agreement was one of those bridges where well-meaning people on both sides were trying to cooperate. Nevertheless, the background music was getting worse and worse, in Congress and elsewhere.

My problem, administratively, over time was to continue to extract money from the budgets of my project leaders, who had already entertained visiting Soviet scientists who had visited the Soviet Union themselves, and who wondered whether it was worth continuing to fund projects without specific congressional funding. Remember that I was not operating in isolation here. I was running a very large program. It was functioning well. The Department of State, of course, supervised the implementation of this program from its viewpoint, as well as in terms of other agreements it was carrying out with the Soviet Union. There was an officer in the embassy in Moscow, usually the Science Officer, whose job it was to look after all of these agreements. The Department of State had a considerable number of people monitoring and checking the visas and so forth of Soviet visitors. It also handled the incidents that invariably came up.

So I stayed in the Soviet loop, if you will. I had no intention at the time of returning to serve in the Soviet Union, but I was involved with Soviet visitors and worked closely with them. I occasionally visited the Soviet Union, would check in with the embassy in Moscow, and would usually have private and confidential briefings. Then I would go off and do my environmental work and check back with the embassy.

Some of the travel I did in the Soviet Union was really remarkable. I took into the Soviet Union our first Arid Ecosystem Delegation. We ended up in the Repotek Desert in Uzbekistan. It was something like the Sahara Desert. I visited the Karakorum Canal, which turned out to be a disaster involving the Sea of Aral and all of that.

I accompanied Russell Train on a major visit which he made to the Soviet Union with his wife and two teenaged children. First, we attended a meeting in Moscow. Then his counterpart, Dr. Yuri Israel, made available an aircraft for him, on which we flew on an environmental journey which took us to Samarkand and Bokhara in Uzbekistan, where we visited the historic preservation of the sites there. We stayed in quarters normally reserved for the Communist Party elite, which I never would have gotten into otherwise. These quarters were fully furnished, with all of the facilities. We flew on to the Pamir Mountains and to Irkutsk. We took one of the Hydromet Survey ships out onto Lake Baikal, one of the world's greatest bodies of water, containing one-fifth of the fresh water in the lakes of the world.

We were headed for the Arctic Circle when bad weather closed in, so we went no farther than Yakutsk. That was in the Arctic Region, but we couldn't get up to the northernmost

part of that region, as we had hoped. We then took a train back to Khabarovsk, on the Sino-Soviet border. I put Dr. Train and his family on a plane to Tokyo. I said, "Boss, did you have a good time?" He said, "Yes, a wonderful time." I said, "I have to go back and meet your counterpart, Dr. Israel. It will be his turn to come to the United States." Train said, "Give him what he wants."

So I went back and thanked Dr. Israel in Moscow and said, "Looking ahead to your upcoming visit to the United States, I know that you've been there before and have visited many different places. I'd like to tailor something for you which is of environmental interest and which you would like. Of course, we will start in Washington. Where would you like to go after that? Would you like to go to Florida?" He said, "That would be nice, but I've already been there." I said, "New Orleans?" He said, "You're getting warmer." I said, "How about visiting Los Angeles or San Francisco and seeing the great environmental and marine laboratories in that part of the country?" He said, "Bill, you're getting warmer. How about 'Gavai' (i.e., Hawaii)]? The members of the most senior delegation I want to bring to the United States from the Soviet Academy of Sciences have been to the United States and have traveled around. However, 'Gavai' would be the best."

To make a long story short, I ended up taking them to Hawaii. We didn't have USG airplanes available, but we got their tickets to Hawaii and put them up at the Kahala Hilton. They said, "Eta rai." This means: "This is paradise." At the conference held out there, which covered looking ahead environmentally deep into future, we met on the ground floor in a lovely conference room. Dr. Israel started off by saying: "I rise to register a protest." I was really nonplused and said, "What do you mean?" He said, "The Soviet side is at a great disadvantage." I said, "What is the problem?" He said, "If the American Delegation will just turn around," and we swivelled around in our seats. Behind us, through a huge, panoramic window was a Moon Bridge across which beautiful maidens were tripping their way to the beach in their bikinis. I said, "If you want, we'll switch sides." He said, "No, no!"

However, speaking more seriously, at that conference they got into the question of the Ozone Layer around the South Pole. This was in 1976. The U.S. side had observed holes appearing in the atmosphere. We were beginning to link these holes with hydrofluorcarbon emissions. We brought this point out, and Dr. Israel and company were "backpedaling." They were arguing that this might be true, but it was not proven by any means. They said that we will have to see whether, in fact, there is a causal relationship here; whether, in fact, the effect is growing; and whether or not there is a possibility of regeneration of the ozone layer. You know, in so many cases Nature regenerates itself. They knew the economic consequences of going down a track which said that these emissions, commercial sprays, and the great refrigerant, freon, in industrial societies, including the U.S. and the Soviet Union, are ruining the atmosphere. There were also genuine conflicting views among the scientists, so no agreement was reached on this matter. I hark back to this serious, scientific conversation in 1976. Look at what has happened since then. Meanwhile, things were getting worse in terms of U.S.-Soviet relations, but the Environmental Agreement was still being implemented.

Then, one day in late 1976, I got a phone call from Mark Garrison, who had recently returned from a tour of duty as Political Counselor and later DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] in our embassy in Moscow. I had broken him in as a Passport Officer many years previously in Hong Kong, when he was integrated into the Foreign Service under the Wristonization Program. He did a stint overseas as a Consular Officer, returned to Washington, and became a distinguished Soviet watcher. He said, "We need to send you to Moscow as Political Counselor." I said, "Thank you very much, Mark, but I've served in Moscow and I now run this Environmental Agreement with the Soviet Union. I have no intention of going back to Moscow." Mark said, "Well, Marshal Bremont has just been declared Persona Non Grata [no longer acceptable to the Soviet Government], in response to our declaring a Soviet official in their UN Delegation Persona Non Grata. We would very much like you to go to Moscow. You are the logical choice." I said, "Thank you for saying that, but are you telling me that the needs of the service call for me to go to Moscow?" He said, "Yes." So off I went to the Soviet Union in the wake of President Carter's election in 1976. I arrived in Moscow on January 1 or 2, 1977, as the new Political Counselor of the embassy and got back into the old traces.

Q: So we'll pick it up the next time at that point.

Today is March 18, 1999. Bill, we'll resume here after a little hiatus. It must have been pretty cold in Moscow in January, 1977.

BROWN: It was certainly cold.

Q: Tell me, you'd been in Moscow before this. Isn't that so?

BROWN: Yes. Let me say that my second posting to Moscow, as well as my timing, were unique. First of all, why did I go to Moscow? I went for the needs of the Foreign Service. That is, Marshall Bremont was the Political Counselor of the embassy. He had been declared persona non grata in retaliation for our having declared a Soviet spy assigned to the UN persona non grata. The Soviet official was of about the same rank and status as Marshall Bremont. I think that the Soviet official at the UN was on leave when we declared him persona non grata, so he couldn't come back to New York. It so happened that Marshall Bremont was on home leave, at that time, so the Soviets retaliated against him in that way. This was considered foul ball. After all, Marshall Bremont was not an intelligence officer, but a regular Foreign Service officer assigned to the embassy, but that was the temper of the times. The embassy needed a replacement for Marshall Bremont.

Now, I had served there in the embassy in Moscow from 1966 to 1968 as a Sino-Soviet watcher. My basic job was following Sino-Soviet developments. In 1967 I had witnessed the 50th anniversary of the Great October Bolshevik Revolution. Brezhnev had taken power in 1964, overthrowing Nikita Khrushchev. However, Brezhnev was newly in

power when I went to Moscow in 1966. I could speak and read Russian. More recently, from the end of 1973 to the end of 1976 I had been running the world's largest, environmental agreement, the one between the Soviet Union and the United States. In that capacity I had done considerable travel, both in the Soviet Union and in the United States.

Prior to that I had spent a period of about two years studying Mongolian. However, I was not assigned to Ulan Bator because the Mongolian Government did not agree to our opening up an embassy there. I had studied the history of the Mongolian People's Republic and translated into English the history of the Communist Party of Mongolia. Harvard University published this history, with the help of the FSI, I might add. So I was up on things Soviet, and I suppose that I was a logical choice to be assigned to Moscow as Political Counselor, there being no one else available. So I went to Moscow on very short notice.

Q: Excuse me, I always like to get when and where. You were in Moscow this time from 1977 to...?

BROWN: I was there in Moscow from January, 1977, through late June or early July, 1978, when I was transferred to Taiwan, Republic of China. Now, we had a very interesting situation in Moscow at the time. To draw in the big picture, and I'll come back to that, I read in today's New York Times a review of Henry Kissinger's latest volume of memoirs, Years of Renewal, which is well and favorably reviewed. I haven't yet had a chance to read this book but I would commend the possible listener or reader of this interview to that book for Kissinger's view of U.S.-Soviet relations, in which he played such a prominent role, under Presidents Nixon and Ford.

In early 1977 President Carter entered office, having just been elected in November, 1976. I was just leaving for Moscow. Carter was about to be sworn in as President. Late in the Ford administration, after a protracted and acrimonious exchange with the Soviets, President had nominated and the Senate had confirmed Malcolm Toon as the new Ambassador to the Soviet Union. That appointment was initially resisted by the Soviets. One story that I heard was that Secretary of State Kissinger said to Anatoli Dobrynin, the Soviet Ambassador to the United States: "If you want to remain as Soviet Ambassador to the United States, you'd better arrange to have Malcolm Toon receive agreement from your government as Ambassador to the Soviet Union." Ambassador Dobrynin had been Soviet Ambassador to the United States since the Kennedy administration and was considered a very influential representative. I don't know whether he was Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Washington, but he had tremendous access everywhere in the U.S. Government and in U.S. society more generally, including the White House.

Q: This was only logical, but what was the problem holding up Toon's agreement?

BROWN: Well, the problem was that Malcolm Toon had previously served in the American embassy in Moscow. He was a highly professional diplomat but he had a strong reputation for being tough as far as the Soviet Union was concerned. He had seen

tough times when he was Political Counselor in the American embassy in Moscow. He had been denounced personally by Pravda at that time.

Anyway, Toon eventually received agreement and was confirmed by the Senate. He arrived in Moscow in early 1977, just as I did. We were then faced with the situation that it was widely reported that President Carter was uneasy or unhappy about the appointment of Toon as Ambassador to the Soviet Union. There were all kinds of rumors and reports that President Carter was reviewing the appointment of Toon and five or six other Ambassadors. The others had been appointed to countries of much less significance than the Soviet Union.

Sargent Shriver was reported to be visiting Moscow amidst rumors that Ambassador Toon was going to be rapidly withdrawn from Moscow and that Shriver would become the next Ambassador to the Soviet Union.

I remember accompanying Ambassador Toon on a call on Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko. I guess that this was after Ambassador Toon had presented his credentials. All of these stories were swirling around, and the press was playing with them. In his typically churlish, sour, and sarcastic manner in talking to an American Ambassador, Gromyko's first words to Ambassador Toon were: "Are you still here in Moscow?" This was downright insulting.

Anyway, Ambassador Toon was very unhappy as the stories continued to circulate that the Carter administration was cool and negative toward him and was considering a replacement for him as Ambassador to the Soviet Union. This was understandable and was quite evident in the first press conference that Ambassador Toon held in Moscow for the American press. The press conference was "off the record" and wasn't long. Ambassador Toon said, in effect: "Look, I don't like the Soviets, and they don't like me. That's fine with me, and that's the way it ought to be, given the current state of our bilateral relations." Someone asked him about the story that Sargent Shriver had been in Moscow. Ambassador Toon said something like: "Look, I have nothing against Sargent Shriver, but that would be a disaster. What we need here in Moscow is a senior, qualified person." The conference went on like that.

As the press conference broke up, one of the better known correspondents turned to me and said, "Boy! My notebook is burning!" I said, "Stick it in your pocket and let it burn, buddy. Remember, this conference is off the record."

So this was the situation. The DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] in Moscow at the time was Jack Matlock, a fine and experienced, professional diplomat. He was well read and fluent in Russian. He was a very serious scholar of Russian, Belorussian, and Ukrainian affairs, as well as Soviet questions. Ambassador Toon was rather dour to begin with and was not in the best frame of mind, to put it mildly.

I would call your attention to Henry Kissinger's most recent book, which I haven't read or

reviewed. However, let me now talk about the overall Soviet-U.S. relationship as I saw it, as the new Political Counselor of the embassy in Moscow.

At this point [1977] Brezhnev had been in power since 1964. He had solidified his position. He had been unwell. There were reports of his illness, but he was very much in power. Now the 60th anniversary of the Great Bolshevik Revolution was coming up [in November, 1977]. With it, of course, came the near deification of Brezhnev. He had been the equivalent of a Brigadier General or Political Commissar of an Army Division [during World War II]. You were now beginning to see works published which made it seem as if he had won World War II all by himself!

The Soviet-U.S. relationship had soured. The U.S. had suffered a major setback in terms of prestige and morale in Vietnam. We were still very much suffering the aftermath of that. To a significant degree, the U.S. military were demoralized in that respect, suffering from the Vietnam Syndrome. The military establishment was being downsized.

As we perceived them, the Soviets were expanding their influence around the world at our expense. In Africa, they switched from supporting Said Barre in Somalia to Mengistu, the brutal, new dictator in Ethiopia. Ethiopia was in a fascinating position in terms of population, size, potential influence, and ideology. The switch of Soviet support from Barre to Mengistu was very upsetting. Fidel Castro of Cuba became involved in Angola. We learned that the Soviets were not happy about this Cuban involvement as such. Reportedly, the Cubans had not asked the Soviets for permission to involve themselves [in Angola], although they depended on Soviet sea and air transport to maintain Cuban forces in Angola. In their own way the Soviets were using their involvement in Latin America to expand their influence. There was rising concern in Washington about Soviet mischief-making and contacts in the Caribbean area and elsewhere in Latin America.

In Asia, you may remember, the Soviets looked mighty powerful at that time. Clashes had taken place along the Sino-Soviet during and after my first tour in Moscow [1966-1968] in which the Chinese communists did not come out at all well. Soviet muscle was very much in evidence. There was the ongoing nuclear missile arms race between the Soviet Union and the United States. This was the situation as President Jimmy Carter entered office. He had a new agenda and a new Secretary of State.

Q: You mean Cyrus Vance, the new Secretary of State.

BROWN: Yes. President Carter had a new agenda in which there were several elements deemed of major importance by the new administration, vis-a-vis Moscow.

Human rights was a very big issue. I would like to dwell on that at some length here. Of course, we continued with the policy of containment of the Soviet Union but we hoped to open up a new dialogue. The arms control issue was very high on the agenda of the early part of the Carter administration. Finally, there was another, significant item on the Carter administration agenda, and that was China. We could sense and feel that this new

President intended to complete the normalization of relations with China. We still hadn't reached closure on this issue, even after the Shanghai Communique of 1972.

Q: We had not exchanged Embassies.

BROWN: There were Liaison Offices in Beijing and Washington. We had some very important people involved in this process but we did not yet have a full, diplomatic relationship and all that that would mean. However, one could sense that the new, Carter administration meant to pursue this matter.

Q: As you were looking at it, did the Korean situation come to your attention?

BROWN: Oh, yes. How would the Soviets respond to the changing situation? If there were a pullout or downsizing of American forces in South Korea, how would that affect the balance of power in terms of the big game, that is, relations between the U.S., the Soviet Union, China, and Japan? These were major issues at the time.

Several of these relationships overlapped, and there were tensions and conflicts or elements of conflict, if you will, between them. Our job, as I saw it and as the American embassy in Moscow saw it, was to sort these relationships out and try to give them their due weight. It wasn't very long before we got into a real pickle on some of them.

In the human rights field President Carter's statements had given great hope to the dissidents in Moscow, including Sakharov and company, the Jewish dissident community, the refuseniks, and so forth. This rapidly led to a KGB [Soviet secret police] crackdown. When I arrived in Moscow, the KGB was starting to roll up the dissidents.

Then in February came a real stunner, a bolt out of the blue. I think that this happened on either a Saturday or a Sunday. Ambassador Toon called me in on very short notice. We met in the "Tank" [conference room built of plastic for highly classified meetings]. The Ambassador laid on the table a brief instruction from Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, "You will deliver the following message to Andrei Sakharov from the President." It was a first person message from President Carter dated February 7. It was a brief but very poignant statement of support for virtually everything that Andrei Sakharov had said. Ambassador Toon asked me what my reaction was. Now, I was not Ambassador Toon, and he was not I. We had never served together before and didn't know each other too well. We came from different backgrounds. However, we were both professional Foreign Service Officers. I looked at the message and said, "I'm very, very concerned." Ambassador Toon said, "It's a disaster, an utter disaster!" We both focused on the fact that from our view as professional diplomats, the prospects for the arms control initiative, which the Carter administration was widely reported to be preparing to take to Moscow, would be negatively affected. There was no surer way of souring the atmosphere for that major undertaking than to deliver a message which could only be taken by Brezhnev as a direct, first person insult.

I mention this because of the dilemmas which you can run into when you are involved in the big, diplomatic game, and you have all of these cross currents in play, some of which are in conflict. Ambassador Toon said, "What do you recommend?" I said, "I recommend that we send a message to the Department of State saying that, of course, we stand ready to deliver this message as soon as possible. We should add, however: 'We assume that Washington is aware that this message could have a major, negative impact and be misinterpreted by Brezhnev as insulting thus souring the atmosphere for a major, Carter administrative initiative, arms control.'" We sent a back a message along these lines and got a reply shortly thereafter from Secretary of State Vance, who was on a visit to the Middle East. In effect the reply from the Secretary was: "You've received your message. Deliver it."

So Ambassador Toon called me back into the "tank." We sat down, and he said, "What do you recommend?" I said, "Well, Mr. Ambassador, we could try a cutout, a friend of a friend to deliver this message. There are various, possible intermediaries. However, no matter what we do, the Soviets are going to know exactly what we are up to. They have us and Sakharov so bugged that they will know what we are up to. My recommendation is: just deliver the message straight out in the open. Call Sakharov down to the embassy, and he'll come. Then give him the message." And that's what happened.

The Political Section in Moscow had two sub-sections: the Internal and the External Units. Both units were headed by wonderful guys who did very, very well in the Foreign Service. They were real, professional diplomats. The head of the Internal Unit at the time was Dick Combs, later to become DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] in Moscow. I talked the matter over with Dick, who phoned Sakharov. Although Sakharov had been publicly pilloried and disgraced by the Soviet Government, he was still a member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. As a member of the Academy of Sciences, he phoned down to his motor pool. The result was that he was driven down in a proper, black limousine to the embassy, in front of which a great crowd of KGB goons had gathered, with cameras. As he stepped out of the limousine, the cameras were put about a foot in front of his face, with many flashbulbs going off.

Sakharov came into the embassy. Dick Combs read to him from the copy of the President's message which we had typed up. He said that the original copy would be coming in the Diplomatic Pouch. Sakharov said immediately: "Do you have a xerox machine?" Combs said we did, and ran off a dozen or so copies of this statement. He expressed tremendous gratitude and satisfaction and went out, faced the camera flashes, got into his limousine, went home, and held a press conference. So we were then in the soup. Brezhnev and company were obviously very angry. Sakharov and company were delighted.

This was now about February, 1977. President Carter had recently been installed in office. It was arranged that I would meet with a group of Soviet dissidents in the apartment of our key, contact officer for such matters, Joe Pretzel, who is still very active and has been a roving Ambassador in the whole Caucasus area and that part of the world.

Joe arranged this meeting. Attending were my wife, Sharansky, and several others, including a number of non-Jews who were nonetheless dissidents. It was a fascinating evening. Our guests were showering praise on President Carter. It got to the point where I said, "You know, my reading of history is that dissident movements, throughout history, essentially make it or fail on their own and have no need for outside help. Now, you could argue that there are exceptions. Here you are in Moscow, the capital of an enormous country. I would like to ask you, and it may sound strange, coming from me, whether you really believe that this kind of support from President Carter is going to help your cause? The way I look at it, one of you who is missing tonight has gone underground. The KGB is arresting dissidents, and all of you stand to be incarcerated by the KGB."

They said, "That's right. Keep it up. Keep the pressure on the Soviet Government. Increase the pressure." They said, "You see, Mr. Brown, you don't really understand Soviet society. There is no other way than to pressure this kind of regime. Put the pressure on, keep it on, if you can, and increase it." Well, it was an interesting exercise. These dissidents were all "rolled up" [arrested] soon after. Within a few weeks trumped up charges had been pressed against Sharansky, who was jailed. I didn't see him for another nine years. This was a prime agenda item for the Carter administration which, I think, very much enjoyed the publicity. This incident was very much on the agenda of human rights constituencies, including Members of Congress.

I'll give you another example of the kinds of dilemmas we would get into. The Armed Services Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives was then led by Congressman Mel Price [Republican, Illinois], who was well on in years. He was coming to visit Moscow at the time of the Congressional Easter Recess in 1977. We received a cable from Congressman Price, which said, "I'll be coming your way." Then followed the usual "laundry list." He said that he wanted to see members of the Soviet Politburo; the top Soviet leadership; the Chief of Staff, General Orgakov; and other top Soviet military leaders, since he was the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee.

I took this cable down to the Soviet Foreign Ministry. They said, "We didn't invite them. This is a self-invitation. They want to come to Moscow at Easter time? Well, you can go down to Intourist and make arrangements. We're not inviting them and we're not giving you any guarantees whatsoever that they'll be seen by any of the Soviet officials they have mentioned." This gave me a real problem. I ended up doing something unusual, because throughout my career I had developed great respect for Congressional Delegations and their power in a variety of ways, both observable and unobservable. I had been named Control Officer for CODEL Price [Congressional Delegation Price]. I flew to meet them in Copenhagen. They had their own Air Force plane.

I went to Copenhagen at my own initiative. I sent a cable and was told that this group of Congressmen would be touring the Castle of Elsinore, in Denmark, but I could meet with them in the evening and then fly with them to Leningrad [now St. Petersburg] and then down to Moscow. I wanted to have a good session with these Congressmen because I figured that this was a very important trip and at a very difficult time.

Well, I got to the Control Room of Congressional Delegation Price in Copenhagen and was told: "Well, maybe one or two members of the Delegation can see you." However, as things turned out, the word got around, and I met with a great number of them in Congressman Mel Price's suite. The Executive Director of the House Armed Services Committee at the time was John Ford. He had long been Executive Director of the House Armed Services Committee. He said to me: "You'd better lay it on the line with these people, because some of them have some pretty interesting ideas." I soon found out that, among these Congressmen, were both members of the Committee and other Congressmen who were self-invited and who were there to pursue the primary agenda item of human rights. Some of them were there for both military matters and human rights issues.

I won't go into names of these Congressmen, but one of them, a distinguished gentleman from California, had a list of the dissidents and refuseniks that he wanted to meet on arrival in Leningrad. Others on the delegation wanted to attend church services and meet with dissidents of this or that stripe. There were many different varieties of dissidents in those days.

I said, "You know, this will be on your arrival in the Soviet Union. You'll be there in Leningrad for a day or two, and then we'll go on to Moscow. You hope to meet with the top Soviet leadership. Thus far we have absolutely no, positive response on that. If you have any hope whatsoever of having a constructive dialogue with the Soviet leadership, you have to bear in mind that the KGB will be following each and every one of us, day and night, as well as all of those that we contact. By contacting dissidents you run the risk of souring the whole atmosphere." However, they were determined. They had made many commitments to constituents back home.

So I did what I could to get dissident addresses. I alerted our Consulate General in Leningrad, I arranged for some of the members of the Delegation to attend church services, and others to meet with dissidents, both Jewish and non-Jewish. When we arrived in Leningrad, Arabatov was there to meet us. This was a pleasant surprise, not that he was a pleasant personality. However, he was a well-known specialist on U.S.-Soviet affairs.

Q: Wasn't he at the time the head of the North American Institute, or something like that?

BROWN: Right.

Q: His name was Georgi Arabatov.

BROWN: Right. His son now holds forth as a current expert on North American affairs in the Soviet Union. Arabatov made some sour remarks, and off we went. It was a brief, fascinating tour to Leningrad. I accompanied several of the Congressmen to a Baptist, Easter service, where the congregation was so moved that the congregation, if not speaking in tongues, was at least speaking out from the floor. I found it fascinating that

one member of the congregation at this service was in a Soviet Army private's uniform. The Members of Congress were put right up on the pulpit, right up on the stage, as it were.

That evening I got together with Georgi Arabatov, who was drunk. I met him up on the top floor of the Leningrad Hotel. He gave me "hell." He said, "We know where you and your people have been. And you expect me to help them, etc." I talked pretty tough back to him. I said, "They are what they are. They are members of a very important Committee of the United States Congress. They ought to be of very considerable interest to you." He said that they had asked to meet the Soviet Defense Minister, but he was sick and was not available. I said, "Well, at least they ought to meet the Chief of Staff, Orgakov." Arabatov said, "He's got a bad cold. He's been on maneuvers," and so forth. I said, "Well, put him in a wheelchair and roll him out! You owe it to yourselves as well as us to have a dialogue develop." I had to help Arabatov down to his room, he was so drunk.

We then flew on to Moscow. No appointments, of course, had been granted by the Soviet political leadership. Further meetings were held with Jewish and non-Jewish dissidents. We had a meeting with Chief of Staff Orgakov, the first official American delegation to have met with him. He received the Congressmen with a huge staff to his left and his right. He took their questions himself, made notes, and, of course, fed them the line that the Soviet military budget was infinitely small, compared with the U.S. defense budget. Of course, it was unbelievably small, because much of it was hidden under other budget headings.

General Orgakov conducted this briefing suavely and with finesse. Our Military Attaches had never seen a performance anything like this. They had never been able to see him. They had always been blocked off by phalanxes of Soviet officers. Here they had him on full display. I saw an Orgakov who was a soldier-diplomat.

Then we went down to Kiev. There were more meetings with dissidents, refuseniks, and so forth. The Congressmen asked me to leave various things which they hadn't been able to deliver. They would give this stuff on me, asking me to deliver it to so and so at such and such an address. It was just incredible. However, it shows you the kinds of things that we can get into, as we get into these missionary modes and if the Congress, let alone other human rights constituencies, bless such initiatives.

I consider myself a human rights advocate as such. I've done a lot in that field. However, there is a dilemma facing a professional Foreign Service Officer in this connection. I'll say that former Congresswoman Pat Schroeder, now that she's out of Congress, came out of that trip to Moscow with a somewhat lurid reputation for what she had done. It wasn't long after that trip that I received a lengthy clipping from a newspaper, to the effect that she had smuggled out in her brassiere and panties tape recordings of her interviews with Soviet dissidents. This wasn't exactly the best way to go about dealing with such matters and then publicizing them in that way.

A word on our assessment of the situation in the Soviet Union at the time, as the Sharansky trial was being prepared in Moscow. He was labeled a U.S. spy. His roommate or a close associate of his was a KGB agent. The Soviet authorities trumped up the charges against Sharansky.

We got into a real fuss about such matters. From time to time it was useful to try and step back and estimate what the Soviet public thought about all of this. We regretted having to conclude that the Soviet man in the street just didn't give a damn. (End of tape)

Q: You were saying that Sharansky was...

BROWN: Frankly speaking, he was an unknown, apart from a select circle of the Soviet intelligentsia and fellow dissidents. Of course, he got great publicity in the United States and in the West more generally. Incidentally, I think the world of him. He is a wonderful person.

My conclusion, and those of my colleagues, was that this issue came down to being a U.S.-Soviet confrontation. In that configuration, the Soviet public supported the Soviet regime hands down. First of all, it didn't give a damn about someone like Sharansky. Secondly, if this were portrayed as it was as a U.S. intrusion in Soviet affairs, it was just another negative from the viewpoint of Soviet public opinion, whatever that was.

Q: I just wanted to ask what was the effect of the visit of this Congressional Delegation?

BROWN: I think that such visits can be extremely useful. There was an important audience in the Soviet Union listening to Members of Congress, regarding our concerns and how to handle the Soviet-American relationship. I was delighted that for the first time until then, they at least had a formal session with General Ogarkov. We hoped that this would give us the leverage, the precedent, to have such dialogues in the future.

Early on in the Carter administration we learned that Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and Paul Warnke, the new head of ACDA [Arms Control and Disarmament Agency], were planning to come to Moscow for arms control discussions. Ambassador Toon, suffering from the slings and arrows of his situation at the time, managed to set up a meeting with Secretary Vance in Brussels, so that they could get to know each other and to prepare more effectively for Vance's visit to Moscow. Toon told me that Secretary Vance asked him: "What do you think of the package?" Toon told me that he replied: "I could give you a better opinion if you would show it to me." In other words, the Department had not shown the American Ambassador in Moscow what they were bringing for discussion with the Soviets!

Then, having absorbed as much of the package as he could, and this was very complicated material, Toon told me that he had said to Vance: "Look, if this is what President Carter wants and which you all have decided on, then I'll do everything that I can to advance it. However, I can tell you straight out that in the current atmosphere in

Moscow, this is not going to fly.”

Well, Secretary Vance and Paul Warnke came to Moscow with that package anyway. Vance was a unique Secretary of State. He visited the embassy, wearing a blue, woolen sweater. He spent some time in our terribly cramped quarters, and gave us all a pat on the back, and that was very good for morale.

Vance also initiated a new approach with the press. That is, at the end of each day's discussions with the Soviets, he would have a press conference. Well, the discussions with the Soviets had been very acrimonious and unproductive. This was inevitably reflected in the press conference. On the next day or so the Soviets began holding their own press conference and blasting us. So the whole visit was a flop and a shock.

Now, Ambassador Toon had wisely said to Vance and Warnke: “Look, in view of the bugging of the hotels, I offer you my nearby residence. Then you can work here in the embassy.” The Soviets had offered them a beautiful villa in the Lenin Hills area. Vance and Warnke declined Ambassador Toon's offer and went to the villa offered by the Soviets in the Lenin Hills area. As the Political Counselor at the embassy, I went out there with them. The Vance Delegation was deeply concerned and, I would say, in a state of semi-shock. Vance and Warnke were walking around the great, gravel driveway, so that, hopefully, they could have a private conversation with each other. This was a rather simplistic view, shall we say. We had warned all of the members of the Delegation that everything they said and did in their rooms would be recorded by the Soviets. I entered some of their rooms at this villa, where there was classified material scattered all over the place. Delegation members were getting on the phone back to the State Department in Washington, speaking in the clear, and expressing dismay that this visit had failed and that they had been stiff armed by the Soviets. Of course, since Ambassador Toon had warned them in advance, this should not have come as a surprise. So we were off to a tough start.

Q: Can you talk a little bit about what you were picking up? Cyrus Vance and Paul Warnke were not novices. They were not like William Jennings Bryan coming out of Nebraska. You had this peculiar Carter administration in that you had Zbigniew Brzezinski there as National Security Adviser, who hated the Russians. You also had the sort of evangelical peace side of President Jimmy Carter. Were Vance and Warnke talking to other Soviet experts? Did they know what they were getting into?

BROWN: Frankly, I do not know. I can only suppose that they had expert briefings back in Washington, but this certainly didn't come across. I say that with the deepest respect for them individually as public servants of great stature and integrity. However, I felt that they just weren't equipped at that time for the task at hand in terms of a realistic approach. But they were loyal, senior civil servants of President Jimmy Carter.

Q: This is one of the things that one hears as we do these interviews. We hear of the disaster of Secretary of State Cyrus Vance going out on a mission which would not be

successful. This is not a good way to start an administration.

BROWN: Well, look, today we are talking in March, 1999. If I were to have Sharansky here, who is now a cabinet minister in the Israeli Government and if he were seated over in that chair between us, I am sure that he would look back and say, "You did exactly the right thing. Look, the Soviet Empire toppled, the whole human rights approach was vindicated, and we're all the better for it." I cite this in terms of the dilemmas that a professional Foreign Service Officer runs into in such matters. What weight should you give this agenda item as against that agenda item? If you think that the administration is wrong, how do you try and educate them and, at the same time, be seen by them as loyal messengers and servants of a new administration? This is a very difficult question.

Now, there is another question that your remark brings up, and that is the position of Zbigniew Brzezinski. It was known that Brzezinski hated the Soviets. Most of us did. It also became apparent that Brzezinski wanted to come out himself and deal with the Soviets. The State Department was determined to prevent this.

One of the means used at the time was an instrument called the "Informal." Embassy Moscow and the Soviet desk in the State Department had found, over the years, that in order to cope with leaks more efficiently and to cope more effectively with those people back in Washington who might disagree with this or that professional approach by the Soviet desk, an Informal channel of communications was set up which functioned concurrently with the regular telegrams. These messages were labeled "Informals," and they were very closely held. These messages would be signed off in the Ambassador's office in the embassy in Moscow, but there was no easily available file of them. Similar precautions were taken back here in the State Department in Washington. I remember on one occasion that we received the text of a proposed Brzezinski operative plan regarding the Soviet Union, which involved going after what was described as the soft underbelly of the USSR. That is, go after the minorities in the Soviet Union, the Ukrainians, the Georgians, the Armenians, and so forth. In other words, stick it to them.

The Soviet desk in the State Department used the Informal channel to ask for information to critique this reported Brzezinski approach. So we used the Informal channel in a fairly lengthy reply. It was not to be the kind of thing which was then intended to surface. The idea was: "What is the best way of coping with Brzezinski?" I must say that Brzezinski didn't visit Moscow during my time in the embassy.

I'd like to talk about our analysis at the time of the Soviet economy and society. Bear in mind that our local sources in Moscow were extremely limited. The Soviets were not about to give us their statistics or any particular help in discovering their weaknesses, economic or otherwise. It was a real challenge to collect material on these subjects. An awful lot of the material we collected was anecdotal in nature. Bear in mind that on the one hand I was a non-economist arriving in Moscow for a second tour of duty, although this was some years after my first tour there.

During my second tour in Moscow I could see that in big places like Moscow and Leningrad there were more things to buy in the shops than had previously been available. There was a greater variety of goods. At the same time the goods available were still of fairly poor quality and very uneven in availability. When we traveled out in the countryside, we found that even many of these items were not available. This was particularly noticeable on a seasonal basis. During the winter, for example, the Soviets were desperately short of meat. It was so bad that my Yugoslav colleagues used to comment on the situation.

The Yugoslavs were really good observers. It was in their national interest to do this. The Yugoslav officials to whom I refer spoke fluent Russian and often had their children attending Russian schools. They were able to buttress our observations by telling us about other aspects of the situation.

Invitations were being issued among the intelligentsia in Moscow in the dead of winter: "Come out to my dacha for a night of lamb" or beef or whatever, meaning, "Bring the meat with you." I used to jog in those days very early in the morning. I used to see crowds of people coming into Moscow from the hinterland at the railway stations, carrying what looked like empty laundry bags over their shoulders. They were coming in to buy whatever they could in terms of canned goods at what was for them very stiff prices. They would then load up with these canned goods like Santa Claus and take the merchandise home on the train. We knew that there was a lot that was wrong with the Soviet economy. However, we didn't have the sense of the collapse that was to come over the next 10 years or so. [See Melvin Goodman's piece, "Who Is the CIA Fooling? Only Itself" in the Washington Post Dec 19, 1999. A former career CIA analyst. Goodman, asserts that, "CIA analysts had tracked the early stages of decline of the soviet economy from 1976 to 1986 but [CIA Director]Gates would not circulate most draft assessments that pointed to Soviet weakness. As a result, CIA estimates overstated the size of the Soviet economy and underestimated the economic burden of maintaining the Soviet military."]

I may have mentioned this before, but there were some currents stirring in terms of religion in this controlled society. I mentioned dissidents, both Jewish and non-Jewish. On the religious front, if you went to the Baptist service on the occasion of Easter that I attended in Leningrad, or in Moscow, as I did later on, you would see people who, in Soviet terms, were members of the underclass. These people were absolutely jamming the churches. These people were waiting outside, often in bitterly cold weather. You could witness really religious experiences by going to such churches.

Then, of course, there was another manifestation. One day late in the afternoon Ambassador Toon called me up to his office and said, "Look, there's been a group of Seventh Day Adventists down in the Consular Section all day. They have refused to leave. Now, you are a senior officer and have a bit of gray hair on your head. Go down there and tell them that it's time for them to go home." So I went down and met with them in the very crowded Consular Section. There must have been eight to 10 of them sitting there on benches and so forth. The men had long beards. I said to them in Russian: "You

know, you've been here all day. We deeply appreciate your courage in forcing your way through the guards in front of the embassy and barging in here. However, you know that there is no way that we can get you to the United States, even if we wanted to. You have to have the approval of the Soviet authorities. You need an exit visa and so forth." I said, "You know, it's now 5:00 PM. The staff of the Consular Section has been working hard all day. It's time for you to go home. So I'd suggest that now is the time for you to leave the embassy."

The leader of these Seventh Day Adventists looked at me and said, pointing upwards in the air, that "God has spoken to us. God has told us to leave this terrible Soviet society. God has chosen YOU [emphasis supplied] as the instrument of our departure." So I went back up to the Ambassador's office, and I said, "We've got a problem here." I don't know whether it was a year or a year and a half later before they finally left. They camped in the American embassy.

Q: I think that they were Pentecostals.

BROWN: They were Pentecostals, not Seventh Day Adventists. This was a truly gripping story. I had to deal with other people who simply barged into the Consular Section, Georgians or whatever. Charging through these huge, Soviet guards outside the embassy by creating a disturbance and then fighting their way in took an awful lot of courage. Of course, I had to urge them very hard to go out, at the end of a long day. These people then faced an immediate and very grim experience. They would go around the corner and be picked up and rather severely handled by the Soviet police, shall we say. Some of them had done this more than once and described to me the water hose treatment they had received from the Soviet police.

You could see that some elements of Soviet society were in ferment. People were seeking some other outcome than the standard, communist propaganda answer to their lives.

Another factor that one could see, and it began to hit me later on, toward the end of my second tour in the embassy in Moscow, was corruption. We had a Soviet contact who was a bit of a maverick. He was the husband of one of our Russian language teachers. He was a cinematographer. We rarely saw him. We figured that his wife had been co-opted by the KGB. This was one of the circumstances of the time. All of our local employees had to report to the KGB, whether they were formally agents or not.

I remember meeting with Sergei. I never pressed him for information because I didn't want to hurt him. He would be remarkably frank with me in a certain way. I remember once, over a glass of vodka, he said to me: "You know, you're the distinguished Political Counselor of the American embassy. With all due respect, you don't know what in the world is going on out there. I travel this country, because I'm a cinematographer. Let me tell you. If you travel 100 miles out of Moscow, or any city, into the countryside, you wouldn't believe the way that the people live, their standard of living, and the way things are done."

Another source was a German correspondent who had been in Moscow for about 15 or 20 years. He was leaving at this point. During a farewell conversation over drinks he said to me: "You know, the level of corruption, even in Moscow, is just unbelievable now. You go to buy a pair of socks, or nylons, or a dress or something nice like that. You end up trading this for that, with money passing under the table." He said, "The Soviet Union is really corrupt." So it seemed to me that there was already something quite rotten in Soviet society, both in Moscow and elsewhere.

Before I forget it, I want to turn to the Middle East in this context. You know, there had been an effort, following the 1973 Yom Kippur war, to broker some kind of joint approach to peace in the Middle East. Material has been published on this in Vienna and Geneva. The Carter administration and Moscow came out with some kind of joint approach, heading toward something like an international conference. That was just what the Soviets would want, because their great obsession, among many others, was always to try and display parity with the U.S. and to demonstrate that, while they had been behind, they were catching up, and so forth.

Well, in the midst of all of this came the surprise visit to Jerusalem of Egyptian leader Anwar Sadat. One of the outcomes, given Moscow's obvious rancor at this surprise, was to send Phil Habib [then Deputy Undersecretary for Political Affairs in the State Department] out to Moscow on a lightning visit. I was his Control Officer for this visit. It was a typical Phil Habib operation. He arrived in Moscow one morning and left in the afternoon of the following day. In between he had major meetings with Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko, Deputy Foreign Ministers, and so on. First Habib met with a Deputy Foreign Minister and then he saw Foreign Minister Gromyko.

For this visit the notetakers at the various meetings were Dick Miles and myself. Dick is now an Ambassador and a wonderful guy. He has since been Ambassador to Armenia. He was then in the External Unit in the Political Section. As Habib moved his hands in their usual gesticulations and was laying out his position to Gromyko, he tried to assure the Soviet Foreign Minister that we had not played any games. He said that Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's trip to Jerusalem was a surprise to us as well as to the Soviets. Gromyko interrupted him to say, "Mr. Habib, I can barely restrain myself from laughing in your face!" He said it just like that. Habib said, "Oh, no, it was a surprise to us, and we haven't been doing things behind your back."

Well, that was a fascinating business. Habib was eager to join Secretary of State Vance, who was now traveling in the Middle East. Habib met with various Soviet officials all day long. He said to me: "I want all of this verbatim." When he ended his meetings at about 5:00 PM, Dick Miles and I got two secretaries and dictated memcons [memoranda of conversations] all night long. We had them typed up, and I think that we finished the job at about 3:00 or 4:00 AM. So I was up all night. I delivered the memoranda to Habib at breakfast. He said, "Great. Now, make sure that we get the follow-up, because my flight leaves at 2:00 PM this afternoon. We have another meeting, and I want to make

sure to have the complete record.” So we went in, bleary-eyed, for the early morning sessions the second morning. These meetings went on for a couple of hours. Then Miles and I dashed back to the embassy, dictated the memcons, and had them typed up. I rushed Habib out to the plane. He had a transcript of his meetings as nearly full and verbatim as possible. That's the way Habib was, and that's the way we operated in those days. We were damned proud to do it.

The story that we heard was that Habib joined Secretary of State Vance in the Middle East. They did their business, involving a bunch of shuttle trips and so forth. They went straight back to Washington. Habib went straight to work at 6:00 or 7:00 AM and shortly after that he collapsed. Habib's life was saved by a coronary fibrillator on call in the State Department. He had had a major heart attack. He was so dedicated to his job. That was the way he was. I was to deal with him at great length in a later incarnation in the Middle East. That was quite a story. I'll never forget that.

Q: How was the Camp David meetings arranged? Were the Soviets...

BROWN: They were furious. This series of meetings at Camp David cut them out completely. Here was Anwar Sadat who had, in effect, dismissed the Soviets. Sadat launched what came to be called the Yom Kippur War with Israel. Sadat used the Soviets in a desperate attempt to survive the Israeli counterattack across the Suez Canal. Now, having gone through the motions of approving an international conference and so forth, Sadat had independently assessed that this was not what he wanted. He wanted a breakthrough with the Israelis on his own terms. So Sadat went to Jerusalem and met Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin.

By the way, Ambassador Toon had previously been Ambassador to Israel. When the news that Sadat had gone to Jerusalem broke, I'll never forget what Ambassador Toon said. Like the rest of us he was taken by surprise. I remember his saying: “I know Menachem Begin. I dealt with him as Prime Minister of Israel. I'll tell you something. He will NEVER give back the West Bank of the Jordan River [emphasis supplied].” He was right. Begin would not give the West Bank back to the Palestinians - or anyone else. Look at Begin's disciples even now.

The Soviets were furious at this development. Here President Carter got all of this publicity and put on a grand show, which was very dramatic. You remember the famous handclasps and so forth at the White House. And the Soviets were left high and dry. In strategic terms the Camp David meetings must have been a tremendous jolt for the Soviets because they had bet so heavily on their relationship, and a very expensive relationship, with certain Arab clients. In the Cold War atmosphere behind all of this, anything that we supported the Soviets opposed. And vice versa, too. We had provided major quantities of military supplies to the Israelis, and the Soviets had given major quantities of military supplies to Egypt and Syria. The Soviets had become involved in a budding relationship featuring the supply of arms to Iraq. The Soviets were, of course, stunned at what was left.

I remember calling on the newly-installed Director of the Institute of Asian and African Studies in Moscow. His name was Yuri Primakov. Of course, I knew something about him. Namely, that he was a KGB agent and correspondent for years, writing for PRAVDA. He spoke Arabic and was on the best of terms with the likes of President Hafez al-Assad in Syria, Saddam Hussein in Iraq, and other such people. Now Primakov was the head of this prestigious Soviet institute, and I thought that I should pay a courtesy call on him. He gave me a polite reception, but he was obviously rather sourpussed, and he wasn't prepared to give me much new wisdom, if I may put it that way. Little did I think at that time, and this was in 1978, that I'd be talking about Primakov in 1999 when he was the Prime Minister of Russia. Well, that's one great thing about the Foreign Service. If you last long enough in office, you see some remarkable changes.

Q: I've always thought that it was an article of faith with American policymakers: "Don't let the Soviets into negotiations over the Middle East." It sounds as if you were up against a new administration with a different view. When you were sitting around and having a drink after work, was there concern about the new, Carter administration and its backbone in dealing with the Soviets?

BROWN: Speaking personally, I was very concerned. You have to bear in mind that I didn't have all of the facts at hand, but you didn't have to be a rocket scientist to perceive that the Soviets were out to extend their influence as far and wide as they could. The Soviet Navy, while no match for ours, was nevertheless becoming a blue water Navy, able to operate on the high seas. Their submarine force, with its nuclear capabilities, was a subject of very serious concern. The Soviets were putting out newer and better missiles of greater accuracy, with longer range and much greater, destructive power.

The Soviet Navy had become involved in various escapades, as we saw them, in Nicaragua and other places. They had an ideology and a propaganda apparatus which made it very clear that they intended to overtake us. They were dedicated, if you will, to the eventual destruction of capitalism, as they termed it. They were trying to undermine us at every turn. Of course, we reciprocated. It was a real contest. I remember summing things up in a kind of annual wrap-up, listing Soviet efforts in the African, Latin American and Asian situations at the time. The situation looked pretty menacing and pretty discouraging to many other people. I tried to put myself in the position of a diplomat from a Third World country, given our efforts in Vietnam and our own self-flagellation. As against that, I mentioned in this review that Soviet society was increasingly corrupt. Apart from the facade as far as showcase, Moscow-Leningrad imagery was concerned, the Soviet Union had deep economic problems and great inefficiency. One wondered at what cost this great colossus was maintaining itself. However, I did not have the feeling that the Soviets would be so involved in their internal concerns that they would no longer be an external threat to the U.S.

That takes me back to a conversation I had with Mark Garrison, who had been instrumental in arranging for my assignment to the embassy in Moscow. Mark later left

the Foreign Service. He had been DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] under Ambassador Watson, the IBM [International Business Machines] executive. Mark should have been appointed Ambassador somewhere. He had an outstanding background and a tremendous grasp of Russia, including Russian history and the Russian language. The Soviet Union had been his career. He was a very dedicated, serious person. In about 1974 or 1975 I called on Mark when he was Political Counselor in Moscow. I told him that I realized that I was out of the mainstream of the Foreign Service. Here I was on detail to Russell Train, Administrator of EPA, running the US-Soviet Environmental Agreement. I said, however, that in that capacity I got to see places in the Soviet Union that he would never get to. So I said to him: "Let me ask you. As I talk with the military attaches here in Embassy Moscow, they sure don't see a process of serious detente or decay in the Soviet Union." Mark said, "Well, the Soviet Union faces a lot of problems, and one hopes that they will focus themselves and address their internal problems, so that they won't pose the same threat and problems to their neighbors and to our interests, externally." I said, "Good luck!" I had no idea that I myself would be involved in these issues not too long thereafter. I just didn't believe that the Soviet Union was headed for a breakup.

Nonetheless, it was a very disturbing situation. The Soviet Union became involved in Afghanistan...

Q: In December, 1979.

BROWN: Yes. Then there was the whole Iranian situation which fell on us at that time. I can't say that I predicted all of this. No. But there were disturbing signs at the time, and I was one of those who were very concerned about American policy and the Carter administration's handling of it at that time. Maybe I was completely wrong.

Q: One of the things that I have wondered about is whether we were concentrating too much on Kremlinology. In other words, who was moving up in the Politburo in terms of the other members, rather than looking at Soviet society as a whole. Perhaps we were concentrating too much on the leadership, which we could get from the newspapers, rather than looking at Soviet society and saying: "Ye gods, this system doesn't work." We could have looked at Soviet society from that perspective, rather than looking at the relative standings of the leadership.

BROWN: A tremendous effort had been going on for decades in the intelligence community and among very qualified people who had devoted a great deal of effort to learning Russian, studying Russian society, and so forth. Still, we were terribly deficient in terms of crucial statistics and analysis [See Goodman, op. cit]. I think that I may have mentioned before, to take one example, the agricultural scene. The Soviets wouldn't give us their agricultural statistics. They didn't want us to have a true picture of their agriculture. So, in the 1960s, and right on virtually to the end of the Soviet Union, we were forced to send an Agricultural Attache and another person to accompany him on trips designed to get a better picture of the state of Soviet agriculture. During my first tour in Moscow (1966-1968), I went along with the Agricultural Attache on one of these trips

and did random sampling of the crops through areas of the Ukraine and the Caucasus that the Soviets would allow us to visit.

With the information derived from these trips, plus the data we obtained from our satellites, we would try to put together an estimate of the size of the Soviet crops. The Soviet economy was terribly vulnerable to weather changes. The weather can seriously affect the crops, for better or for worse. It is very vulnerable, particularly when you get out to such problem areas as the so-called “virgin lands” of Soviet Central Asia.

Let's face it. We had all of this study going on. Kremlinology, for lack of anything better, was considered terribly important to us at the time. Of course, we needed to consider the question: “Will Brezhnev survive?” However, I recalled for my staff of the time wasted thinking of obituaries for Mao Tse-tung, who died in 1976 at age 83. Still, I warned them to be alert to developments. We were now in a new, technical era, since we had television. If Brezhnev hadn't been seen on Soviet TV for the last three to five days, this could mean something. I'll never forget coming into the embassy one morning and realizing that Brezhnev hadn't been seen on Soviet TV for a week or two. Later that day, at the Country Team meeting in the “Tank” [classified conference room] I remember stating this. Then to Ambassador Toon I said, “I saw Brezhnev at a reception last night. I was in the room with him.” I had gone to a hockey match and I saw Brezhnev there, up in his special box, with two or three people blowing smoke past him. So we were able to conclude that Brezhnev had survived.

While I'm at it, let me tell you of a meeting with Brezhnev. In the midst of this sour atmosphere that I have described, there was a time when Ambassador Toon was instructed to arrange a call on Brezhnev and lay out President Carter's views on arms control. The request for the call was made, and I accompanied Ambassador Toon into the Kremlin. After cooling our heels for a considerable period, we were finally shown into the Conference Room where Brezhnev received people. He was flanked by the inevitable interpreter, a youngish and very dapper Soviet official who had interpreted for Soviet leaders for years. Brezhnev was also accompanied by two aides. Brezhnev was well dressed but didn't look so well. His complexion was very florid. He had, as you know, a jaw or a mouth problem. He spoke with a sort of a slur which sometimes could mistakenly be interpreted as meaning that he was under the influence of alcohol. The doctors had ordered Brezhnev to stop smoking. So he would pull out a cigarette and put it up to his nose and sniff it. He ordered one aide to light up the cigarette and blow some smoke past him. Then Brezhnev broke out in a tremendous coughing spell. I swear that he went on for something like five minutes, hacking and coughing. We all sat there just frozen, ourselves and Brezhnev's aides. We didn't dare say, “Would you like a glass of water” or something like that. We just stayed quiet. Finally, Brezhnev recovered. I said to myself: “This man is obviously not well.”

The conversation began, but it was not particularly productive. Brezhnev informed us that he was for peace and that the whole country wanted peace. The Communist Party wanted peace, and all Soviet citizens wanted peace. He said that he was doing everything he

could do to achieve peace. However, he said that it would take a corresponding effort on our part, and so forth. At the end of this passage, Ambassador Toon, bless him, said, "Before I go, Mr. President, there is one thing that I would like to raise with you, more or less on my own." Brezhnev said, "What is this?" Ambassador Toon said, "There is this question of the microwave beams being directed against our embassy. This is a matter of real concern for my embassy and my staff. We'd like to see this taken care of." Whereupon Brezhnev said, "No such thing is happening. I'm an engineer. Don't tell me that we're beaming microwave radiation against your embassy. There are hospitals in Moscow, just like in every other city around the world. They have x-ray machines, some of these machines emit x-rays, and maybe some of them, somehow, go this way or that way. Moscow is a big, modern, industrial city with various emissions and so forth, but nobody is targeting your embassy."

With that, we left. I said to myself ever after that: "This was a bald faced, straight out lie." That leads me, Stuart, to dwell on this subject at some length. Various leaders in various societies throughout history have lied when faced with unpleasant news or developments. I shouldn't have been shocked, but it was somehow shocking to me the way Brezhnev handled it. I would have expected that he might have said, "This is new to me, and we'll have somebody look into it. I can assure you," and so forth. Instead, Brezhnev gave Ambassador Toon an abrupt, curt dismissal of this question. Beyond that, it takes us to the question of morale in the American embassy at that time and the evolution, if you will, of developments on the Moscow front of the Foreign Service.

When I first went to Moscow in 1966, after serving in Borneo and Southeast Asia, I fought tooth and nail to be assigned to study Russian, so that I could be assigned as the Sino-Soviet specialist in Moscow. For me, with the mentality of that period, this was a great challenge. This was the front line in the heart of the country of our adversaries. That's the way we looked at things in the Foreign Service in those days.

I have to tell you what a shock it was in about 1972 or 1973 to wake up to the great, microwave scandal and to find that Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and his associates had kept from us the fact that for years we had been bombarded by microwave apparatuses, directed straight at the embassy in Moscow. I remember being one of a small group of officers in 1972 or 1973 when news of this development broke. We raised our voices in despair, dissent, and so forth. We were finally ushered into a room where Larry Eagleburger, Kissinger's Special Assistant at the time, briefed us and made some sort of presentation, assuring us that steps would be taken, and so forth. He said that medical studies were under way, and the evidence thus far was that these microwaves had not been deleterious to our health. This was somewhat reassuring until, at the end of the meeting, Larry Eagleburger said, "Now, rip up all of your notes and give them to me. Nobody can leave with notes on this discussion." One said to oneself: "What in the hell is going on here?"

It turned out that the Soviets had been bombarding us with microwaves, beginning in about 1964 or 1965. Why they had done this remained a mystery. How they had

bombarded our embassy remained somewhat of a mystery, as well as why they had done so. Also a mystery was what was the response. We were furious. We felt betrayed by the leadership of the Department of State and by the Secretary of State himself. (End of tape)

I'm speaking now of the microwave radiation scandal, as I would call it, of the early 1970s, which harked back to the early 1960s. Many of us who had served in the embassy felt betrayed as people who had put so much into our efforts and who had volunteered to serve in Moscow. We probably would have volunteered anyway to serve in Moscow, even if we had known about this. However, we learned only years later that this had happened and that information on it had been kept from us. Foreign Service physical examinations routinely include a blood test. Unbeknownst to us, the Department of State was testing our blood to see what, if anything, had happened to us as a result of the microwave radiation. This was a pretty jolting realization.

Now, at that stage we were assured that there was no evidence whatsoever of damage to our bodies. You know, so many people had been given physical examinations. In an atmosphere like that stories soon began to come out that so-and-so had developed cancer. There was a story circulating that a former leader of the Marine Security Guard detachment in Moscow, who was married and had children, had filed a suit against the State Department and that this suit had been settled out of court for alleged damage to one or more of his children.

Wow! Let me tell you. When I went back to the embassy in Moscow in 1977, this situation had become a matter which affected staff morale. Now I was going back, if you will, as the third-ranking officer in Embassy Moscow. I was of equal status with the Economic Counselor, but in the third-ranking position in the embassy. I had become a part of the management of the mission. By this time we had meters to measure microwave emanations. In the interval something like summer screens had been installed on the windows. I remember once gathering a group of officers with this meter and showing them the effect of taking the screen off. The needle on the meter jumped noticeably. Then we put the screen back on the outer window, because the microwave beam was coming in directly from the front. When we did this, the needle on the meter dropped down. Not all the way, but it faded significantly. So I then said to them, you can see the effect yourselves, but we are now told that this radiation is less dangerous to your health than living near one of the radio stations in Chevy Chase, Maryland, or something like that.

I had just been administering the environmental agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States. I had seen studies by Soviet scientists in an entirely different field which highlighted the deleterious effects of microwave emissions, such as emissions from high voltage electric wires.

It wasn't long before another scare broke. It turned out that the studies of our blood samples over the years of people who had served in Moscow showed that something like six months after a person arrived in Moscow, his or here white blood counts rose

significantly. Some people speculated that this had to do with the water supply. A team led by a doctor was sent out from Washington to look into the matter. I can't recall his name now, but he had earlier pooh-pooed the notion that the radiation the American staff was receiving was deleterious and now he was visiting Moscow again. He announced to us that his group wanted to meet with Soviet medical authorities to discuss with them the epidemiology of the Moscow population, because we had now found significantly higher white blood counts in the blood of the Americans who served in the embassy in Moscow. The idea that the Soviets would sit down and talk with such a medical team about the blood counts of typical, Russian residents of Moscow, in epidemiological terms seemed so naive. Can you imagine the concern of Russian medical authorities about a story that Moscow was an unhealthy place to live? In fact, environmentally speaking, Moscow was an unhealthy place to live, in several ways. So the Soviets ignored this request.

All of this fermented, and the American press played it up. We had a real scare in Moscow.

Q: And rightly so!

BROWN: I raise that matter in terms of lessons learned. Lord knows what the future will bring in the Foreign Service.

Q: Before we leave that matter, was consideration ever given to our saying to the Soviets: "If you keep up this nonsense, we will close our embassy in Moscow?"

BROWN: Or, we could say, if the Soviets kept up this nonsense, we would do exactly the same thing to the Soviet Embassy in Washington. But, oh, no, that would have been nasty, and nothing like that was done. We felt pretty strongly about this.

Q: Of course.

BROWN: It affected morale and assignments to positions in the embassy.

Q: What was the purpose of what has to be regarded as this campaign by Soviet authorities against the health of members of the staff of the American embassy in Moscow? Did they think that if they aimed these microwave radiations at the embassy, they would eventually be able to understand what our people were talking about?

BROWN: This takes you into realms that I'm really not qualified to discuss. I was aware of various theories and of measures and countermeasures that might be taken. However, the point is that microwave emissions were being beamed at us. This point came home to me particularly one day when a visiting technician from the State Department came with equipment and said, "Do you mind if I set this up in your office?" I said, "Okay, but why here? Why in my office?" He said, "Because actually there are at least two beams being directed at the embassy. One comes in from the front of the embassy building, and one

comes in from that great, white building over there, which is called the 'White House.' You know, where the Russian Parliament meets.”

Q: That's the building which was in flames at one time.

BROWN: Yes. He said, “One beam comes this way, and the two beams intersect right here at your desk. So I'd like to set this up.” I thought: “My God! It makes you think.” But the Soviets weren't turning these beams off.

This was a disturbing development. As I said, it affected assignments to positions in the embassy in Moscow, as well as other things. The Foreign Service had now a much less glamorous view of serving in Moscow. It was a dirty, unattractive, hostile city. It was difficult to persuade a middle ranking senior officer of superior quality to come back to Moscow. Over and over you encountered a whole variety of excuses, such as: “I'd love to return to Moscow. Don't misunderstand me. However, my wife would object, or my kids' schooling situation would be a problem.” In those days it was very disturbing to me to deal with such attitudes. I myself had not volunteered to go back to Moscow. However, once there, I threw myself into the job. So service in the embassy in Moscow was a unique experience in many ways.

That takes me to another factor that I haven't really discussed. That is, the China factor. Since my first tour in Moscow as a Sino-Soviet specialist I had seen the great breakthrough of the Nixon and Kissinger visits to China, the issuance of the Shanghai Communiqué of 1972, as well as further, high level visits and exchanges. Clearly, the handwriting was on the wall. There was, if you will, a bipartisan view in the United States that we should further develop our relationship with Chinese and regularize and normalize it, but at not too great a cost to our national interest.

Certainly, as one viewed the Carter administration coming into office, there were early signs that, for a variety of reasons, including strategic considerations, because this was driving so much of it, this new administration was determined to move that whole process along. With the departure of President Nixon and the incumbency of President Ford, the further development of our relations with China had been sort of sidelined because of the transition of administrations, the elections of 1976, and all of that.

While I was in Moscow during this tour of duty, among the many professional visitors that I had was Harry Thayer. Harry was then the senior officer on the Peoples Republic of China desk. He came to Moscow, and we discussed relations between the Soviet Union, China, Japan, and the United States. Then Harry said to me: “Look, we have this small Liaison Office in Beijing. I'm thinking of proposing you for the number two position there. We need to have somebody who is senior, a solid performer, and so forth.”

That faced me with a real dilemma. In professional terms, an assignment to Beijing was just what I wanted. I hadn't particularly wanted to go to Moscow this time. But an assignment to Beijing was right up my alley. I could speak Chinese. However, I felt

morally bound to decline, because I'd only recently arrived in Moscow, albeit that I had accepted the assignment to meet the needs of the service, and so forth. I just felt that I was morally bound to stick it out and complete my tour there. So, on those grounds I regretfully declined the assignment to Beijing that was offered to me. So J. Stapleton Roy was the Foreign Service Officer who was the right man for this assignment, and he got it. He was an excellent man for the job. A first class officer.

More time went by, and then I had a communication from an old friend and professional colleague, Roger Sullivan. Roger had been in the same Foreign Service Institute class with me. He had succeeded me in the following class at the Chinese language school in Taichung. He had succeeded me as Political Officer in Singapore, Then I had brought him into the China Shop in 1972-1973, and he succeeded me there as the Deputy Director on the Peoples Republic of China desk (ACA). Now he was elevated, during the Carter administration, to be Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs, under Richard W. Holbrooke.

Roger got in touch with me by telephone and said, in a guarded but understandable way, that something was afoot, and they therefore proposed that I go to Taipei as the Deputy Chief of Mission. The idea was that I would be placed there so that if something which was under consideration developed further, I would be in a position to deal with it and the inevitable consequences, which clearly implied the departure of the American Ambassador from Taipei. So I said, "Okay. When do you want me to go?" The answer was: "Now."

So in the summer of 1978, after a year and a half in the embassy in Moscow, my wife Helen and I got on a plane and flew to Tokyo. After a few days' consultations in Tokyo, we flew down to Taipei. Ambassador Leonard Unger was the Chief of Mission at the time. Now, do you want to take this further, or...

Q: I would like to ask a couple of more questions about the Soviets. Then we'll stop and pick up on your assignment to Taipei.

Now, at this time, how did we feel about Brezhnev and his leadership of the Soviet Union? We're talking now about one of the chief things that the Political Section in Moscow was doing in those days. We're talking about a period only a couple of years before we were asking what the political leadership of the Soviet Union was doing in getting the USSR involved in the war in Afghanistan. This was an absolute disaster for the Soviets, and it seemed to be almost an off the cuff and reckless decision. Who was leading in the Soviet Politburo as we saw it at this time? How did we view the Politburo and Brezhnev at that time?

BROWN: Our sources were limited. However, the picture that we had was that Brezhnev was physically in decline. We could also see that he was surrounded by a bunch of other people who were old and suffering from physical ailments of various kinds. Brezhnev's Minister of Defense, Ustinov, was very ill. Gromyko, the Foreign Minister, had been in

that position ever since 1962. These were not healthy men. They were men who had lived lives of great tension and stress, and the ravages imposed by time and stress were taking their toll. The constant question was how long would Brezhnev survive, and then what? And we would go around and around, as far as likely successors were concerned. There was no clear successor in view.

Indeed, the succession to Brezhnev happened after I left, and look at the spiral that developed. First Andropov and then Chernenko. These guys were dropping like flies! Access by the embassy to members of the Politburo was practically non-existent. Access by other sources was almost non-existent. Western and other powers dealing with the Soviet Union dealt with the front side of the Soviet bureaucracy, that is, the cabinet ministers and so forth. In other words, the official, governmental side. As we knew and know now, the real power was in the Communist Party. You never got to see them at a party level.

When it was decided that Ambassador Toon should begin a program of travel in the Soviet Union, he charged me with arranging for him to see a Communist Party figure in Leningrad. There was no way that he could do that. We went up to Leningrad and got to see the Mayor of Leningrad and the head of the local branch of the Foreign Ministry in Moscow. He also got some tours of the sights, some nice meals, and so forth, but he didn't get to see the Communist Party boss in Leningrad.

Then Ambassador Toon asked me to arrange a trip to Kiev, in the Ukraine. Toon wanted to see the senior Communist Party boss of the Ukraine. We got to Kiev. We knew this wasn't going to happen. I really tried to set this up and argued with local Soviet officials. I got what everybody else got, for a distinguished, Western Ambassador, and that was an appointment to see the Foreign Minister of the Ukraine. Remember, Ukrainia had a seat in the United Nations.

Q: Oh, yes. White Russia, Ukrainia, and another Soviet republic...

BROWN: Was it Georgia? These Soviet republics had been granted seats in the UN. Initially, we considered them Soviet puppets. However, this was later an excuse for us to open up American Embassies in their capitals. I think that we were able to arrange a courtesy call on the President or the Deputy Vice President of the Ukraine. That is, governmental officials. We also saw the Mayor of Kiev, as well as an array of gray-faced bureaucrats in between. That was it. We never got to see the boss.

There was another occasion, when I was accompanying a Congressional Delegation to Kiev. After this Congressional Delegation left the Soviet Union, Helen and I stayed on in the Ukraine for a few days. We wanted to visit the home of Bulgakov, the famous writer of the 1930s who perished during the terror of the Moscow purges in the late 1930s. Helen wanted to paint a picture of his home. We had lots of wonderful stories about this. Bulgakov's home had been on a hill, close to a famous, old church. Helen wanted to visit his home. She was outside his home, painting the church. All of a sudden, there were no

cars and absolute, dead silence. Then came the sound of a loud siren and screeching of tires. It turned out that the Communist Party boss was returning to his home or his office, which was near by. I saw this great cavalcade of limousines and heard the sound of sirens. This great, security entourage flashed past us, and that was that. I said, "Wow! There's the local boss!" [Laughter]

We were denied access to all of that. You therefore couldn't establish any kind of dialogue or rapport with local leaders. We couldn't measure these guys. They were encased in security arrangements, and contact with them was very, very difficult.

Q: Looking at the decisions that were coming out, you'd have to say that these Soviet officials really weren't with it. We have these kinds of security arrangements with our own officials in the White House and other places, but...

BROWN: Moscow was a rolling mill. There were all kinds of people, all the time, and there was a lot of chicken feed around, too, you know. But all of the foreign representatives were watching and comparing and so on. When all is said and done, we had pretty limited access to these figures.

Now, as far as speculation as to the succession to Brezhnev and others is concerned, of course we analyzed that, as much as we could. It was clear that Brezhnev had not chosen a successor, nor would he. You didn't do that in that kind of a society. If they did that, pretty soon they would get rid of the man in power. We have seen that happen many times in history. However, it was then, and it remained, quite a challenge to determine what might happen.

Q: Now, as chief of the Political Section, how useful did you find what was being produced by the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency]? Obviously, Moscow was the major target, as far as the CIA was concerned.

BROWN: We didn't get much locally as State Department consumers because that was a different scene, both operationally and so forth. CIA studies would be sent out to us. Remember, I was a fan of the FBIS [Foreign Broadcast Information Service] from previous experience. So I was constantly flipping through the latest, FBIS reports or accounts of Soviet broadcasts and so forth. We received prestigious studies from the CIA and other intelligence agencies. They tended to confirm our own views. However, you see, we were all in the same swim, as it were, and particularly in terms of economic analysis. I mean no disrespect either to the CIA or to our own economists, but we just didn't have a grip on the situation. [See Goodman, op. cit.]

My own, gut feeling, which I often expressed to others, was that there was a lot wrong with Soviet society. It was inefficient in so many ways. It was corrupt and increasingly so. Our people were spending such a disproportionate amount of our limited resources on the Soviet military and putting out good analysis.

During my second tour in Moscow a very senior officer from the Defense Intelligence Agency came out to Moscow. We had been together at the National War College some five years previously. He had gone on to greater things in his own agency. I remember discussing my view of the Soviet Union with him. He said, "Bill, what you're telling me is that this Soviet economy is lousy, that things are rotten here, and so forth. But I've got to tell you, Bill, from my end of things, the Soviets are producing first class, modern, nuclear weaponry, in very significant amounts, and with a very high level of sophistication." I said, "Okay, I can't challenge that. I'm just telling you that, at the street level, there are potholes, shortages, alcoholism, disaffection, disillusionment, new stirrings among the people, and Soviet youth is disaffected. From anecdotal material there are great shortages of meat. There are, at times, terrible shortages of meat and other produce. God knows what conditions are like in the hinterland of the Soviet Union which we still can't get to. From all of our accounts, the Soviet economy faces major problems." So we had a kind of standoff here.

Q: What about your feelings on Marxism and Leninism? I was talking to one person who said that he was in Poland at this time. He said that there were maybe three people in all of Poland who really believed in Marxism. Did you see any evidence of that?

BROWN: I think that as far as the great bulk of the masses were concerned, they were loyal, Soviet citizens, doing their jobs and struggling to make a little better place in their lives. You could say that they were getting the crumbs, but automobiles were beginning to become more available. The automobile population was growing, the cars were junky and broke down frequently, but at least the elite and sub-elite, the upper classes of Soviet society, now had wheels. Restaurants were better, and there was more merchandise in the shops. The power of the Soviet regime was incontestable. At the same time, more and more people had visited, heard of, or could read about the West and all of its delights. I think that the European miracle, let alone the achievements on the American scene, were increasingly evident. The reach of radio and, on the periphery of the Soviet Union, foreign TV broadcasts was increasing. Finnish TV could now be seen in Estonia. More travel abroad was being allowed. There was the whole business of Western dress and attire, blue jeans, and the beginnings of narcotics addiction. The birth control pill had enormous impact. Alcoholism was a major problem, as it always had been.

There was, if you will, a greater perception of the West and of the contrast between conditions in Soviet society and the West. Relatively few Soviet citizens would ever be able to travel in the West, but you should bear in mind that the system of awards for internal travel existed within the Soviet Union. I once went with my wife and daughter to Sochi.

Q: Is this near Yalta?

BROWN: It is on the Black Sea, across from Yalta and just North of the border between the Russian Federated Socialist Republic and Georgia. It is on the other, eastern coast of the Black Sea. Visiting Sochi was like moving from night into day. Sochi is a warm,

seaside resort. Thousands of people were in bikinis there, sunning themselves on the lovely beaches. Pepsi-Cola was available there! Ice cream and Pepsi-Cola were being consumed. There were nice coffee and snack bars. This is where the trade union and other leadership elite of the “heroic workers,” the party bosses and union achievers, and so forth went. A visit to Sochi was a status symbol. In Moscow, on the shelves of many a senior bureaucrat was an unopened bottle of Pepsi-Cola. The label said “Pepsi” in Cyrillic letters, because Pepsi now had its own bottling plant in Sochi, thanks to Richard Nixon and Pepsi-Cola. What this bottle meant was: “I have been to Sochi and I have had Pepsi-Cola. Here is the bottle to show it!” That bottle was right next to the ritual copy of the “Collected Works of Lenin.”

Q: In Yugoslavia I used to see copies of the “Collected Works of Tito.” They were constantly in sight, obviously.

BROWN: Everybody had those collections. The rituals were all there, including the parades and so forth.

One had the sense that there was minimal enthusiasm about this. I'm not saying hostility, but there was minimal enthusiasm and a growing amount of cynicism as to what it all meant. I don't want to put too much of an edge on this but I was struck at the signs of a kind of religious movement. There was enough missing in enough people's lives that numbers of Russians were going to church, searching for something else. Even though the Russian Orthodox Church was under the thumb of the regime, one could sense that there was some outreach to the people by the Orthodox Church leadership. There were signs of some contact with Russian Orthodox communities abroad.

The Russians carried in their intellectual baggage a tremendous sense of inferiority vis-a-vis the United States. We had our materialism, as we have a materialistic society. However, with the Vietnam conflict over, the drumfire of really virulent, anti-American propaganda which I had been exposed to some 10 years previously in Moscow was noticeably absent. Soviet media had often carried pictures of American troops in Vietnam, using napalm against the local people, and so forth. That had lost its edge. So there was continuous competition but no sense, certainly at the lower, public level, that the Soviets had overtaken us. There still was that Slavic sense of inferiority which manifested itself in peculiar ways.

Q: My last question on this subject. You were sort of a China watcher par excellence. What about the China-Soviet relationship, and how did that play out during the time you were there?

BROWN: Let me tell you. The evolution in our relationship with China since the time of my first tour in the Soviet Union had reached the point that at diplomatic functions the Chinese Charge d'Affaires in Moscow, Mr. Wang, at times would say to me in front of other Western diplomats: “NATO must be strengthened! Don't go soft on the Russians! Make yourselves stronger! The only things that they understand are pressure and power.”

Incidentally, Sino-Soviet relations were so bad that they didn't have Ambassadors in each other's respective capitals. They just had Charges d'Affaires, but these had the personal rank of Ambassadors. Wang would make these remarks in front of representatives of other NATO countries. I said to him: "We really should make you an honorary member of the NATO Society."

There was another, interesting time when Wang and I were sharing old memories of the Nixon-Kissinger-Mao Tse-tung-Zhou En-lai breakthroughs and so forth. I confided to him that at the time of the Nixon visit to China I had been Deputy Director of ACA and had prepared these Secret books for these visits in which we cautioned our people, based on our own knowledge of the Chinese and on our readings, to be careful not to put their arms around the shoulders of Chinese officials or slap them on the back. Kissinger and his people came back from Beijing and said to us: "What's the matter with you people? The first thing the Chinese did was to put their arms around our shoulders, ask us to have a drink, and so forth." Whereupon Mr. Wang said, "Don't you think that we were preparing our own Secret books?" He had been involved in the preparation of similar books for his superiors.

Q: Was there any concern among the Soviets about their ability to take care of the Chinese?

BROWN: Oh, no. not in terms of conventional warfare. So deep had the mutual hostility between the Chinese and the Soviets become that they had the worst possible images of each other. Remember, in 1969 they had an armed clash along the Ussuri River [along the border with Eastern Manchuria], near Khabarovsk. The Soviets said that all that was left of the Chinese soldiers on that occasion were their belt buckles.

Clearly, in any hypothetical conflict the People's Liberation Army of China would be no match for the Soviet Army in full array, with all of its tanks and nuclear weapons. However, a lot had happened since this border clash. The Chinese were absolutely determined to continue modernizing militarily. They had now developed a breakthrough in their relations with the U.S., although it was still in the early, formative stage. However, the background music was that U.S.-China relations could be and would be improved. Certainly, that was unpleasant music in Soviet ears. For their part the Chinese remained driven in their concern about the Soviets, whatever their public remarks. We'll come to that in a later session, because that fear of the Soviets and the Chinese determination somehow to counter them through the relationship with the U.S., if necessary, was clear.

We're now talking about my time in Moscow in 1977-1978. In fact, that was abundantly clear through 1985, when I was later Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State dealing with the Chinese, and discussing our relationship with them.

Q: All right. We'll pick this matter up the next time. We will then be in the summer of 1978, when you were off to Taipei. You were told to be ready for something. I guess that

there was only one thing that you could be getting ready for. You knew exactly what was going to happen, didn't you?

BROWN: Exactly? No. When or how, no. I was just sent to Taipei with a verbal appreciation that something was in the works, and something was likely to happen. I was told that decisions were being made, and that sort of thing. However, I had no idea specifically about what, where, when, how, and so forth. This was a very important factor, as I will relate the next time.

Q: All right.

Today is April 9, 1999. Bill, you were in Moscow from when to when?

BROWN: I was there twice. The first time was as a Sino-Soviet watcher, 1966-1968. This time I was in Moscow from the first days in January, 1977, through about June or July, 1978.

Q: Before we move you on to discuss your time in Taipei, you said that there were a couple of things you wanted to mention.

BROWN: Yes. One of them that strikes me now is what I might call the "Great Moscow Fire." I've forgotten the exact date, but there was no snow on the ground. It was cool outside. It was probably some time in the autumn. When I was coming home from a diplomatic social function late at night, I drove past the embassy. A combination of embassy secretaries and senior officers lived in one of the wings of the embassy building. I remember my wife saying to me: "The embassy's on fire!" I said, "Oh, that's ridiculous!" We turned around and came back and, by golly, the embassy WAS on fire. Smoke was pouring out of some of the windows, and a crowd of Americans were being evacuated from the building. We pulled over to the curb. My wife ran out to get our cat in our apartment. I made myself available to the then American Ambassador, Malcolm Toon, and our DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission], Jack Matlock, who were standing outside.

I would assume that we had a fire plan. I can't remember this specifically, but I would imagine that we had one. However, as the evening wore on, and this fire raged on all night long, it left quite an indelible mark on my memory, as well as the utility of planning for emergency situations.

The embassy was overcrowded and had been for years. We had been engaged in these protracted, decades-long negotiations with the Soviets for a new embassy building. Reporting and other requirements levied on us had risen, so there were a lot of people working in a very small space. Because of the nature of diplomatic business, there was always a great deal of paper stashed away in all offices, both classified and unclassified. Over the years a lot of ad hoc electrical wiring had been put in. It was believed that one of

these ad hoc electrical circuits burned out, starting the fire.

The fire broke out in the upper stories of the building, the working spaces, beginning on the eighth or ninth floor and spreading above that. The fire rapidly got out of control. Ambassador Toon was standing out on the curb, dressed in a tuxedo. He, too, had come from a social function and he was looking up, watching the fire. Soviet fire trucks were pulling into the area, ladders were going up against the building, and platoons and companies, or more, so-called firemen were racing up these ladders in brand new, firefighting uniforms. It didn't take much for us to figure out that they were specialists whose job included much more than firefighting.

Faced with this situation, Ambassador Toon found himself confronted frequently by the senior Soviet fire official, an officer of general officer rank who was the senior Soviet Fire Marshal. I think that it was a mistake for Ambassador Toon to be positioned down there, watching the fire. It's great to be on camera and for the employees of the embassy to see him as Ambassador, appearing to be in command. However, it also rendered him vulnerable to distractions, including the repeated approaches of the Soviet Fire Marshal. As the evening wore on, the Fire Marshal kept pressuring Ambassador Toon for access throughout the building. Toon said to the Fire Marshal, in my presence: "You may send your men to this floor and that floor, but not to the 10th and other floors," where the most sensitive equipment and materials were stored. Then, after an interval, back would come this fire official, stepping up the pressure on the Ambassador. Finally, the Fire Marshal said, "Mr. Ambassador, unless my men have full access to the building, the fire has now reached the stage where I no longer can vouch for the structural integrity of the building. You may lose the whole thing." At this point Ambassador Toon said, "All right." He had already ordered almost all of the Americans out of the building. He now ordered the last of the Marine Security Guards to leave.

And the fire burned on. It turned out that at least two of the American employees of the embassy disobeyed his orders to get out of the building. They were the CIA Chief of Station, on the one hand, and a senior Sergeant in the Defense Attache office. Ambassador Toon apparently didn't know this, and I certainly didn't know it. At least these two individuals stayed in the building, carrying out the destruction of classified and sensitive materials, as best they could. Months later, I think that a U.S. Air Force Sergeant in the Defense Attache Office was awarded a medal for his work at the time of the fire. At the presentation ceremony, which Ambassador Toon, of course, presided over, the Ambassador got in a rather acid remark that while the fire was burning, the Sergeant was not where he was supposed to be. That is, outside the building.

For my part I just stood around and tried to decide what was the best thing to do. I ran over to a nearby, separate building, where we had a Commercial Office on the ground floor. I had that building opened and placed a telephone call to the State Department Operations Center in Washington. I said to the Watch Officer: "We have a massive fire burning in the Embassy in Moscow. My prediction is that we will lose all communications with the Department. Therefore, keep this UNCLASSIFIED line open,

24 hours a day. Do not let the line be broken.” That line became our only line of communication with Washington, as the alarm bells went off in the Department of State. We communicated with Washington over this line.

In effect, the embassy was virtually knocked out for several days. The Soviets didn't do anything in particular to help us. In fact, later on, when an emergency communications package was flown into Moscow from Vienna or some place like that, we had a great deal of difficulty in treating the whole package as a diplomatic pouch. The package was a container or two wide, filled with sensitive equipment.

This fire left an indelible mark on me in several ways. First, the necessity to have a real fire plan on hand and to hold periodic fire drills. Secondly, we needed to be very careful of our wiring. Thirdly, notwithstanding the natural pack rat mentality of professional Foreign Service Officers, we had to consider how to deal with emergencies, especially in the kind of environment we had in Moscow. After all, we couldn't run down to a library somewhere and look something up. Yet, we had to exercise continuing and tightened control over the amount of paper we held. We always had to remember the vulnerability of very sensitive equipment, should the worst happen. I applied these standards later on, as I went on to senior assignments, including those as Ambassador. I felt that we had to have a site which would be entirely separate from the embassy, where we would have a communications package available for emergency use in sensitive situations. Of course, as the technology improved, we were able to stash away in another building a secure phone, for instance. In an emergency and with the right key, you could have both open and secure means of communicating with Washington.

Another question was whether to have the senior embassy leadership on the scene of the catastrophe at a time like that. The Ambassador needs to be in command, but I would say that a lesson for me would be, when you are in a non-permissive, hostile atmosphere, such as Moscow, you want to have enough buffers so that the Ambassador, for instance, is not vulnerable to pressure from local officials who may be interested in more than the fire. (End of tape)

There was another item, but I've forgotten what it was. Maybe I'll recall it later.

Q: Was there a feeling that these firemen in their brand new uniforms took a lot of material from the embassy?

BROWN: Oh, yes. The evidence afterwards was pretty obvious. They had really gone through the rubble, opened safes, and taken advantage of the situation to exploit it as they wished, as far as sensitive files, equipment, and so forth. So, in security terms we had to reckon with major losses of classified materials, shall we say.

Well, let's get back to the situation affecting my ongoing assignment after Moscow. As I said, I was approached by Roger Sullivan, who was then Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, serving in the new, Carter

administration under Assistant Secretary Dick Holbrooke. Roger was an old friend. We had been in the same entering class at the Foreign Service Institute in 1956. He let me know briefly that something was up and that I should prepare myself to go to Taipei as DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission]. The obvious implication was that if we broke relations with the Republic of China on Taiwan, my job would be to close the embassy, pack the Ambassador off, take charge of the office, and do what was necessary.

Details were not yet available, but I was to move to Taiwan quickly. So my wife Helen and I flew from Moscow to Tokyo and then to Taipei, arriving in July, 1978. I think that we arrived just after July 4.

At this stage I would like to pause and call my audience's attention to a couple of very important, external sources of information which I have recently learned of. We now have, of course, Ambassador John Holdridge's book, Crossing the Divide. Last month, in March, [1999?], under the joint auspices of the American Institute on Taiwan and the Woodrow Wilson Center of Johns Hopkins University, a symposium was held to mark 20 years of contact with Taiwan under the Taiwan Relations Act. The symposium was attended by old timers, including myself; Mike Oksenberg, who worked on the National Security Council as the China specialist; David Dean; Harvey Feldman; and a number of others. This was an important event, marked by some very trenchant questions raised by members of the audience. The audience included a lot of people with considerable background in Taiwan affairs who had come from Taiwan itself to attend the symposium. The thrust of their questions was: "Why can't U.S. policy move on to the obvious, and that is to recognize the new reality of a free, democratically elected regime in Taiwan and give Taiwan more space to develop its policies toward the People's Republic of China?"

At that time David Dean, [a retired Foreign Service Officer and Chinese Affairs specialist], gave an oral presentation of his recollections of the move to normalize fully relations with the People's Republic of China, particularly from his point of view of having served as the first Director of this new American Institute on Taiwan. This institution had been nebulous at the beginning. He highlighted the difficulties he encountered, including a lack of money, policy differences with certain elements in the Department of State, and great sensitivities in various areas. He paid tribute to those of us who had helped to put this new institution into operation. I would recommend to the readers of this interview to review the papers that will come out of that symposium, including David Dean's presentation. The remarks of Mike Oksenberg at this symposium are also worth reading. They were made from a different perspective and in response to sometimes searching questions on "Why was the decision made to normalize relations fully with the People's Republic of China; why was this done in the way and manner it was accomplished, and why was this done at the time it was done?"

A second source of information on this subject which I have more recently found is a book by James Mann, called, About Face. I don't recall ever meeting Mr. Mann, but he has written a remarkable book, involving considerable research, including documents he obtained from the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] and other sources, under the

Freedom of Information Act. For instance, he obtained in this way a previously classified, CIA chronology of the moves made to normalize relations with the PRC, all the way back from the Warsaw talks with PRC officials conducted by Ambassador Walter Stoessel and continuing through the trip to the PRC by former Secretary of State Kissinger and President Nixon, as well as other senior, American officials since then. It's a remarkable book.

Q: James Mann has used a number of our interviews in this Oral History series.

BROWN: I sensed that he probably had. I would strongly recommend James Mann's book to readers of this interview. I would like to draw from it, and based on it, make some overall remarks which were applicable then. I would also say that they remain applicable today. It is rather poignant for me that today, April 9, 1999, the PRC Prime Minister is in Washington, negotiating with President Clinton on the whole gamut of U.S. relations with the PRC, including trade and other matters. I saw President Clinton the other day giving an excellent speech on C-Span on the rationale for the policies he has followed on China. That is very valuable. I don't recall such a comprehensive speech or rationalization by an American President in its length and detail as the Clinton speech was.

Coming back to Mann's book, I would like to mention some of his observations and mine, drawn from his work. The first point is that domestic politics played a tremendous role in so many of the important, foreign policy moves of our government, whether they involved the Middle East, the Far East, and certainly China.

At this point in this interview, I am describing my move from the embassy in Moscow to the embassy in Taipei. Although we had a bipartisan policy vis-a-vis the Soviet Union over the years, we also had intense, political rivalries within the Executive Branch of our government and between Congress and the Executive Branch. Some of the issues involved were the Jackson-Vanik Amendment [limiting assistance to the Soviet Union unless Soviet Jews were allowed to emigrate to Israel] and other aspects of U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union.

My second observation is that the precedents set by Secretary of State Kissinger and President Nixon and the inheritance they left behind amounted to a secretive, exclusionary and highly personalized form of diplomacy. This itself, in my view, reflected serious domestic, political concerns. Harking back, I can't recall whether I have already told you this but, at the risk of repetition, I will cover this now.

Q: Okay. It makes no difference.

BROWN: When I was at the National War College in 1972, one of the speakers was former Secretary of State Dean Rusk. As I had just visited China, accompanying the Democratic and Republican leaders of the House of Representatives and their party, I was full of beeswax and, perhaps, a somewhat exaggerated sense of my own importance. I asked to be recognized and said that I was a Foreign Service Officer who had long

advocated a more energetic policy toward the People's Republic of China, leading to a breakthrough in relations. I asked Secretary Rusk why we had to wait until Richard Nixon became President. I asked why President John F. Kennedy could not have moved toward normalizing relations with China on Secretary Rusk's watch.

Rusk answered that there had been pressures to move more quickly on normalizing relations with the PRC. These pressures came from certain sectors in the State Department, including elements of what might be called the China service. However, Rusk recalled that President Kennedy told him in the Oval Office of the White House that he, Kennedy, was aware of these views. However, Kennedy was faced with tremendous, domestic problems, given the Cuban situation and his difficulties with Soviet leader Khrushchev in Vienna [in 1961], and the fact that all foreign aid and other bills that came through Congress in those days would have had bipartisan, legislative riders tacked onto them containing specific language on China (sometimes then called "Red China" or "Communist China"). Rusk recalled that Kennedy had told him: "I don't want any more of this. I don't need it. I've got other problems." So the possibility of a China initiative was turned off. So there you are. That was a very interesting revelation at the time.

In any event the Kissinger and Nixonian legacy was heavily oriented toward domestic political problems. You may recall that the line that emanated was that only Nixon could do this and, of course, that only a brilliant Henry Kissinger could execute it. From Mann's book and my own recollection, as the Carter administration entered office, it had other and more immediate priorities. These included the negotiations on the Panama Canal, which was a major issue domestically, and specific, agenda items on the Soviet Union, including the human rights issue, which I discussed in a previous interview with you, as well as arms control. These were major issues. Initially, the question of relations with China was somewhat further down on the scale of priorities.

Q: There were questions regarding the Middle East, too.

BROWN: Yes, the Middle East was a major consideration, and President Carter had made up his mind by this time to move ahead on this matter.

Now, the Carter administration had another characteristic which we've seen in several administrations, and that is the rivalries, not only between the Congress and the Executive Branch, but within the Executive Branch as well. There were rivalries between different departments and agencies, if I can use that expression. There were the competing interests of the State Department on the one hand, the National Security Council on the other, the Pentagon, the Department of Commerce, and so forth. Unfortunately, as I looked at this problem from the point of view of a career Foreign Service Officer, the Foreign Service, certainly during the Nixon administration, and to a significant degree during the Carter administration, reflected a cleavage between Secretary of State Vance, on the one hand, and Zbigniew Brzezinski [National Security Adviser] on the other.

Brzezinski used to insist that there was a great, strategic advantage in playing the China

card vis-a-vis our number one enemy, the Soviet Union. Secretary of State Vance argued for a more balanced approach to this problem. Brzezinski, thwarted in his efforts to travel to Moscow, made a trip to China and acted like former National Security Adviser Kissinger. That is, on this trip to China he brought with him a very small group of advisers, with the State Department largely cut out of his entourage. Richard Holbrooke, as Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs, was unable to participate in the real talks with the Chinese communists during the Brzezinski visit to China. Great secrecy was observed by Brzezinski, who engaged in wheeling and dealing in China. He made various commitments and promises to the Chinese, many of which have only recently come to light.

This kind of secrecy continued to prevail during the Carter administration, particularly the feeling that Brzezinski's trip to China was going to be a bold stroke which would have to be negotiated very carefully. Brzezinski felt that when the ultimate decisions were made on China policy, they had to be implemented very quickly. This subject was treated in James Mann's book, About Face. It was also discussed at the recent symposium that I previously mentioned on China policy and the status of the American Institute on Taiwan [AIT]. At this symposium it was clear that many of the people in the audience still smarted because of their impression that Chiang Ching-kuo, the President of the Republic of China, was only given a couple of hours' advance notice of the intentions of the Carter administration regarding our breaking relations with the Republic of China and opening relations with the People's Republic of China.

In responding to this comment at this symposium, Mike Oksenberg stated that he had argued for at least 11 or 12 hours' advance notice to the Chinese Nationalists, but events overtook this proposal, and there we were.

Against this background there was an element of considerable concern in the Executive Branch about the reaction of Congress, friends of Taiwan within Congress, and the ability of the Taiwan lobby to counter the action planned by the Carter administration. This is important in considering the background to the circumstances under which I was transferred to Taipei. As a professional observer of Sino-Soviet affairs, I sensed many of these elements, but they weren't explained to me in the relatively stark terms which I am now presenting. So the message to me was: "Go to Taipei. Something is up. Probably a decision will soon be made on relations with China." I was led to believe that probably this decision would involve a break in diplomatic relations with the Republic of China. As a result, Ambassador Unger would have to leave Taipei, the embassy would have to be closed, and I would then take over the remaining facilities. However, no specific details were given to me.

So this was the situation when I arrived in Taipei in 1978. I found Leonard Unger, a wonderful Ambassador, who had been there for about four years at that time. He had been told, when he was appointed Ambassador to the Republic of China [by the Nixon administration], that he would probably be the last American Ambassador there and to prepare himself accordingly. However, the Ford administration was wrapped around an

axle in terms of domestic politics, didn't feel that it could move swiftly on the Shanghai Communiqué, and did not reach a point of decision. Here we were with a brand new administration under President Carter.

Meantime, it was understandable that Ambassador Unger and his staff had sort of gotten used to the situation. Life went on, as usual, in the embassy in Taipei, as it had done for the previous four years or so, notwithstanding this or that trip to Beijing by some high U.S. official. The U.S. military presence in Taiwan had diminished, in accordance with previous assurances to Beijing, but we still had several thousand U.S. military personnel on Taiwan. We had a Rear Admiral who was the commander of the Joint Taiwan Defense Command, with his own structure and staff. We had a huge PX [Post Exchange] and a huge Commissary. We had U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy people stationed up and down the island. True, the numbers had shrunk dramatically from the level of more than 40,000 people we had had in Taiwan during the Vietnam War.

The embassy in Taipei was a typical American embassy, with good local employees, many of whom had been employed by the embassy for decades. The Chinese Nationalist Government in Taiwan was headed by Chiang Ching-kuo. It was an autocratic, authoritarian government, no question about that. Martial law still existed on paper. There were the first stirrings of opposition to the government, but anything like dissent was rapidly and severely dealt with. One nevertheless sensed that Chiang Ching-kuo was on a track of his own brand of, shall we say, reform and liberalization. His father, Chiang Kai-shek, had died only a few years previously. Mme. Chiang Kai-shek, who was not the mother of Chiang Ching-kuo, had gone off to live in Long Island, New York. Chiang Ching-kuo was undoubtedly in command of the government, which had a very heavy-handed, military element. The Chinese Nationalist military presence was noticeable, the security establishment was very strong, and the intelligence apparatus, with which we had good relations, was very capable. Yet there was no question that life was getting better materially for the people of Taiwan.

Taiwan was already making substantial profits on exports to the United States. A whole system had been set up for bonded production in Taiwan of television and other, higher technological equipment for sale in the United States. Apparel and other goods of Taiwanese manufacture were going to the United States.

When I was transferred to Taipei in 1978, my home leave in the United States had been postponed, so that I could move to Taiwan and take this job as DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission]. Later that year I took home leave and arrived in Washington in December, 1978. My initial impression was that the Department of State was so quiet as to be almost eerie in terms of developments in China policy. I had booked a place down on Marathon Key in the Florida Keys to spend home leave with my wife. One of our daughters joined us there. Shortly before I left Washington for Florida, I had had a conversation over an open phone with Ambassador Unger. He asked how things were in Washington. I said, "Things are quiet as a church." However, just before I left for Florida, Harvey Feldman, the chief of the Taiwan desk, said to me: "Something is afoot. Get ready. Check in with

me from time to time.” I said, “Okay,” and went down to Florida.

I had only been there in Florida for two or three days, when I turned on television, and there was President Carter's announcement of a breakthrough with Beijing, a severance of relations with Taiwan, the establishment of diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, and so forth. I picked up the phone and called Harvey Feldman. He said, “Get on the plane. Riots are going on in Taiwan. Get back to Taipei as soon as you can.” So I gave our daughter the keys to the rented apartment in Florida. Helen and I jumped on the first plane out of Marathon Key, Florida, changed planes in Miami, and raced back to Taiwan, in time to witness massive demonstrations against the American embassy.

Our Security Officer in the embassy at the time was John McPoland, with whom I am still in touch. John and the Marine Security Guard detachment had coped with crowds of up to thousands of people, who had pelted the embassy with rocks, had broken windows, damaged cars and so forth. As John put it, the Marines had invited the demonstrators to go away using tear gas. The embassy was under siege. The situation was hectic, and Ambassador Unger was understandably under tremendous pressure. During all of this there was a great outcry in the Taiwan press. There were demonstrations against us up and down the island. In all, it was a very, very difficult time.

Then came the word that, in view of the Congressional reaction, which was bipartisan and which heavily criticized the manner in which this change in Chinese representation had been handled, Warren Christopher, Deputy Secretary of State, would fly out to Taiwan and negotiate the terms of our new relationship with the Republic of China. We sent in a cautionary cable, taking into account all of the demonstrations that were going on in Taiwan, but we said that we would do our best to support the Christopher visit. The Christopher party stopped in Honolulu to pick up the Commander in Chief, Pacific, Admiral Mickey Weisner, and continued on to Taiwan.

As I contemplated this situation as the DCM in Taipei and in view of the riots which had already taken place against us, security considerations were paramount in my mind. So, through our Security Officer, I kept constantly in touch with the Chinese Nationalist authorities, seeking reassurances that we would be okay in going to the airport, meeting Deputy Secretary Christopher, getting him into his hotel, and so forth. We were repeatedly assured that this was the case. With great difficulty I finally got through over the telephone to General Kung, retired Commandant of the Chinese Nationalist Marine Corps who was now head of the Chinese National Police. He said that there were hard feelings around Taipei and so forth, but “Don't worry. Precautions have been taken.”

When I got out to the airport to join the party welcoming Deputy Secretary Christopher, I arrived somewhat later than many other people. My driver had to move the car very slowly through a crowd of several hundred demonstrators. We had arranged for the arrival of the Christopher party, not at the main, civilian airport near Taipei, but at a nearby, adjacent airport which was under Chinese Nationalist military control. However,

a crowd had gathered outside the entrance to this military airport. As I went through this group of several hundred people, with my driver moving the car very slowly, I became aware of a sort of grinding noise. I learned later that this was from people rubbing balls made of a mixture of mud and sand against my car as it moved through the crowd.

I arrived at the terminal and immediately made a beeline for Fred Chien, who was the senior Chinese Nationalist official present. I believe that Fred was Deputy Foreign Minister at the time. I also sought out the senior Chinese Nationalist police officer on the spot, Brigadier General Peter Chung, who was a close contact of the embassy. I kept pointing to the fact that I had come through this crowd of demonstrators and expressed concern about it. I continued to receive assurances that the necessary security forces had been deployed and that this situation would not be a problem.

So Deputy Secretary of State Christopher's plane landed at the airport. He was received by Fred Chien, who delivered a very acerbic and vitriolic speech, fully covered by the television cameras. We headed out for the cars. Once again I expressed concern and asked if we should not follow an alternative route, cutting across the runway, rather than out the main gate. Once again, the Chinese Nationalist officials assured me that there would be no problem. So off we went.

I think that we went less than a quarter of a mile from the airport exit to the main street outside it. Going down a lane, we found ourselves engulfed by demonstrators, and they really worked us over. I was in the right front passenger seat. We were in Chinese Nationalist Government cars, because it was a large motorcade, and the Nationalist authorities had provided most of the cars. Roger Sullivan, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs, and Herb Hansell, the State Department Legal Adviser, were in the rear seat of my car. I could see what was coming. The crowd was rocking and rolling the cars assigned to us. Iron bars were being used to hit the cars. Finally, I said to the other occupants of the car: "Gentlemen, you'd better turn up your collars because they're going for the windshield." Just then a member of the crowd smashed the windshield in front of me with a crowbar, and we were all showered with shards of glass.

Ahead of me I could see that the windows on the car carrying Deputy Secretary Christopher, Ambassador Unger, and, I think, Admiral Weisner, had been shattered, and members of the crowd were pushing sticks into the broken windows. It was a shambles. They really worked us over. I think that this was the longest quarter of a mile that I've ever gone through. During all of this the Chinese Nationalist police were in evidence, equipped with megaphones. We finally worked our way through and scattered to different destinations. As each car managed to get through the crowd, it would take off in different directions. Some of us went to this place and some of us went to that place. We obviously couldn't go to the designated hotel out of fear that there would be another demonstration waiting for us there.

A few hours later there was finally a general gathering of the Christopher party in a huge, bunker complex at the Joint Taiwan Defense Command where the Rear Admiral

commanding the U.S. Joint Taiwan Defense Command had his offices. A group of demonstrators gathered outside. We were furious, of course, at this hostile demonstration. A debate then broke out as to whether the members of the Christopher party should just go back to the plane and return to the U.S. because of the insults expressed by the crowd. Deputy Secretary Christopher spoke over the telephone with President Carter, who asked him for his views. The President reportedly said, "If you feel that it is necessary..." There was a lively debate among members of the Christopher party. In the end, Christopher said, "We'll stay." So they stayed, and the situation quieted down. A tremendous Chinese Nationalist security presence was deployed.

Of course, television viewers in Washington and in the world more broadly were treated to this spectacle of a real roughing up of the Christopher party, and tempers ran very high. Ambassador Unger had at least one Band-Aid on his neck. People in the Christopher party had been jabbed, poked, and so forth.

We met with President Chiang Ching-kuo, who was very somber, quiet-spoken, but emotional. He presented an historical review, pointing out that during the Vietnam War the U.S. had made tremendous use of Taiwan as a backup and transit point for aircraft and for rotation of personnel. He said that the Chinese Nationalists had given us all that we had asked for, and now we were breaking diplomatic relations with them.

We then began a process of negotiations. Deputy Foreign Minister Fred Chien and senior Chinese Nationalist officials were on one side of the table, and Deputy Secretary Christopher was on the other, flanked by Fred Hansell and his team, including Roger Sullivan. We had been badly shaken up, but there was work to be done. It was fascinating to see how well prepared the Chinese Nationalist officials were. Ever since the issuance of the Shanghai Communique in 1972, at the time of the visit of President Nixon to the People's Republic of China, they had had time to see the handwriting on the wall and had secretly done a lot of homework.

One of the things, among many others, which struck me at the time was the time the Chinese Nationalist officials spent on their concern that the new accommodation, much as they bitterly resented the whole thing, enabled them to be sued in U.S. Courts. When I heard this, I remember scratching my head and saying to myself: "Why in the world are they doing this?" I have used this story many times since then because I learned that to borrow large amounts of money in the United States at reasonable rates, you have to have a court of recourse. In other words, if you're going to go out in the bond market and borrow great chunks of money and do business as a government or a company, there has to be a system under which you can be sued in court. Otherwise, people aren't going to lend you money. I had never thought of that consideration, which had never really occurred to me. So the Taiwan Relations Act has a specific provision to deal with that matter. The negotiating session came to an end, although there were still many issues left unresolved. In any case, Deputy Secretary of State Christopher and his party left.

Q: Just one question. I would have thought that arrangements to deploy this mob at the

airport were planned in advance. I would have thought that, after this incident was over, there would have been a damned good reason for the Christopher party to pick up and go home. In some sense that would have strengthened our negotiating position.

BROWN: I tell you, Stuart, at some times and in emergencies life works in strange ways. Until that point we, in the United States, were the villain, if you will. However, that mob action against us turned the tables, as it were. Chiang Ching-kuo's administration was now on the defensive. This so limited the ability of these very severe critics of the Carter administration in Congress, who had been in full cry, that it undercut that line as well. It reduced it to a grumble, in many ways. On reflection, I commend Deputy Secretary Christopher for going through this experience. It was only the beginning. The Chinese Nationalists then sent Yang, a Deputy Foreign Minister, to Washington, and the negotiations continued.

The situation had been so hectic that I really didn't have much chance to talk with Roger Sullivan and others as to how things were going to go over the next few months. One learned the hard way that the execution of the larger scheme had been done in such secrecy that a lot of fundamental planning had not been done. Now, here I was serving under Ambassador Unger, a wonderful man who had gone through this traumatic experience. The word was that he would have to leave Taipei now because we had promised Beijing that the embassy in Taipei would close and that there would be no U.S. officials left on Taiwan.

The word was that we would have to move out of our embassy Chancery in Taipei, and we were going to set up a new institution in its place. I like to think that I coined the word used to describe it, a new instrumentality. We would call it something. It wouldn't be an embassy. It would be unofficial, and we would discuss the matter further.

Meantime, we would close the embassy and get out of the building. The Ambassador would leave Taiwan. We would protect ourselves but get ready for the next phase. Well, it took quite a while for Ambassador Len Unger to go home, shall we say. He had been in Taipei for four years, the conclusion of it had been a very painful experience, time dragged on, and Washington was more and more impatient. So I had to be a real diplomat in that sense.

Finally, there came a moment when we lowered the U.S. flag, as they were raising the flag at the American embassy in Beijing. It was all very emotional and very heart-rending for those of us on the site. This marked the end of an era. We had invested a tremendous amount of treasure, emotion, and money in the whole relationship with the Republic of China. And now we were ending it.

As we went deeper into the situation, it became more and more complicated. Now came the cry in Congress that the whole thing had been done so poorly and the basis for moving on was so weak and flawed that the whole thing had to be re-done. This was the view widely expressed in Congress. Of course, the Chinese Nationalists in Taiwan were

playing to the maximum the role of injured party. Remember, we had broken relations with the Republic of China and we had also served one year's notice of termination of the long-standing Defense Treaty with the Republic of China, which had been in effect since 1954. It was a rather peculiar situation. We broke diplomatic relations and pulled the string on the defense treaty. Remember that under the terms of the treaty we were still in a treaty relationship with the Republic of China for another year, even though we no longer had diplomatic relations with the Chinese Nationalists. Really, this was a crazy situation when you think about it.

Congressional Delegations wanted to visit Taiwan. The Department of State didn't want them to go. One of these Delegations was already on the way, led by Representative Lester Wolff, a Democratic Congressman from New York and Chairman of the House Subcommittee on East Asia. He was on the road, and he and I still tell each other this story.

Q: He lives here in Arlington, Virginia.

BROWN: Yes. He's a Washington lobbyist. We still chuckle at this story.

As I said, the Department of State didn't want him to go to Taiwan. He wanted very much to go and, in fact, was on the road. I was told over the telephone that the Department didn't want him to go to Taiwan and I was instructed: "Don't do anything that will enable him to go to Taiwan." He communicated with me, via both backchannel [very secret] and front channel [open cable]. For its part the Department of State made a real blunder. They used a security argument to try to dissuade Wolff from going to Taiwan. They asked me to support the following message to Congressman Wolff: "Look at the tremendous demonstrations against the embassy. Look at the mob action against Deputy Secretary Christopher. You'd be putting yourself at grave risk."

He then took this message and fired it at me. I prepared a cable which said that the embassy in Taipei was, of course, keenly aware of the demonstrations against us, both at the embassy and against the Christopher mission. However, I said that the situation had changed dramatically. The demonstrations were over. Furthermore, I said that I had called on the chief of the Chinese Nationalist Military Garrison. I think that his name was General Wang [Wang Ching-hsu]. He assured me that he would have over 5,000 troops deployed between the airport and the hotel where Congressman Wolff planned to stay in Taipei. He said that these troops would be available wherever the Congressman went, with gas masks, bayonets, and a full flying wedge. I told the Department that General Wang had assured me that everything would be done to protect Congressman Wolff. Congressman Wolff seized upon these assurances and came to Taipei. He came with a small, bipartisan delegation. They relished the spectacle of this tremendous motorcade, with a flying wedge of police, gas masks under the seats, soldiers at attention and armed with bayonets, deployed along the cavalcade route. The Wolff Delegation was wined and dined. Forever after, Representative Lester Wolff could throw this episode in the face of the State Department.

Then came a whole bunch of other Congressional Delegations, some of which were composed entirely of Republicans. We soon realized that among them were some who felt so strongly about this matter that those of us on the ground were part and parcel of the Carter administration which had perpetrated a terrible insult against Chiang Ching-kuo. I had to do my best to cope professionally with these Congressmen.

Then came the financial problem. I was told to close the embassy in Taipei under the provisions of the Vienna or Geneva Convention for closure, no later than February 27, 1979, at which point we were instructed to have left the embassy chancery and those of us remaining in Taiwan would no longer be considered Foreign Service Officers. We were told that all of those who cannot abide by these instructions would be transferred, leaving a small group, no larger than 50 persons, remaining in Taiwan. We were instructed to ensure that all U.S. military personnel would leave the island as soon as possible. We were instructed to get ready to open this new instrumentality, to be designated the American Institute on Taiwan.

So finally, Ambassador Unger left. There were frantic negotiations with very senior U.S. military officers. Whenever the U.S. military has title to something and has to get rid of it, it has to go through a legal process involving negotiation of a sale or the transfer of title at a price of a few pennies on the dollar, or whatever the market will bear.

At this stage, with Ambassador Unger gone, I began to be deluged with all kinds of visitors, including very high-ranking U.S. military officers. They simply could not believe that the U.S. Air Force, Navy, and Army had to get off Taiwan completely. I had red-faced generals ready to pound my desk, saying that this just could not be. I said, "Tell that to the President of the United States. He's ordered it. You will proceed. We have a deadline. Do it." As I say, frantic negotiations took place in that regard.

Then came a second, classic blunder by the Department of State. Someone in the Department had it in mind that they would take the unexpended funds for Fiscal Year 1979 and already allocated to the embassy in Taipei and, with the approval of the relevant chairmen of the relevant sub-committees of the House of Representatives and Senate, would roll that money over for the AIT [American Institute on Taiwan]. The Department obtained approval from the Congressmen, but when they came up against Senator Ernest F. ("Fritz") Hollings [Democrat, South Carolina], he balked. In their excitement and agitation they threw a security argument at him, which included the unfortunate remark, "Unless we get this done, the security situation in Taiwan may deteriorate to the point where blood runs in the streets." At that point Senator Hollings, a graduate of The Citadel, the South Carolina Military Institute, for whatever combination of reasons, just said, "Show me! No!" As a result, the AIT had no money.

Now, I had very loyal, dedicated people, and I had assurances that somehow all of this would be taken care of. We were instructed to close down by February 27, 1979, after which "you will not do anything of an official nature or smacking of an official nature of

any kind whatsoever.” This was put to me in very strong terms.

So we ripped out the security equipment or whatever else was valuable in the old Chancery and we abandoned that building. However, I left one teletype circuit, my automatic ticker, still going. In the interim I used the address: “Bill Brown, Taipei.” This signified that there was no longer an embassy, nor was there yet an AIT. I left the ticker running, in case anybody wanted to communicate with me. Every so often I would send an UNCLASSIFIED message to the State Department and sign it, “Bill Brown, Taipei.” This kind of communications went around the world. That was our situation. I did phone work from home, sending it to Roger Sullivan, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, and under his direction.

Well, Ron Palmer was then in the Bureau of Administration. He flew out to Taipei and did his best to assure us that, somehow, everything would be taken care of. We would set up the AIT. There were some glitches to be resolved and so forth, but it would be taken care of. However, as time went on, the people with me in Taipei were getting more and more concerned. I remember telling the people in the Department with whom we were dealing, among other things: “Whatever you do, as we move into the new entity or instrumentality, for God's sake don't do anything which would cut off our pay!” No, we were assured, the arrangement is that we would continue to be paid and that eventually a new pay system would be worked out. I said, “Until you've worked it out and tested it, don't cut off our pay.” (End of tape)

People began coming to me saying: “You know, my allotments haven't come through, and my bank is saying that my bank account is overdrawn,” and so forth. I then had a daughter in Veterinary School at the University of Georgia. I found out that she subsisted on a bag of rice for six weeks because our allotments had been cut off! Despite assurances to the contrary, somebody in the Department had nevertheless cut the line to Bangkok [State Department Regional Finance Center], and we were without money.

We closed the embassy and moved out of the Chancery. I found myself in a peculiar situation because of the hangup involving the objections raised by Senator Hollings. There was no money available to us. For six weeks we were in limbo. I couldn't go to the old embassy, because that had been closed. I operated out of my house, the DCM's residence up on the hill. I held working coffees, because we were all unofficial now.

We were told that the Department was worried about Deng Xiaoping's reaction [in the PRC] to everything and was eager to convince Beijing that, truly, the American embassy in Taipei had closed. It was stated to the PRC that there were no officials left behind, the entire U.S. military presence was ending and no official business was being done. I remember Roger Sullivan really working me over very hard and insisting that I assure him that absolutely no business whatsoever was being carried on. I told him: “Listen, Roger, are you telling me that if an American citizen dies tomorrow, as they do all over the world, either on the sidewalks of Taipei or down the island, I'm just to leave the body there and not do anything? I shouldn't go down and assist in the removal of the remains

and ship them back to the United States?” He said, “Well, you can do that.” I said, “Well, come on, let's be realistic.”

Incidentally, during this very period, I suddenly received word, although not through Washington, but locally from the Chinese Nationalist officials, that an American C-130 [transport plane] was flying into Taipei. I said, “What? This is impossible.” It turned out that a member of the staff of a Congressional Committee had been in Taipei. On the escalator of a department store, he somehow fell and broke his leg. So the Committee Chairman said, “Fly in a C-130 and evacuate him medically!” So out of Okinawa came the old medevac flight, a C-130. I got this guy out to the airport and on the C-130 and off to Okinawa. I didn't talk about it until it was over. You had to be realistic in these circumstances. We had quite a large American community there which did a lot of business, so we did things quietly. For months thereafter I was signing checks dated February 27, 1979, which was our last, official day in Taipei. There were many bills outstanding which had to be paid.

I was informed that an American Ambassador, Charles Cross, an old China hand, would retire from the Foreign Service and become the first Director of the Taipei AIT office. He had visited us in Taipei the previous summer. The Department said that it hoped that I would stay on until his arrival, which I said that I would do. Meanwhile, I said that I would open up the AIT and get it going.

I found myself in this peculiar position with no money. So I met Deputy Foreign Minister, Fred Chien, off-site and I said, “Look, there is space in the old MAAG [Military Assistance and Advisory Group] headquarters across town. It's kind of a tacky building, but it's empty.” Near it was the office being used by our friends down the corridor.

Q: You're talking about the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency].

BROWN: Yes, they were still operating, but very quietly. Here was empty office space next to them. So I began quiet informal negotiations with Fred Chien, which were really extraordinary. The Chinese Nationalists were the injured party. I needed something, and I said, “I'm sorry, Fred, but I don't have any money. I need that space, which is modest, unoccupied, and that's where I'd like to set up this American Institute on Taiwan. I know that it's an area with high-priced rents, but, Fred, I want you to rent this to me for a year for \$5,000.” He went back to his superiors, consulted with them, and subsequently informed me: “You've got it!” So we opened up the AIT, and that's where it still is.

I went through a tremendously active, consular period. You're an old Consular Officer, Stuart, so you can appreciate this. When the embassy had been in the stage of closing down, we were inundated with a tsunami wave of applicants for consular services in the thousands.

Q: They wanted visas and passports.

BROWN: Yes. Some of them also wanted notarial services. The Chinese Nationalist Army was called out to maintain law and order. Some of those applicants for consular services were in line for days and had brought mattresses to sleep on. We put out the word by radio and television that people shouldn't worry and that everything would work out. That, if anything, probably caused them to come in even greater numbers. They came from all over Taiwan. For six weeks nothing much was done to regularize our status. Officially, we were not supposed to do anything. I was still working with the old budget and still signing checks dated February 27, 1979. I arranged to have a nearby building in this compound rehabilitated by local carpenters, plasterers, and so forth. They were working 24 hours a day. I couldn't call it the "Consular Section." We called it the "Travel Section."

As we prepared to open up, another consular tsunami wave hit us, even though we got on the radio, television, and so forth. People came by the thousands. I went to work on the visa line myself. In the process we had to rename all of the sections of the office, calling them anything but an embassy. The "Political Section" became the "General Affairs Section." The DAO [Defense Attache Office] became something else. As I said, the "Consular Section" became the "Travel Section." The old "Economic" and "Commercial" sections were combined under another name.

Instead of exequaturs [document issued normally by the Department of State, permitting Foreign Service Officers to perform their functions] on the walls, we had brown pieces of paper which said, more or less, that we reposed full trust in this or that person. Although we were non-official, we performed the vital functions which all Embassies perform. Visa applications were nominally checked through the use of the "IVAC" [Lookout System]. The visas stated that they had been issued by the American Consulate General in Hong Kong. In fact, we got the visa stamps from the Consulate General in Hong Kong and issued them in Taipei. However, on the face of it, they were supposedly issued in Hong Kong.

As the U.S. military pulled out of Taiwan in this situation, some very interesting questions arose. One day, shortly before the U.S. military pulled out, a senior U.S. Navy Captain came to my house, carrying with him two large suitcases. He informed me that I was now to become the owner of hundreds of millions of dollars worth of property. The old DAO people had negotiated as best they could with the local, Taiwanese authorities to get "pennies on the dollar" from our reluctant hosts for certain buildings. The remainder was to be transferred, in the first instance, to me. I said, "What does this mean?" The Navy Captain said, "Well, we sent teams all over the island. We've done an inventory, and here it is. Here are the documents covering it. So, if you will, just sign here." I said, "Wait a minute. You're talking about millions and millions of dollars worth of property." For example, this included the Armed Forces Radio Network on Taiwan, with broadcasting and relay stations down the island. There were oil tank farms and large petroleum facilities, pipelines, and so forth. I said, "And you expect me to sign for these?" He said, "Well, you're free, of course, to go yourself and check this list out. That's up to you." So I took a deep breath and signed for this list of property. In this way I

became the owner of hundreds of millions of dollars worth of property!

I also had to dispose of this property. I negotiated then with my Chinese Nationalist counterpart, which was called “The Coordinating Council for North American Affairs,” (CCNA) staffed by professional Chinese Nationalist Foreign Service Officers, including senior diplomats who went through the motions of becoming something else. So we had two organizations which we could portray as non-official for dealing with each other. We, of course, called ourselves “The American Institute on Taiwan.” So I took these two suitcases with documents identifying millions of dollars of property and transferred what had been the Armed Forces Radio Network to the American Chamber of Commerce in Taiwan. It still thrives, I think. Psychologically, it was very important to have independent English language, radio and television stations, operating on Taiwan. The other facilities I signed over to the new CCNA.

So it went across the whole spectrum of U.S. owned facilities and establishments in Taiwan. We had to undo all of the official ties, while Congress was pounding on the administration and the Taiwan authorities were doing everything they could to maintain some sort of officiality. In this connection, they were doing everything they could to get the best piece of legislation passed as the Taiwan Relations Act, whereas the Department of State and the Executive Branch of the U.S. Government had originally contemplated a very loose, very vague kind of relationship. The old, legalistic element in the American political system kicked in, and Congress ultimately passed the Taiwan Relations Act which President Jimmy Carter very reluctantly signed. He had no choice.

I might just pause there, once again, to demonstrate that, notwithstanding the texts of so many of these foreign policy decisions and moves, which were intended to be strategic, far reaching, and so forth, there was a very strong, domestic, political undercurrent here. This is still in effect. Much could be, and has been, written about this situation.

I found Mike Oksenberg's remarks at the symposium I mentioned very interesting. Toward the end of a lengthy, “Q and A” [Question and Answer] session, I finally stood up and said to Oksenberg: “In all of the discussion thus far, I have been particularly interested as an old Sino-Soviet watcher. There has not been a word mentioned about the rationale for the use of the China card with the Soviet Union.” I had just come from the embassy in Moscow and was keenly aware of this. Oksenberg differs with me on this matter. He said that there were some people who repeatedly advocated our playing the China card. He very clearly meant Zbigniew Brzezinski by this term. He meant that Brzezinski wanted to develop military contacts with Beijing and get on with this relationship. Oksenberg says that certainly Secretary of State Vance and he, Oksenberg, were looking on the move to normalize relations with the People's Republic of China on its own merits. That is, to achieve stability in Asia, to prevent U.S.-Chinese confrontation, to build a positive relationship with Beijing, and to do the best that we could under the circumstances with Taiwan.

I differ with Mike Oksenberg. In terms of the rationale for this change in our China

representation, and certainly this is the way that I look at it, I would say that, at that time, there was certainly a strong, strategic reason for this change. U.S.-Soviet relations were then pretty poor.

Q: Were you getting the feeling that in Brzezinski's view, particularly because of his Polish origins, anything that we could do to the Soviet Union that would make the Soviets uncomfortable or put them on the defensive was a good thing? China, in itself, was just an object to be used to stick it to the Soviet Union.

BROWN: Well, that's putting it pretty baldly, Stuart. I won't go into Brzezinski's Polish origins, but earlier in this interview I spoke of learning through the Informal Channel of a draft policy paper prepared by Brzezinski which advocated really sticking it to the Soviets via the soft underbelly. He advocated playing up the ethnic, nationalistic differences of the Ukraine and the Central Asian republics of the Soviet Union. So Brzezinski was known in Washington circles as being very strongly oriented in that direction.

Like his predecessor as National Security Adviser, Henry Kissinger, Brzezinski was no China expert. However, like Kissinger, Brzezinski was a quick learner and he certainly used methods like those used by Kissinger, with the approval of President Carter. Beijing exploited both of these opportunities, both during the Nixon, as well as in the Ford and Carter administrations. I would also say that Beijing has exploited these opportunities subsequently. I would say that we paid heavily for this highly secretive, elitist approach to China, allowing the Chinese to extract from us all kind of assurances, but out of the public view. Beijing was then able to use these to play against succeeding U.S. Presidents, and so forth. You certainly saw those chickens coming back to roost in the 1980s and, I would say, even now.

Okay. Back to Taiwan. As the Taiwan Relations Act came to be debated in Congress, our Chinese Nationalist counterparts had really done their homework. The resulting legislation was remarkable in its comprehensive coverage and in the implicit warnings that it gave to Beijing in terms of our view of peaceful resolution of relations between the PRC and Taiwan. We also made clear that a non-peaceful approach, or the use of force by the PRC against Taiwan, would be viewed with grave concern as seriously affecting vital American security interests. There was, of course, the epoch-making determination that we would sell defensive arms to Taiwan.

Now, as you look at James Mann's book and the other literature on this subject, the question of whether we would be able to sell arms to Taiwan in this new relationship was a paramount issue. When Brzezinski went forward with a proposal that, after a one-year pause in arms sales, during which the U.S.-Taiwan defense treaty would lapse, we would resume a modest level of arms sales to Taiwan. Deng Xiaoping read Brzezinski the riot act, and Brzezinski came back to the U.S. very much chastened in that respect.

However, assurances had been given to the Chinese Nationalists, in the face of Deng Xiaoping's outburst of rage on this subject, that we would take into account PRC views

but still deal modestly with the sale of defensive arms to Taiwan.

Then, of course, came the Taiwan Relations Act, which is the law of the land and not just administration policy. Next came the question of implementing this legislation. How do you initiate a defense relationship with no embassy, Defense Attache, or formal system of communications? This was a highly complex and sophisticated business.

For example, we had supplied the Chinese Nationalists under Chiang Ching-kuo with F-5's, plus various aircraft parts and so forth. Servicing F-5 fighter aircraft and other equipment usually involves setting up special communications channels with the Pentagon, through which a foreign state operates. There were specialists stationed on the ground, at both ends. Normally, joint teams are set up by the host country and the Pentagon in the United States. These are not just ordinary, military offices. They are staffed by real specialists. You're dealing with millions and millions of dollars of spare parts and replacements.

We had to do or to re-do all of this, and it all had to be unofficial. In fact, everything had to be unofficial. All of the previous official relationships had to be entirely undone.

Now, U.S. Government agencies in Washington were still so hung up that, in the early days, no senior U.S. official could even visit Taiwan. Nobody, which was ridiculous. Congressmen and Senators could and would visit Taiwan.

Q: It sounds as if Mainland China, or whatever you want to call it, was jerking our chain.

BROWN: Well, whether the PRC was or wasn't doing this, my view is that the fear and apprehension in Washington that things would go wrong with the arrangements regarding Taiwan were very palpable, as I saw and heard it. Washington agencies were very much afraid that the arrangements made regarding Taiwan would come undone. It was also feared that Taiwan would take undue advantage of the situation and that we would bumble things. I don't really think that Beijing really had to jerk our chain. People in the U.S. Government agencies in Washington were very cautious in this regard.

So no U.S. officials could come to Taiwan. We had to be thoroughly sterilized, as it were. I had to reduce the staff of AIT down to 50. Of course, when they heard the figure of 50, others in the U.S. Government, and particularly the Department of Defense and our brethren down the hall [i.e., the CIA], said, "What you mean, Bill, is just you people in the State Department complement." I had to answer: "No, the entire U.S. Government component is going to come down to 50." Then they said, "What you mean is 50 officers." I had to say, "No, 50 total, including secretaries and technicians." At first they couldn't believe it. I had to go through a real squeeze process here. CINCPAC, in the person of Admiral Weisner, said, "What you mean is 50 plus my people from CINCPAC, or 50 plus my communications people." I had to say, "No, the overall number is 50." That squeezed him way down. I had to tell people that if they were unwilling to go through this

process of paring down personnel, then the Department of State or their home agency would transfer them elsewhere. Some of them couldn't take these reductions and were later transferred. I was really learning my trade at a senior level now. I believe that never in the history of the Foreign Service had this been done. It was a remarkable, educational process for me.

You know, at the risk of exaggeration, I would say that every bilateral relationship requires a scapegoat. Each side fixes on some individual, some guy who is the villain in all of this. Unfortunately, the U.S. side fixed on Fred Chien, Chinese Nationalist Deputy Foreign Minister. Some senior people were convinced that Fred Chien bore partial responsibility for the assault on the Christopher motorcade, since Chien was in the last car of the motorcade.

To this day Fred Chien and his wife get very emotional at that charge. They claim that they had no advance knowledge of this. However, Fred Chien had delivered a vitriolic speech when Deputy Secretary Christopher arrived. I was in a very unusual situation. I very much respected Fred as a professional diplomat. He was a key America watcher. He had been educated at Yale, spoke perfect English, and was a very intelligent and dedicated civil servant.

Here I was in this strange situation where Washington wanted no official status for us, whereas Fred Chien, representing his boss and the Taiwan administration, wanted to give us maximum officiality. As far as passports were concerned, we had to turn in our Diplomatic Passports to the State Department. We then had to negotiate the equivalent, in terms of privileges and immunities, without our being diplomats as such. Fred Chien said, "Sure! We'll give you the whole works. You want clearance through the airport? We'll just put the diplomatic clearance in your new, non-diplomatic passports." I had to be very careful and say, "No, what I would like is a courtesy stamp. It mustn't say 'diplomatic.'" And on and on we went through a myriad of details. As I said, Washington remained very apprehensive and turned its eagle-eyes on this whole range of issues.

Taiwan appointed retired General Konsin Shah (formerly Chiang Kai-shek's pilot and *aide de camp*) as head of its office in Washington. They, of course, had disposed of "Twin Oaks," the former residence of the Chinese Nationalist Ambassador in Washington. Fearful that Beijing would try to take this property over, the Chinese Nationalists had laundered it through a private organization. For many years Washington would not let any American official attend any function at Twin Oaks. For years the Taiwan representative in Washington tried to get us to have even a cup of tea or coffee there, but we wouldn't do so. The whole thing was kind of ridiculous. I dwell on this in an effort to give you a sense of how very delicate and sensitive it was at this stage.

Eventually, the first, full Director of the American Institute on Taiwan, Charles T. Cross, arrived in Taipei. Until recently, he had been American Ambassador in Singapore and was a career Foreign Service Officer. He had been persuaded by the Department to retire and take on this very responsible job. AIT itself was incorporated under the terms of the

Taiwan Relations Act, which is the law of the land, as a District of Columbia, public corporation. AIT decided not to place its headquarters in the District of Columbia but just across the Potomac River in Rosslyn, Virginia, where it is still located. Again, this was an extra cautious move so that AIT would not be portrayed as part of the Department of State.

Indeed, I am still one of the three Trustees of the American Institute on Taiwan. (Two of us are unpaid. The third is the Managing Director) As I reflect back on those circumstances, I am impressed to see how far we've come as far as loosening up is concerned from those very tight, initial days.

Chuck Cross arrived in Taipei. Born to a Missionary family in China in 1922, he spoke Chinese and had joined the Foreign Service in 1949. His first position overseas was that of Assistant Public Affairs Officer in Taipei, which he took up in June, 1949. As a young officer, one of his duties was to go up and down Taiwan and keep in touch with members of the small, American community on the island. This community largely consisted of missionaries. He told them to have their bags packed and be ready, because it looked as if Mainland China would take over Taiwan, and, if this happened, we were going to close the American embassy in Taipei. There were still old timers in Taiwan who remembered him from those days.

Chuck Cross came to Taiwan and got right into the swing of things. Members of the AIT staff were not allowed to go and visit any Taiwan Government ministry. I would call Fred Chien and ask to see him. He would say, "Delighted. Come right over." I would say, "No, from now on we have to deal with the 'Coordinating Council for North American Affairs.'" So we would meet outside of Chinese Nationalist Government ministries. There was, if you will, a lot of polite, "winking and nodding" involved in these contacts, because our Chinese counterparts were obviously still under the direction of the Foreign Ministry. We knew that, but we wouldn't go into that ministry or anyplace else of that kind. I wouldn't let my small group of retired U.S. military officers on the AIT staff go into any of the Chinese Nationalist ministries, even when they had to get a given job done. All such contacts were done, shall we say, off-site, as much as possible.

We ordered new stationery and we took up this new identity. There had been a real scare commercially, as President Carter broke diplomatic relations with the Republic of China. The local stock market plummeted, as did real estate values, on a temporary basis. Some Taiwan businessmen approached me during those dark hours and asked for my views. I said, "We'll get over this, and you'll get over it. Things will work out." Those who were smart enough ultimately profited very nicely. Meanwhile, real estate and other markets plummeted, and for a while there things looked bad.

One Taiwan businessman who had just bought the Coca-Cola plant, suffered a disastrous loss because Deng Xiaoping's visit to the U.S. in January, 1979, featured a trip to President Carter's home state, Georgia, including the headquarters of Coca-Cola in Georgia. The reaction in Taiwan was to boycott Coca-Cola. However, things began to

come back to an even keel.

I traveled quite a bit in Taiwan. There were times, before Ambassador Cross arrived, when I was busy as all get out, on the one hand, and there were other times when I had time to spare. I got Johnny McPoland, our Security Officer, to make the best of it. He set up special car crash courses. He had many vehicles which had been discarded by the departed American military establishment. They were second hand and couldn't be sold. He arranged access to a special patch of an abandoned airport runway for training purposes. He taught us all how to do the "J turn," the "bootlegger's turn," and so forth. He even trained me to the point of crashing cars. I crashed many cars, front and rear, to avoid road blocks. He even got me to the point where I could train others. I could take other people out, under his observation, and show them how to do all of this.

We had no Marine Guards left. So John McPoland set up a system for protecting us without any U.S. Marines. That was a challenge, to put it mildly.

As Ambassador Cross settled in, a funny thing happened one day. Out of the blue, my secretary said to me: "There's a call for you from Tel Aviv, Israel." I said, "It must be a mistake. They're undoubtedly trying to reach somebody else. They think that we're a private business concern." She said, "No, there's a fellow named Dick Viets from the American Embassy, Tel Aviv on the phone." Viets and I had served together in India. So I got on the phone, and Viets said, "Bill, I'm DCM here, and I'm going to be Ambassador to Tanzania. Sam Lewis, the Ambassador to Israel, would very much like you to come to Tel Aviv and replace me as DCM." I said, "Dick, I'm committed here. We've gone through hell and are just now getting this place set up. We have a new Director of AIT, but he's just getting his feet on the ground." Dick said, "Well, why don't you think it over? Get back to me."

About a week later came a short cable which said, "Nu?" So I did a cable which said, "Thanks very much, but no. My commitment is here. Given what we've gone through, I should stay here." Then I got a phone call at home from Ambassador Sam Lewis, whom I'd never met and didn't really know. He said, "Look, we got your cable, but you very definitely are the man for this job, on the basis of all of the reports we have on what you've gone through, and so forth." Ambassador Lewis said, "We need your kind of officer here. I'd very much like for you to be my deputy." I said, "Well, Mr. Ambassador, thank you very much. However, I've never lived in or studied the Middle East. I don't know any Middle Eastern language. This is my area. We've gone through a very unique period, and I'm sure that the Bureau of East Asian Affairs would be very unhappy if I were to leave here at this time." Later he called back and said, "Your front office is taken care of." I said, "Well, we'd better check this out with the sixth or seventh floor in the Department of State." He called back later and said, "That's taken care of, too. I can tell you that the Secretary and his advisers would very much like for you to come here." He said, "Why don't you get on a plane and come here? I'll be in Washington."

So I discussed this matter with Chuck Cross. He was very nice about it and said that he

would certainly miss me. However, he said that these were the needs of the service and a chance for a new vista.

Off I flew to Washington. When I met Ambassador Sam Lewis, he obviously had wanted to see me in person. He said, "It so happens that Special Negotiator Robert Strauss, [a well-known, Texas politician] has been appointed to Israel to conduct the follow-up negotiations on the Camp David agreement. His plane leaves tomorrow for Tel Aviv, so let's jump aboard! You can get a free ride to Israel and see how it actually looks."

So I jumped on the plane with Ambassador Sam Lewis and got to meet Dick Viets and to get the low down on what things really were like there in the embassy in Tel Aviv. I flew back to Washington with Strauss. It was a remarkable journey back to the U.S. Strauss had met Prime Minister Menachem Begin but had been unable to persuade him with his Jewish, Texas charm. Strauss then briefed the press on the plane in rather characteristic, colorful language. When we landed in Lisbon, the reporters all made a beeline for the nearest phone. I then flew back to Taipei and arranged to move expeditiously to Israel, arriving there in late September or early October, 1979, at the time of Yom Kippur.

I had been blooded, if you will, as a new DCM. I had gone through an unparalleled professional and historical experience in setting up the AIT in Taipei. Let me digress briefly on that. Other countries had done something similar, but we hadn't. There was, if you will, a Japanese model. The Japanese had set up something after they got over the shock of the Nixon visit to China. They quickly moved on recognizing the PRC, but the Japanese model for a replacement for their embassy in Taipei didn't precisely meet our needs as an American model. For example, the Japanese didn't have to contend with Congress. The Japanese have a way of doing things quietly once the fix is in. We find it much more difficult to do things in the way the Japanese do them. I'll give you an example. The Japanese were informed by Beijing at one point that the Japanese national air carrier, JAL [Japan Airlines], could no longer fly into Taiwan out of Narita Airport in Japan. The Japanese accepted this and went right about putting a new logo on the aircraft and scheduling flights out of Haneda Airport in Tokyo to Taiwan. Haneda is fairly near downtown Tokyo and is far more convenient than it would have been to schedule these flights to Taiwan out of Narita Airport. The new arrangement prospered, and life went on.

The Japanese representative in Taiwan behaved in a very low key way and was very quiet. Initially, the Japanese had been very pessimistic about the future of Taiwan and how long it would last. However, when they saw us do what we did, that is, set up the American Institute on Taiwan, they learned their own lessons from the American model. Meanwhile, already during my time in Taiwan, I could see the first glimmerings of Europeans, Australians, and others, looking at what we had done. They had broken diplomatic relations with Taiwan and paid the full price which Beijing demanded for opening Embassies in Beijing.

They now looked at what we and the Japanese had done and began looking for ways in which they could quietly come back into Taiwan, while still preserving their Embassies in

Beijing. They started to set up cultural centers, airline offices, and so forth. These offices gradually evolved into something more extensive, but at first they were extremely timid. The PRC had so much more leverage on them, or, more precisely, they allowed the PRC to play them that way. So this was an evolving situation. In some cases these new institutions have evolved remarkably in terms of some countries' representative offices and physical presence in Taiwan.

We are now at a stage, and I'll come back to that at a later point in this interview, where we've had U.S. cabinet officers go to Taiwan if they had business perceived as serving the vital interests of the U.S. This has been done despite protests from Beijing. Remember that when the AIT was set up, not a single U.S. Government official, however lowly, was supposed to be allowed to come to Taiwan. In fact, I had one, almost under the counter [semi-clandestine] case. A representative of the DEA [Drug Enforcement Agency] stationed in either Bangkok or Hong Kong had a house in Taipei and used to go back and forth. The way I put it to him was: "Listen, you no longer have an official presence here. However, if you want to come to Taiwan unofficially, wearing another hat and so forth, that will be all right." As the press of significant business came upon us, relatively low level exceptions to the no visit by official Americans were gradually made, on a case by case basis, so that business of vital interest to the U.S. could be carried on. However, during my last few months in Taiwan, getting the U.S. military out of Taiwan was a major problem.

Q: There is a question I wanted to ask. You mentioned the technical nature of military equipment. You just don't dump equipment from aircraft or ships. Technicians have to go along with a sale of military equipment. How was this handled?

BROWN: Bearing in mind that everything had to be done quietly, let us say that, maybe, the modular packages were re-labeled, but the basic hardware remained inside them. This included orders of special communications equipment. The whole spare parts question is very complicated. We're talking about automated warehouses which the average civilian or the average Foreign Service Officer has absolutely no comprehension of.

Q: I was talking to someone who was in Egypt. He was talking about going through the warehouses in Egypt. There are, perhaps, something like a million spare parts for F-16 aircraft or F-5s. I mean...

BROWN: These days the supply lines for spare parts are all automated. Robot machines go down a line to a given bin, take out a part, and bring it back. Specialists have to evaluate wear and tear on parts constantly and compare notes. The host government constantly wants upgraded [improved] parts and equipment. At first equipment and spare parts that weren't in the pipeline to the Chinese Nationalists just stopped flowing for a year. Then the pipeline was re-opened for new sales, under the Taiwan Relations Act and in view of President Carter's commitment to Beijing not to undertake new sales to Taiwan for one year. Then we got into the question of "What's in the pipeline?" If something has already been ordered, you considered it "in the pipeline," and the transaction moved

quietly.

All kinds of side issues came up. For instance, Taiwan was going through the beginning phase of setting up civilian controlled, nuclear power plants. In September, 1978, just around my birthday, my wife had a disc operation on her back at the Clark Air Force Base hospital [in the Philippines]. At about the same time I had an American nuclear delegation visiting Taiwan. Remember, this was before the break in diplomatic relations with the Republic of China. This was an important issue.

First of all, and for years, we had made a major effort to persuade Chinese Nationalist Premier Chiang Ching-kuo to take the Canadian “CANDU” nuclear research reactor and ship its fissionable material out of Taiwan because, although it had been originally been intended for power and research purposes, if mishandled, it could have implications for nuclear proliferation. We went through a long and difficult process of obtaining agreement for that material to be withdrawn from the reactor, shipped out of Taiwan, and replaced with a much lower-powered substitute.

Then there was the question of nuclear power reactors for meeting Taiwan's dramatically escalating electric power needs. Taiwan had no oil. Import of foreign oil was a substantial item in the Taiwan budget. There is coal in Taiwan, but it is soft coal and terribly smokey. Taiwan invited an American firm to come and build a nuclear power reactor to generate electricity. Local Taiwanese technicians participated in its construction. For the second nuclear reactor they contracted with an American firm but with more Taiwanese participation. By this time Taiwan had acquired more and more know how in building nuclear reactors.

I went out to see the first Taiwan nuclear power reactor with a nuclear team. I'll never forget the introduction. We put on the ritual hard hats. The site for this new plant was called “Gold Mountain (“Chin Shan”). It was located on the Northeast coast of Taiwan. The American nuclear team was given a slide lecture with an American woman's taped voice. The lecture started with: “Welcome to the Chin Shan Nuclear Facility. Why did we choose Chin Shan?” [a click sound, as a new slide was displayed]. “We chose Chin Shan because Taiwan is [click] a very seismic island. Here are the seismographic outlines” [click]. “This area is relatively earthquake free.” Just then the whole building began to rock! [Laughter] There was a stunned silence as we all swayed. When the ground stopped moving, and it seemed as if an eternity had gone by, the hosts said, “Would you like to go to the Control Room?” We all went into the Control Room, which was spewing out all kinds of recording tape. Lights were flashing amber red and so forth. Meanwhile, in nearby Taipei, a couple of people had been killed by collapsed buildings. That whole question of nuclear cooperation in the new configuration of relations with Taiwan was yet another example.

Now, before I leave Taiwan, let me cover a couple of other points. We had broken diplomatic relations with the Republic of China on Taiwan. We were now in operation with a new unofficial instrumentality [that is, AIT, the American Institute on Taiwan].

This relationship began to have repercussions in local society in Taiwan. The Republic of China at the time was a very autocratic regime, with the Chinese Nationalist military playing the primary role, and Lord help anybody who was identified as a dissenter. Into prison they went.

Just before the announcement by President Carter of a change in the pattern of U.S. relations with China, the first election was scheduled to be held in Taiwan. At this recent symposium on Chinese affairs, held last month here in Washington, DC, a veteran Taiwan political figure, a lady, got up and spoke with emotion and real dedication. She had been one of the candidates in this first election in Taiwan. In the wake of the momentous announcement by President Carter, one of Chiang Ching-kuo's initial reactions was to cancel the elections. Those who had been candidates in these elections and who protested the cancellation, including this lady, went to prison. She ended up in prison for 12 years!

Q: My God!

BROWN: What all of this triggered was great distress over the cancellation of the elections, protests by some of the candidates and their backers, a crackdown against candidates who protested and their backers, and then an increasing cycle of repression. This was such that, after I left Taiwan in December, 1979, demonstrations broke out on the island, and some of them became violent. These demonstrations were brutally and savagely put down, to the point that the Carter administration became very exercised and demanded that the people who had been arrested should be given fair trials, should not be executed, and so forth.

It was a very poignant moment for me, and I think for others in the room, to hear this lady describe her experiences. She is now an elected magistrate of a county in Taiwan.[She later became Vice president.] She said, "I just want you to know that I am a victim of all of this." I think that few of us had ever realized the relative costs of going along with decisions like President Carter's announcement on the change in the pattern of our diplomatic representations in China. She had spent 12 years in prison as a result. I can assure you, well at least I reckon, that they were not pleasant years in prison.

Q: Well, at this point you were not part of the Department of State. You were sort of a civilian attending that symposium. Were you doing the usual, political reporting?

BROWN: Oh, yes. Let's face it. Technically, we reported back to David Dean's American Institute in Taiwan headquarters in Rosslyn, Virginia. However, once we re-established our classified communications capability, although everything read, "AIT-Taipei," our reports immediately found their place for appropriate readers in the Department of State. It was all nominally funneled back through AIT, but it was part of the Department of State communications system.

But to return to this question of local repercussions of the Carter announcement, Mark

Pratt was the excellent head of the General Affairs Section previously known as the Political Section of the embassy in Taipei. I had previously studied Chinese with him. He is a good friend. We realized that this was a delicate situation, but agreed that we ought to be in contact with certain mildly dissident Taiwanese.

The government of the Republic of China on Taiwan was, after all, an autocratic regime run by mainland Chinese. However, the Taiwanization of Taiwan was inevitable, given the demographic situation that 85-90 percent of the population were Taiwanese. They spoke a dialect or sub-dialect of Chinese, but they considered themselves Taiwanese, and not mainland Chinese. There was a mainland controlled regime sitting on top of them. Almost all of the principal figures in the regime were mainland Chinese but, over time, this was bound to change. At the time I was in Taiwan, already lieutenants and captains in the Chinese Nationalist armed forces were increasingly Taiwanese.

At this time the business community was already and very significantly dominated by Taiwanese. They had made money during the Vietnam War, supplying our needs in Vietnam. They had built up substantial textile and steel industries in Taiwan which were predominantly but not exclusively controlled by Taiwanese businessmen. There was a very significant, Christian community in Taiwan. It was mainly Presbyterian. My wife Helen was invited to meet with Presbyterian ladies, who turned out to be overwhelmingly Taiwanese and who were therefore, I'm sure under the watchful eyes of the security authorities.

Through Mark Pratt it was arranged that I meet with some young Taiwanese businessmen who worked for larger firms. They were moderate people but were already looking ahead. Before Ambassador Charles Cross arrived to take over the AIT [American Institute on Taiwan], I had some stature by virtue of my office, as the acting Director of the new entity, and decided to meet some of these Taiwanese.

When an evening function was arranged and I appeared in an automobile with Mark Pratt, by golly, there was a big, black Security Service limousine right outside the door. The government authorities were making it unmistakable that we were being watched. In other words, they were not happy that I was meeting with such people. That was the atmosphere of the period. It was to deteriorate sharply in this process that I mentioned, and there were very severe consequences later that same year.

How ironic it is now that we are dealing with Lee Teng-hui, whom I had known as a senior, loyal Taiwanese official of the Kuomintang. He was Taiwanese born and is now the President of the Republic of China on Taiwan. It has become overwhelmingly Taiwanized in every sense of the word. The Chief of Staff of the Chinese Army is now a Taiwanese. The general officers and so forth are Taiwanese. The Legislature is dominated by Taiwanese. It is a free democracy with a free press. All of this has developed in such a short period of time! It's a fascinating development which we can come back to at a later time, once I have completed my recollections of my time in Israel and several other assignments.

Q: All right. Let's stop at this point. We are now in October, 1979, which is an interesting end of a year.

BROWN: The Camp David meeting had just taken place, the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt had been signed, Robert Strauss had already tried and failed in the follow-up to the Camp David Accords as they pertained to what to do with Palestinian territories, and we were engaged in a very interesting relationship with Israel, as we tried to follow up on the Camp David agreements.

Q: So we'll pick this up in October, 1979. You had just arrived in Israel as DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission].

We begin with your arrival in Israel in October, 1979. We have several things to talk about, but let's not go into them here.

BROWN: Well, one of the things I'd like to discuss is certain aspects of assignments to the AIT, in professional Foreign Service terms and in our overall, policy terms. I struggled very hard, with the help of some but not of others, to set the AIT up in such a way that officers were guaranteed, if they stayed in the service, full promotion, rehiring, and so forth. I was terribly concerned that an assignment to the AIT should not become a graveyard or a repository for gray beards and people about to retire, officers who were at the end of their careers. I wanted to be sure that people would not say, "Well, if nothing else, there's always an assignment to the AIT in Taipei."

What I wanted to make sure was that the new blood coming into the Foreign Service and into the China Service of the Foreign Service would see Taipei and its little, sub-post, Kaohsiung, as valid, attractive professional assignments. I think that we should go into this in some detail. In other words, the big game would undoubtedly become Beijing and the Consulates General that would be opened up in mainland China: Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenyang, Chengdu, and so forth. However, the China Service of the Foreign Service should look on Taiwan as an interesting, fascinating area which, in a sense, is a model of what could be done by Chinese in an increasingly liberalized and privatized economy. So that, as they were posted to mainland China, they wouldn't have merely that all too narrow focus of the PRC propaganda line, and the guided tour.

I was telling young officers assigned to Taiwan that this was a valid assignment in a Foreign Service career. I fought like hell to keep the Chinese language school on Taiwan. There were those who said, "Hell, the game is now Beijing. Let's just close the school at Taichung and move it to Beijing, where they will deal with the new, simplified characters and current communist jargon. It will be just so much more convenient." I fought that battle, tooth and nail. Eventually, for cost savings purposes, we moved the school from Taichung, where it had been nearly since its inception, up to Taipei, but up on the

mountain, Yang Ming Shan, where it would not be down in the busy hubbub where the AIT offices were. Rather, it would be sufficiently separated so that the students could concentrate on their studies. The leadership of the school continued to teach all kinds of Chinese dialects. That is, the local and mainland versions of Chinese, including the reading of communist as well as local newspapers. Also, the language school would take Foreign Service students on tours of Taiwan industry, including steel, plastic, computers, and all of that. As a result, they would be better prepared to serve both in Taiwan and on the mainland.

The motto that I used was: "We ought to have faith in maintaining a system where our China officers are interchangeable between the China Mainland and Taiwan. They may start their service on Taiwan or they may start on the Mainland. It will be perfectly all right for them to go back and forth in their assignments, without being tainted in any way. On landing in Taiwan in 1978 the authorities were aware that I had been to mainland China with the first Congressional Delegation in 1972. I was one of the first of my kind to do so and I was proud of it. However, I wanted to avoid slipping into what I thought was the trap of an overly, shall we say, parochial approach. That is, that Taiwan is a special case, a diminishing case, and the whole emphasis should now shift to mainland China. I thought that that would be most unfortunate.

I'm happy and proud to say that the language school, for instance, is still on Taiwan, although there are those who argue that it ought to be moved. We still have this principle of interchangeability of officers back and forth, which is the way it should be.

Q: Well, then, we'll pick this up the next time when you tell us how you were selected to go to Israel. We'll pick up with your arrival in Israel in October, 1979.

Today is May 5, 1999. Bill, we're going to discuss your time in Israel, and we discussed this off microphone. You're going to be referring to a very complete, oral history which was done by Sam Lewis, who was our Ambassador to Israel when you served there. So, for someone who is looking at this account, for this particular period of time, they should also take into account Ambassador Sam Lewis' oral history.

BROWN: Yes. That is an outstanding interview, in its entirety. In my view he made an brilliant presentation. I subscribe to his description of events in Israel and the background to them. I will attempt to fill in some niches, give some personal recollections on certain incidents in which I was involved or on which I had special observations, and make some comments on management and other matters. Stu, please feel free to ask me what you want.

Q: I would like to put in here that you were the Deputy Chief of Mission [DCM] of the American embassy in Tel Aviv from 1979 to 1982.

BROWN: I believe that my time there ran from the end of September or early October, 1979, till the end of August, 1982. That covers the following main developments: the follow-up to the conclusion of the Camp David agreements and the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty, the end of the Carter administration, the effect of the mujahideen takeover of our Embassy in Tehran, the Israeli bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor, the Israeli elections of 1981, the worsening situation between Israel and Syria in Lebanon, the massive Israeli invasion of Lebanon in June, 1982, and its sequel.

Q: By any chance, while you're going through that laundry list, did the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan [in December, 1979] have any effect?

BROWN: I would say, "Yes," in overall terms. Remember that not long before this I had previously been serving as Political Counselor in the American embassy in Moscow. I was in that situation during the period of 1977-1978. I was very concerned about Soviet behavior, attitude, and so forth at that stage of the Cold War.

Q: I hope that you will discuss it during your description of this period.

BROWN: Yes. I would like to make some basic observations here. By the way, I commend the reader of this account to the views of other contributors to the Foreign Affairs Oral History regarding the Israeli-Palestinian or the Israeli-Arab relationship, going all the way back to how it appeared in Jerusalem in 1945. Those contributions should be considered as well.

In this connection one of the features to be considered is "What was this all about," particularly in terms of the attitudes of succeeding American administrations, and particularly as we come into the period of the Reagan administration, which began in 1981. As Ambassador Sam Lewis and others have pointed out, there is a school of analysis that the Cold War heavily dominated our approach to the Middle East. That is, the view that the Soviets were out to do us in every way and that there was a number of bad Arab players in this equation. In this view, the Soviets were not willing to help us. In fact, they sought to do us in as best they could. One of the bad Arab characters was President Assad of Syria, who was willing to play the Soviet game. That interpretation of events has a sub-set that the Arab-Israeli conflict at the time was essentially, if not a side-show, a smaller, sub-set of the larger picture of the Cold War. That is the point at which Secretary of State Al Haig and the early Reagan administration came into the picture.

Q: When you arrived in Israel in 1979, the Carter administration was still in office.

BROWN: It was still high Carter administration in a way, although this period was the beginning of the weakening of the Carter administration domestically. This was a reflection of domestic politics, the economy, the attitude toward President Carter, and the rapid wearing away of the great achievement of the Camp David Agreement in domestic political terms. There also was a growing stable of Republican opponents of President Carter, one of whom was Ronald Reagan. There was a feeling that such events as

developments in Afghanistan and the Mujahideen takeover of our embassy in Iran [in December, 1979] were wearing away the influence of the Carter administration and President Carter himself.

Now, you must remember that as we speak it is now May, 1999. It is nearly 20 years since I first came into the Middle East. As I think I pointed out before, you could say that I really came into it cold. I had never served in the Middle East, had never lived there, didn't speak any of the languages in use there, and never had any academic background on it. I was recruited into the Middle East, if you will, cold and over the telephone and then in a personal meeting with Ambassador Sam Lewis. I then became totally immersed in the Middle East, and that's how I learned this particular part of the diplomatic trade.

Q: A question while you're on that subject. Did you find yourself having to work out of trying to equate your experience, particularly in the Soviet Union and in Far Eastern countries? I've seen people come to posts with a pre-set idea of how things are done. It sometimes takes a while almost to unlearn those instincts and develop new ones.

BROWN: The situation in the Middle East, as various of your contributors have pointed out, has always been very intense. During this time it was at a peak of that intensity and was to remain so during my period of service in Israel. You really didn't have time to consider the baggage that you might be carrying. You just worked at the situation, day and night.

Let's go back to my Soviet experience. You could argue that my Soviet experience had some relevance to my service in the Middle East. However, I was fascinated by Ambassador Sam Lewis' account of the argument over the issue of the Geneva Peace Conference proposal, which was a Carter initiative which surfaced in 1977. This led to a U.S.-Soviet bilateral declaration in September, 1977. As Ambassador Sam Lewis points out, Secretary of State Vance had negotiated with the Soviets very secretly to produce that bilateral declaration. I must add that this was done so secretly that, despite my being Political Counselor in Moscow, I had no idea that this effort was going on, until it was announced. I don't recall any role of mine whatsoever in any aspect of those negotiations.

The Israelis, of course, were outraged because, they felt that this negotiation was conducted behind their backs. Ambassador Sam Lewis notes that, to this day, I guess, there remains a real disagreement as to what Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's true feelings were on this issue. Ambassador Lewis says that Hermann Eilts, at that time our Ambassador to Egypt, thought that, initially, Sadat liked the idea of the U.S.-Soviet joint statement, with its clear implication that an international conference on the Middle East would be held. However, the Egyptians reportedly then became upset when they became aware of the U.S.-Israeli working paper, which put a gloss on it and which aroused Egyptian fears that Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin would somehow be able to manipulate President Carter at the expense of Egyptian President Sadat.

In any event, by the end of September, 1977, the very month when that bilateral

declaration was made, the chances of a Middle East conference had just about evaporated, although President Carter continued to push the idea until President Sadat suddenly went off to Jerusalem in November, 1977. This trip by President Sadat came as a bombshell for the Carter administration. You may recall my previous account of the trip by Deputy Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Phil Habib to Moscow to try to persuade Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko and other Soviet leaders that this was a surprise for us. Gromyko, in his usual biting, sarcastic manner, said to Phil Habib: "Mr. Habib, I can barely restrain myself from laughing in your face."

I mention this to make the point that, although I had some exposure to the Middle East from my Moscow experience, I was basically coming into the Middle Eastern area really cold. And in the wake of an intensive, unprecedented experience in Taiwan. That is, the break in relations with the Republic of China in Taiwan, the closure of the embassy in Taipei, the establishment of the American Institute on Taiwan, and all that went with it.

Another point that I should make is that Ambassador Sam Lewis and I were the same age. He was, I would say, then at the peak of his form, he and his wife, Sally. I would stress here the role of Sally Lewis as well. The two of them did an outstanding job. They were physically up to the stress involved. Ambassador Lewis' position was then, and it was to remain so, a very demanding one.

You may recall that the Israeli Government, over the years, had progressively been moving up to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv. It takes about an hour and a quarter or an hour and a half, depending on the traffic, to drive to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv. It's a hard drive up from Tel Aviv. And I mean "up" as Jerusalem is about 3,000 feet above sea level. If you're not in good shape, you feel the change in altitude. Sam Lewis was a dedicated, highly and intensely involved outreach kind of Ambassador. There was a lot going on in Tel Aviv. The Ministry of Defense was in Tel Aviv. Many Israeli politicians had homes in Tel Aviv. Some of the ministries still operated out of Tel Aviv on alternate days or a couple of days each week. However, the main action was up in Jerusalem. So Ambassador Lewis had to tear up and down between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. I think that, on more than one occasion, he made two round trips a day. This was really a wearing experience for him.

At the Ambassador's lovely residence in Herzeliya Petuach the Lewis' entertained constantly. They backed all kinds of noble causes, including charities. They hosted countless functions for visiting Americans, for Israelis, and for all kinds of visitors, including many congressional delegations who poured in and through Tel Aviv. He would meet Congressional delegations at Ben Gurion Airport [formerly Lydda Airport] and accompany them up to Jerusalem. Often the only chance that you had to brief them was during the trip between the airport and Jerusalem. It was a hectic and sustained pace. There was just no letup. That's the way it was during my three years, working under Sam Lewis. That's the way it had been for two years before that, as well as at least three years after I left Israel, during all of which he was Ambassador.

Ambassador and Mrs. Lewis were, and remained, a tremendous team, taken together and individually. They rapidly became role models for my wife Helen and myself, although I had no idea that I would ever come back to Israel. They impressed us as an outstanding Ambassador and his wife.

We have had and still have a Consulate General in Jerusalem, which had historically been in place for 100 years, first as a tiny office and then as a larger post. One must remember that even before Tel Aviv was established, leaving aside the ensuing growth of the city and the location of an American embassy there, Jerusalem was THE post for the official American representative in Palestine.

Q: We even had a false American presence. Some nut came out of Philadelphia around 1848 or so and set himself up as the American Consul. It took the Ottoman Turks, for Palestine was then part of the Turkish Empire, a couple of years to find out who this guy was. [Laughter]

BROWN: Anyway, there was a well established distance between the American Consulate General in Jerusalem and the American embassy in Tel Aviv. There was understandable resentment on the part of some Israelis at the very existence of an independent American Consulate General in Jerusalem. It was not accredited to Israel because, as part of the overall picture, the United States Government had a host of legal positions which had been articulated and adopted at the United Nations. In this connection one key position was that the fate of Jerusalem remained to be determined. We did not recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Therefore, the American Consulate General in Jerusalem was not accredited to the Government of Israel. The Government of Israel resented the presence of an independent American Consulate General in Jerusalem and looked on its staff, for many years, as, in essence, pro-Palestinian, and pro-Arab. In the worst case, some Israelis regarded the Consulate General as anti-Israeli.

So the work of interfacing with the Israeli Government was almost entirely handled by the American embassy, from a distance down in Tel Aviv. We had some fine people successively assigned to Jerusalem as Consuls General. The Consulate General had a smaller staff than the embassy in Tel Aviv. The Consulate General's offices were split, with one office on the Jewish side of Jerusalem and the other office, which was the Consular Section of the Consulate General, across the line on the Arab side. The consular district of the Consulate General was all of Jerusalem and the West Bank of the Jordan, as well as reporting thereon. However, as a matter of policy, personnel of the Consulate General in Jerusalem didn't go into Israeli Government offices or ministries. They reported Palestinian and Arab Jerusalem views. This didn't gain any popularity for the Consulate General, let us say, among our Israeli interlocutors.

So there was a built-in, if you will, tension between Embassy Tel Aviv and the Consulate General in Jerusalem, which both the Ambassador and his DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] in Tel Aviv and the Consul General in Jerusalem and his deputy had to deal

with. They had to deal with occasional eruptions, let us say.

Another factor here, of course, is that Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin was in power. Begin's Israeli background had been conspiratorial, if you will, during the struggle with the British which preceded Israeli independence. For years Begin and his immediate following had been politically in the wilderness. He had been a member of the Knesset [Israeli Parliament]. However, the embassy's reach into the Begin camp was pretty limited until about 1976 or 1977. True, Ambassador Toon had met with Menachem Begin when Begin was still in the Opposition. (I remember Ambassador Toon saying in Moscow, at the time of the signature of the Camp David Agreements and the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, that, "Begin will never, ever, give up the West Bank of the Jordan River.") However, we didn't know Menachem Begin that well at the time.

Now, as I arrived in Israel, some momentous developments had taken place, including the famous Camp David Agreements, and President Anwar Sadat of Egypt was on the front pages of the world press with Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and President Carter. Still, Ambassador Sam Lewis was THE man as far as getting into contact with Prime Minister Begin was concerned. We had some very good officers in the embassy in Tel Aviv, some of whom spoke pretty fluent Hebrew, who would work the scenes elsewhere including the Knesset. We also had extensive contact with Labour.

Q: By "Labour," you mean members of the Labour Party, the opposition to Prime Minister Begin.

BROWN: The Labour Party. In a calmer atmosphere it was a challenge to keep in contact with all of these various political parties in the Knesset and in the ruling, coalition government of Israel. As I said, the distance problem and the communications problem, as well as the time difference between Israel and Washington, were very challenging. By the time I got to Tel Aviv, the embassy staff was really stretched out.

I don't know if I ever told Ambassador Sam Lewis this, but as I transited Washington en route to Tel Aviv, the Country Director of Israeli Affairs, David Korn, pulled me aside one day and said to me, in essence: "Look, Sam Lewis has recruited you for his own needs, on his own principles. We've gone along with this, but we have a special agenda with you. That is, the embassy in Tel Aviv has been working full blast for years now. It is heavily stretched. The people assigned there are fatigued. There is a morale problem to work on. You have to be careful because Sam is so determined to get the most outstanding people that there is a bit of aggravation back here in Washington as to all of this."

Well, that's the kind of thing that I brought quietly with me to Tel Aviv. As I said, Sam was at the top of his form, but the embassy, which was not a large embassy, was stretched out. So I had that problem to be concerned with, in managerial terms.

Now, if I may jump around a bit, Ambassador Sam Lewis emphasized the role of

communications, and particularly the secure telephone. He found this indispensable. I swore by it as well. In those days we had an apparatus called a "K-Something," which was a pretty cranky and complicated piece of machinery, by modern standards. A communicator had to crank it up with a special tape. You had to call a communicator into the embassy or have them set it up the night before. It had to be set up in the right time sequence or it wouldn't work with the State Department in Washington. Very often it sounded as if you were talking with somebody on the other side of the Moon. The apparatus would break down. It took a great deal of manipulation. Pretty soon you had to learn how to run this thing yourself.

The secure telephone had a great advantage, but I was later to see that it had a down side as well. First, we tended to become dependent on the secure phone, particularly in the Israeli context, where the atmosphere was often so clouded as to what our real policy was on a given point. We also had problems due to divisions within the Washington agencies, particularly in rapidly developing situations. We often relied on the secure telephone for the most sensitive matters, and our discussions on it therefore didn't get into the record. So historians should be particularly careful about communications via secure telephone. If I were an historian, I would already be very distraught at this time. As I look past your shoulder, Stu, I can see volumes of the "Foreign Relations of the United States," neatly set out on your shelves. By the time the Department of State reaches this period in the Middle East, there will be a large amount of material that is not properly recorded and will never be so recorded, because it was done orally, on the most interesting and delicate matters.

The use of the secure telephone occasionally led to conflicting interpretations. Sam or I would take notes at our end of the conversation. We assumed that someone at the other end was taking his or her own notes. However, then, as you reported up the line and laterally, as to what had been said on the secure telephone and so forth, we often found that there were conflicting interpretations of what was discussed. That, or people tended to read into a conversation or add to it material that the other party to the conversation didn't remember. This also led to compartmentalization, which I used to run into later on, particularly when I was an Ambassador, in view of the way Secretary of State Baker handled Ambassadors and issues. This way of doing business on the secure telephone allowed others outside of the Department of State, as the use of the secure phone improved in quality and frequency of use, to butt in. That is, people outside of the Department of State began to operate their own, secure communications system with Ambassadors or other elements of an embassy. This was often unbeknownst to the Department of State and sometimes in rivalry or competition with it. Like so many other technological developments, the secure telephone is a many-edged instrument.

I'd like now to go into some specific incidents. However, before I do, I'd like to say how much I appreciated the fact, at the time and since then, that Ambassador Sam Lewis took me so deeply into his confidence. At times he was now getting to be a pretty tired man who tried to pace himself. He was in tremendous, physical shape, but the wear and tear on his system was enormous. Every so often he would go off on a well-deserved period of

local leave. He liked to dive. He'd go down to the waters off the Sinai Peninsula and dive, leaving me in charge of the embassy. Or he'd go on consultations in the Department of State or on home leave. The intensity of developments affecting Israel was such that, even as a newly arrived DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission], I often got involved at the highest level, with the Israeli Prime Minister or the Defense Minister on very sensitive matters. It was a real immersion and quite a baptism of fire for someone like myself who had come to the area essentially cold.

I mentioned the continuing flow of visitors. One also has to remember that there were, on any given day or night, important visitors in Israel whose presence we might not even be aware of. Within the American Jewish community there were many different strands and strains. Politically, they were often in contention. That is, they were Democrats or Republicans, along with sub-sets thereof. They had their own connections in Israel and their own pathways. Often these pathways led into very high places in Israel. Those who were particularly well-heeled and could contribute or could demonstrate that they had political influence. They had appropriate access to Israeli political figures. It was quite a challenge for us to try and keep track of these people as well, many of whom didn't even notify us that they were in Tel Aviv or were up in Jerusalem and operating on their own. This was really a remarkable phenomenon, and it remains so. As we entered a period of American elections, all of that activity intensified enormously. The Israelis would "play it" for their own benefit.

Q: This raises a question in my mind. After you had been in Israel for a while, this was the world in which you lived. However, I think that one of the things that people who have not served in Israel or even have not served in the Arab world may resent is that Israel is a little country which seems, no matter what the American interest is or what the American embassy would do, Israelis can always bypass you and go to the American Congress and get whatever they want. Was that something you had to deal with, particularly early in your tour of duty in Israel?

BROWN: Well, you rapidly became aware of the fact that the Israelis had a tremendous embassy in Washington and, I would add, good, high quality Consulates around the United States and a very good Mission to the United Nations. The Israeli Consulate General in New York was often headed by a former Israeli Ambassador. Israel had a purchasing mission in New York. They were working this structure for all that it was worth. They were in touch with both Houses of Congress and the Executive Branch of the American Government, the various elements of the Jewish communities, the arms industries, and various aspects of American intellectual and cultural life.

For instance, it didn't take me long to figure out that Prime Minister Menachem Begin and his associates were working with the American Christian right wing. This was appalling to some Israelis, particularly those associated with or sympathetic to the Israeli Labor Party, who had been used to, and thought it entirely appropriate to work with the American liberal community, as well as with certain elements of industry. There were some people on both sides of the ocean who were appalled to see this. Well, the answer

was quite obvious. Here were assets which could be developed and which had very significant amounts of influence. One could name Senators and Congressmen to this day of that background or nearly of that background who developed very strong opinions on our relationship with Israel and who backed the Israelis on many issues.

I have been in situations in far off places in this little country of Israel where one would come upon a school, cultural center, or hospital, only to find that Senator or Congressman So-and-so had obtained very significant sums of money to support them. Or, if these institutions were known to us, we hadn't really had much of a role in the process of their financing. For instance, one might receive a communication from AID [Agency for International Development] Washington informing us that such and such a project has been proposed by "So-and-so." AID Washington would ask us to take a look at it and let them know what we thought about it.

Well, we would look into it. We wanted to assure ourselves and Washington that this project was not fraudulent but was on the up and up, that it was a bona fide hospital or educational institution and so forth. However, very often we rapidly came to the conclusion that back in Washington the fix was in, and our views were of no particular significance. One had to keep all of that in mind.

Another phenomenon was noteworthy. Among all of the places where I had served, both before and after serving in Israel, and I had been in some pretty active situations, never did I see such a flood of Congressional Delegations, both official and unofficial. Remember that Members of Congress can go to Israel either officially or unofficially. If they are determined to go to Israel, they're going to go. Those who come as part of official Congressional Delegations are assigned an official airplane, either from the Department of Defense or from another source. They fly over to Israel and are billed as an official delegation.

However, that's just the tip of the iceberg. You get many Congressmen who come to Israel as members of an unofficial delegation. Ambassador Lewis' rule of the thumb, as well as mine thereafter, was that, by golly, whoever was paying for the tab, all congressional delegations, unofficial as well as official, were important and had to be tended, cared for, briefed, and provided the best perspective that we could give them. We certainly didn't favor the prospect of Congressmen slipping in and out of the country without meeting the Ambassador and/or the DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission].

Our procedure was to meet members of these unofficial Congressional delegations at Ben Gurion Airport, take them up to Jerusalem, and brief them. We appreciated that, in many cases, they were on their way up to meet with the Prime Minister or Defense Minister to get Israel's version of some event or development. We wanted to make sure that these Congressmen had the right perspective to the extent that we could provide it, bearing in mind that they were often exhausted as they got off the plane from the United States. However, we did what we could. By handling them in this way we could get some idea of what was being said to them and by them. If necessary, we would try to, shall we say,

upgrade and enhance either the conversation itself or their understanding of what it all meant.

Among them I remember, during my first tour in Israel, several cases of Members of Congress coming in and saying to us: "This Menachem Begin needs to be informed about how strongly I or we feel about whatever the issue was, whether Israeli settlements or another matter. One would say to oneself: "That's nice to hear. Perhaps they'll give this version straight to the Prime Minister." Then you would find out very often, and even most often, that they would lead off by saying: "You know, Mr. Prime Minister, my record speaks for itself. You look into my voting record and the statements I have made regarding the State of Israel, and you will find that I am one of the most stalwart supporters of the State of Israel and what you stand for in the whole Congress of the United States. Now, we have some minor problems. One of my constituents has told me that he doesn't quite understand this or that issue." Whereupon Prime Minister Menachem Begin would say, "You're right. What we should do is to increase our 'Hazbarah.'" In Hebrew this means, "Israel's official information or propaganda program." And often these Members of Congress would come out of the meeting, "Shorn like lambs," after having assured us that they were going to go into the meeting with Begin and "lay it all down on the line."

Menachem Begin was a real personality. Here was a man whom Ambassador Sam Lewis has eloquently described as someone who could speak several languages fluently. Begin prided himself on his command of English, Latin, and so forth. Lewis described him as a man who could get under your skin, a man who could put his finger on a raw or sensitive nerve, really put you on the defensive, and make his point.

I'll give you an example. The situation between the Syrians and the Israelis regarding Lebanon was heating up. In 1981 in Zakleh, in northern Lebanon, the pro-Syrian side started to build a road. The Israelis regarded this as a violation of the oral, Kissinger-negotiated red lines agreement, which Ambassador Sam Lewis has alluded to in his interview in this Oral History series. The net result was that the Israelis shot down two Syrian helicopters around Zakleh. The Syrians responded to this by deploying Soviet surface to air missile units into Zakleh.

Thereupon, Prime Minister Begin called in Ambassador Sam Lewis. I went along with Sam, as notetaker, because we knew that this was a really serious matter. As we waited outside the Prime Minister's office, his secretary notified the Prime Minister that we had arrived and we were ushered into Begin's office, which was filled with rabbis with long beards. We started to back out, saying that we were sorry to have interrupted. Begin said, "No, no. I want you to meet these gentlemen." We were introduced all around. The rabbis finished what they had to say in Hebrew and left through a side door.

Then Begin sat us down and pointed to a large book on his coffee table. He said, "I want you to look at this book with me." He opened it up, and it turned out to be an extensive collection of photographs, of men and women, young and old, children, students, and so

forth. They were mostly small photographs, some with writing on the margins. He said, “These rabbis who have just left have finally, after years of effort, obtained this through their channels from Poland. These are photos of the inhabitants of a Jewish town in Poland. The people were completely exterminated by the Nazis. Look at these photos. Look at this girl, 13 years old. Look at this rabbi. Look at this man, just an ordinary man,” and so forth. He said, “Read the inscriptions. Well, I’ll read them for you,” because Begin was a Polish Jew by background.

As Prime Minister Begin read the inscriptions, you could see him visibly building up anger. He went on to say, “Assad [President Assad of Syria] is the Hitler of this region. I swear to you, as to everybody, that we will never, ever allow this sort of thing to happen to us, either abroad or here, in any way.” From that point Begin then launched into his version of what had happened over Zakleh, in northern Lebanon. By this time he had reached his crescendo. It was a great, dramatic performance, if you will. He didn’t have to rehearse this. This man was a real, dramatic orator who could get his political message across in his own particular way.

Ambassador Sam Lewis and I left Begin’s office and dashed down on the one hour ride to Tel Aviv. We said to each other: “He’s going to attack Syria, unless we do something drastic.” So we sent off one of those FLASH precedence messages. We first summarized it orally via secure phone and then sent a telegram, to dramatize what we had heard and to urge the Department to do something. The result was that Phil Habib, [then Deputy Undersecretary for Political Affairs] was sent to Israel as a special envoy. There began his outstanding role in shuttle diplomacy between Prime Minister Begin of Israel and President Assad of Syria. This often meant going from Tel Aviv to Lebanon, up to Damascus, and back.

Later on, we learned that Prime Minister Begin had actually given the command to the Israeli Air Force to attack these Syrian surface to air missiles in Lebanon. However, the weather intervened and prevented the airstrike, temporarily, and now we had Phil Habib in Tel Aviv to strengthen our point. We managed, if you will, to stabilize that situation for the time being. That required a whole, separate set of backup facilities. Phil Habib was a tremendous diplomat for shuttle diplomacy. He had been raised in Brooklyn and so had been exposed to the Yiddish/Jewish experience.

Q: He'd been a “Shabas Goy” [Sabbath Gentile].

BROWN: He’d been a “Shabas Goy” and knew how to play it with the Israelis. He was a very dramatic guy. Phil Habib had his Lebanese Christian background. He had gravitas, he had experience, and he was an excellent man for the job. He had also suffered several heart attacks and was not in good health. Just the trip up and down from Jerusalem, then a flight to Lebanon and/or Damascus was physically very taxing for him. However, he was a driven man. I mean, Phil Habib was just “go, go, go” all the time. This required real attention from those of us who worked with and for him. Fortunately, he had Ambassador Morris Draper with him as his mentor. Morrie had the guts to say, “Phil, calm down,” or

to tell him when he thought that Phil was wrong. He would draft cables for Phil and make administrative arrangements. They often would come tearing down to Ben Gurion Airport from Jerusalem, jump into their special aircraft, fly nominally to Cyprus, but actually to Beirut, because you weren't supposed to fly directly from Tel Aviv to Beirut. Or they might go just barely into Cypriot airspace and then into Beirut. There was always the danger of getting unwittingly into conflict in the air. From Beirut they would go to Damascus, and then back. They went through this day and night.

It was a remarkable performance, but what it meant was that from our Ambassador, right on down to our dispatcher, Benny Banin, Habib required full-time, 24 hour a day support, and rightly so. I was very heavily involved in this, and it was a great education for me on how things could be done.

Once, when Ambassador Sam Lewis was away, a crisis broke and Habib and Draper came into the area on one of these day and night loops. I got word, belatedly, out of Cairo that he was already on his way to Ben Gurion. This was during the traffic rush in the morning. In fact, he was in the air and due to land in about half an hour at Ben Gurion International Airport. In the middle of the traffic rush, my driver turned on the siren, the emergency, flashing lights and drove off the road onto the shoulder. We just made it. I ran them up to see Menachem Begin with whom Habib had an intensive conversation. Meanwhile, I notified Beirut that Phil Habib was in the area and was coming to Lebanon.

Remember, communications then weren't as good as they are now. All of these arrangements had to be handled very personally and very carefully. Otherwise, we could have had a disaster. I ran Phil down the hill to Ben Gurion airport, onto his plane, and saw him off to Lebanon. I made a patched through phone call via the State Department Ops Center to the embassy in Beirut to make sure that they got the cable and that Washington was aware of what was going on. Phil flew to Beirut, met the Lebanese, flew to Damascus, and met with President Assad. Then he flew to Saudi Arabia. He and Morrie Draper met the King of Saudi Arabia at 2:00 AM in the middle of the desert. All of this with no sleep. They went to the wrong palace in the desert and then had to find the right one. On the one hand, they were trying to extract from President Assad [of Syria] what they could and play the Saudi card. For their part the Saudis were funding Assad and the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] out of fear. Phil was trying to get the Saudis to play our game behind the scenes. Then Phil Habib flew to Cairo to refuel and was back in Tel Aviv the next morning at the same time, having had no sleep. Phil was totally gray in his appearance. He went up to Prime Minister Begin's office in Jerusalem. Begin treated Phil Habib with respect but said that Phil was asking Israel to make a tremendous decision on a cease-fire. He said that he had to consult his cabinet.

We went over to the Consulate General in Jerusalem to wait. Habib was like a tiger. He was pacing back and forth in the Consul General's residence. A phone call came from Prime Minister Begin. Begin wanted something else from Habib, who by now was almost beside himself. They negotiated over the phone. Then Phil got into his limousine and we went over to Prime Minister Begin's office. There were further intense negotiations. The

we went out to meet the press Phil announced to the world a cease-fire. That's the way Habib worked.

Now, implementing that cease-fire and getting the word out to all of these parties all over the place, and then trying to shore it up and back it up required a tremendous, follow-on effort. Ambassador Morris Draper was superb in all of this. It was very taxing for Morrie Draper. I don't think that he ever got the kind of recognition that he should have had for this effort. However, that's another story.

Now let me go to a couple of other issues and incidents. The first one almost caused my abrupt departure from the Foreign Service. It happened in late February of 1980. Remember that I arrived in Israel late in 1979. A situation emerged, which Ambassador Sam Lewis has dealt with in his oral interview. A resolution was proposed in the UN Security Council blasting the Israelis, among other things, for the establishment of Jewish settlements in the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem. The PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] and the Arabs were putting up this resolution in an effort to put Begin in an embarrassing situation, as well as to move the American administration. At that time we were in a key period just before the Presidential primaries. Jimmy Carter was seeking to be re-elected President of the United States. Another Democrat, Senator Ted Kennedy, was out to capture the primaries from President Carter. New York was a critical state at this period.

Into the middle of this situation came this bombshell. Ambassador Sam Lewis was on consultations in Paris, meeting with Sol Linowitz. At that time Sol Linowitz had succeeded Bob Strauss as the special negotiator for the follow-on negotiations on Palestinian autonomy. Prime Minister Begin and President Carter had a fundamental misunderstanding to begin with, and we were now trying to persuade the Begin government to ensure a favorable outcome in the negotiations on Palestinian autonomy. They were polite but stiff arming us by various means. Bob Strauss saw that this was a losing game and got out of it. Sol Linowitz picked up that job. At that time Linowitz was in Paris. Sam Lewis went to Paris. At 6:00 AM I got a phone call from Hal Saunders.

Q: He was Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs.

BROWN: Yes. This discussion with Saunders was conducted over an "pen telephone line. Hal said to me: "Bill, I've been on the phone trying to reach Sam." I said, "Sam got on the plane half an hour ago. He's on his way to Paris. What's the issue?" Hal said, "It's this UN resolution." I said, "Well, I can tell you right away, from the point of view of Embassy Tel Aviv, that we should vote against this resolution. At a minimum, abstain." There was a bit of a pause, and Hal Saunders said, "Well, actually, Bill, I wanted to ask what the embassy's view would be on voting for it." I said, "Hal, this is too sensitive. Let me rush into the embassy and send you a cable, which I'll send off right away."

I raced down to the embassy. I forget who drafted the cable, but I think that, at the time, my Political Counselor was Charley Hill. Probably, the gent who drafted it was an

outstanding Political Officer, Gil Kulic, who has already contributed to your Oral History. Anyway, as I recollect it, and remember that I have no notes to refer to, I fired off a cable which went out via FLASH precedence because of the urgency of the situation. You know, you use FLASH precedence only for real emergencies. My telegram said, in effect: "Don't vote for this resolution. It would be really counterproductive. It would enrage the Begin administration, particularly the reference to 'Jewish settlements in Jerusalem,' because the attitude of the Begin administration is that this is Israeli territory and that Israel doesn't have any settlements on its own territory." Israel had captured Jerusalem in the 1967 War and had unilaterally and contrary to various UN resolutions proceeded to enlarge the municipality of Jerusalem, integrate it into Israel and to declare it Israel's own eternally indivisible capital. Israelis then moved into sectors which had hitherto been outside the old municipal boundaries of Jerusalem, and these sectors were called 'Jewish settlements' by the Arabs. The Israel Government certainly didn't see it that way, and still does not. Moreover on the overall issue of settlements, be they in Jerusalem or elsewhere, we had made statements to the Israelis that we were not asking for the dismantling of existing settlements.

So that telegram went off. Since the issue was dynamite, I said to Hal Saunders: "Try to get in touch with Sam Lewis, if you can, in Paris." Well, on that weekend Yigal Allon, a great Israeli figure, a former general and former Foreign Minister and the author of the Allon Plan for yielding some of the territory on the West Bank to Jordan, died of a heart attack. The weather was terrible. A windstorm something like a hurricane hit the area. Ambassador Sam Lewis flew back from Paris, by which time our UN Representative had already voted, not against this resolution, not in abstention, but for the resolution! At this point all hell began to break loose, as I predicted.

Seeing domestic political advantage, Senator Ted Kennedy seized upon this to attack President Carter's stance. Cy Vance, as a good, loyal Secretary of State, took the rap for a communications gap. We didn't know it at the time, but Ambassador Sam Lewis has since brought out the view that President Carter had already authorized the vote for this resolution, provided that the reference to "Jewish settlements" in the Jerusalem area was deleted. If not, we would vote against the resolution. Somehow, through a mixup in communications between the State Department and our Permanent Representative in New York, Ambassador Don McHenry, we voted for the resolution! The Israeli Government was furious, and I was beside myself.

When Sam Lewis, his wife Sally, and I went to Allon's funeral, I was still deeply upset. I think that this was on a Sunday. On the following day, Monday morning, I drafted a letter of resignation from the Foreign Service by cable. This said something like: "Whereas I was Charge d'Affaires at the time, and whereas I had sent FLASH Cable No. Such-and-Such recommending that we vote against this resolution, with its call for the 'dismantling of existing settlements' or at least abstain, and whereas we voted for it, I therefore request immediate transfer and early retirement for the Foreign Service." I prepared this cable in final form and sent it in to Ambassador Lewis. After a little while, Sam called me in and said, "You can't do this." However, I felt so strongly at the time that I said, "No, I want to

send this cable of resignation.” He really had to work on me, saying: “Look, you don't want to do this. You don't want to end your career. You did your best. Moreover, I'd be on the spot myself as Ambassador if you sent this cable in to the Department.” So I withdrew the cable.

However, it shows you how deeply involved you can get in fast breaking situations like that and the twists and turns in Washington policy pronouncements. There are those who felt that this vote for the UN resolution materially contributed to Carter's defeat in the elections of 1980, because the Reagan supporters seized on this issue, and there was quite an after effect. Or was it that issue, plus the seizure of the American embassy in Iran? There were so many things to consider.

Q: But during this particular period it seems that every four years, when the New York State Presidential Primary comes up, you have presidential candidates promising that they will move the American embassy to Jerusalem. This has been going on for 30 or 40 years. But nothing happens. Did this come up during your time in Israel?

BROWN: It came up during my time as Ambassador to Israel.

Q: Let's not go into it now.

BROWN: Right. I'd like now to jump to...

Q: Would it be possible to stay in the same time period? We've been talking about the situation in 1979.

BROWN: Well, that particular incident happened in about March, 1980.

Q: Yes, but I'm just wondering whether we could keep this interview somewhat in chronological order. What about our efforts to get support from the Israelis and others regarding the takeover of our embassy in Iran?

BROWN: Remember that the Israelis had had a very unique relationship with the Shah of Iran. They had the equivalent of an embassy in Iran. It was not called an embassy, but they had outstanding diplomats and military people there. For years, Iran had been shipping oil from the Persian Gulf around to the Gulf of Aqaba and into Eilat, the Israeli port on the Gulf of Aqaba. A pipeline had been constructed from Eilat, across the Negev desert, and up to the Israeli coast along the Mediterranean. The Israelis had been involved in all sorts of arms deals with the Shah. They had a very close, military, defense, and commercial relationship with Iran during the days of the Shah. However, they had to be very careful.

I'll give you an example of the cultural gulf, or however it should be called, between the Israelis and the Shiite Iranians. At this time, when the American embassy in Tehran had been seized, Galen Stone, who had been DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] when I was in

New Delhi, came to Tel Aviv for a quick, private visit. He wanted to talk with someone about the Iranian situation. So I invited over an outstanding individual, Uri Lubrani, who is “Mr. Arab, Mr. Muslim, Mr. Oriental Affairs” in the Israeli establishment and still is very, very active, although he's older than I am.

Lubrani had been the Israeli representative in Iran. Someone told me that he often had to sit outside the Shah's office while some major Israeli figure went inside for a one on one visit with the Shah. I invited Lubrani over for a reception so that he could talk with Galen Stone and give him, and myself as well, a little of the atmosphere. If I recall correctly, Lubrani recalled how, when they bought food or Coca Cola in bottles, anything that could be returnable, the Israelis could buy it, but no Iranian would take the bottles back. The fact that a Jew had handled a bottle or a plate or an eating utensil meant the end of the possibility of reusing or recycling it. I don't want to exaggerate that, but I'll never forget that account from a man who knew Iranian culture, spoke the Farsi language, and Arabic in later incarnations. He was a real, top notch expert on the area.

The Israelis were intensely interested in helping us at the time of the embassy takeover in Iran. Of course, they could point to the fact that they had had this unique relationship with the Shah and a wide variety of Iranian military and middle class figures. At this time there were an estimated 50,000 Jews still living in Iran. They were potential sources of information. The Israelis were also in contact with the new, Reagan administration, and there was hope that we could use the Israelis, because they had contacts with moderates in the Iranian military. All of this occurred in the midst of this frenzied situation in Iran, the Iranian attack on Iraq, and the Iran-Iraq War that had gone on for years.

Q: It was actually Iraq that attacked Iran. At least that is my impression. I am not quite sure about it.

BROWN: Well, you can argue about who initiated the Iran-Iraq War. Anyway, this came at a time of the frenzied mujahideen takeover of Iran. Iran's outlook and propaganda was shrill. So much of their operation was called “Operation Al-Quz” or “Operation Jerusalem.” The Iranian attack, or counter-attack, against Saddam Hussein of Iraq was described as only the beginning. The implication was that after Saddam Hussein was knocked off, Iran would proceed to implement “Operation Al-Quz,” or the “liberation” of Jerusalem.

Notwithstanding that, the Israelis were telling us: “Work with us, and we can put you in touch with agents of influence in the Iranian establishment. It's a very delicate matter, but they're not all raving mujahideen. There are professional soldiers and they can be approached. To do this, what we'll need is the ability discreetly to supply them with certain items of military hardware which they need.”

Now, the new Israeli Minister of Defense, as of 1981, was none other than Ariel Sharon. He was, as you know, a driving, and, indeed, driven personality. We had an agreement with the Israelis that they would not supply Iran anything of a military nature, unless and

until we got our embassy hostages out of Iran. Even then, they would only supply material items to Iran after consultation with the United States.

Well, as you remember, the embassy hostages came out just as President Carter handed over to President Reagan in January, 1981. It wasn't long before the Israelis were pressing us to let them ship military equipment to the Iranian military. We were saying "No," but Al Haig, the newly installed Secretary of State, was saying to the Israelis: "What did you have in mind?" I was present when Secretary Haig said to Ariel Sharon: "Could you be more specific?" It therefore fell upon me to go to Israeli Minister of Defense Sharon to get lists of what the Israelis had in mind. Well, Sharon gave me a long, long list of military items which the Israelis would like quietly to ship to Iran.

Of course, this appalled some people on the U.S. side. We kept a hold on this, but you could feel the Israelis straining at the bit. Indeed, the Chief of Station [senior CIA officer] in Tel Aviv informed us one day that an Israeli aircraft had taken off with a load of spare military aircraft tires for Iran. Consultations with the U.S. took place, if you will, after the aircraft had already taken off from Israel and was in the air, bound for Iran. We were very upset by this. As I say, the Israelis were straining to do something like that.

Meanwhile, on our side we were looking this from the point of view of the Cold War. That was one big overlay, the Cold War. The second overlay was getting at the Iranians and dealing with our relationship with Saddam Hussein. So I was present when there was non-definitive, shall we say, discussion of the possibility that to get certain military items, better intelligence, and a better grip on the situation, maybe the United States could allow, by one means or another, certain military items to go to Saddam Hussein. That would be in exchange for the right kind of Soviet tank, or other newly-built Soviet equipment items.

Q: We could pick up items that we could use for research purposes.

BROWN: For research and various other purposes, bearing in mind the tremendous Cold War overlay on all of this and the fact that the Israelis had a proven and very commendable track record with us on getting Soviet hardware, which they captured in the wars with Egypt or other Arab countries. They would run this through us for joint examination, strengthening our ability to gauge the effectiveness of this material, and so forth. We need not go into details here, but there was a long-established relationship between Israel and the U.S. on that account, in terms of Soviet tanks, aircraft, anti-aircraft weapons, and various other, sensitive pieces of equipment.

So that kind of thing was going on. It was fascinating to see Israeli Minister of Defense Sharon and Secretary of State Al Haig, if you will, dance around these issues, bearing in mind the sensitivities on both sides. This was in 1981.

Q: This was prior to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. However, this gives us a little feel for that relationship, which became critical later on.

BROWN: I think that this happened in April, 1981. Already Secretary of State Al Haig was in the thick of such discussions. Nothing yet had been decided, but both Israelis and Americans were feeling each other out on this relationship with Iran, on the one hand, and Iraq, on the other.

Q: Had the bombing of the Iraqi nuclear facility taken place as yet?

BROWN: Not yet, Stu. That's what I'm leading up to.

Q: Okay.

BROWN: There was the Reagan administration's overview of the whole area in Cold War terms. They had negative impressions of certain Arab bad actors, including President Assad of Syria. This view was very early in the show. Israel was considered something of a side show, now that we had the Camp David Agreements and a Peace Treaty with Egypt. Israel's survival was no longer in question and was not threatened, in strategic terms.

Things began to heat up, as the prospect of an Israeli election approached. There was trouble in Lebanon. I mentioned the Zakleh incident and the violation of those old, "Red Line" agreements which Secretary of State Kissinger had negotiated. The Israelis and the Syrians were jockeying with each other in Lebanon. There were occasional, PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] Katusha (Soviet made surface to surface rocket) attacks on northern Israel. The Israelis already had a presence in what they termed their security zone in southern Lebanon. There were periodic tensions in connection with the relevant UN resolutions to get the Israelis to withdraw from their security enclave in southern Lebanon. There was a heating up of Israeli probes and attacks against the PLO facilities in the wake of these Katusha attacks against Israel. Now, Ariel Sharon had come into office as Israeli Minister of Defense.

Q: So Ariel Sharon became Minister of Defense while you were in the embassy in Tel Aviv. What impression did you have of him when he came into office? What did the embassy people think of him?

BROWN: Well, he already had quite a record and quite a history. He was an Israeli hero who cracked through across the Suez Canal and encircled what was left of the Egyptian Army [in 1973]. He had retired from the Army and had been brought back to active duty for that operation. He was now very politically motivated. Politically, he wandered through quite a bit of terrain. There was a time, if you will, when he was associated with elements of the Labour Party of Israel. He was a man who already held distinct and very strong views on how to proceed.

I had first met him when he was Minister of Agriculture in the Menachem Begin Government. This was during the period of the Carter administration. I met him in the

office of the Minister of Defense, Eizer Weizman, who was later President of Israel. Sharon had been hawkish and had led, if you will, the earlier Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1978, in the wake of a horrible, bus terrorist incident along the highway North of Tel Aviv. When I met him, Sharon, then Minister of Agriculture, was concurrently Chairman of the Settlements Committee. He was passing through Weizman's office, carrying an enormous roll of maps under his arm. These were the maps of the Jewish settlements which were going to be built, and which have been built during the following years.

Phil Habib had initially come over to Israel in his capacity as a troubleshooter dealing with water. He was following up on the old Eric Johnston plan of the 1950s. He was asking whether we couldn't have a coordinated, regional plan for the damming of the Yarkon River, which flows down into the Jordan River. The Yarkon River divides Syria and Jordan. It flows into the Jordan River. It had been the subject of armed conflict. In that capacity I took Phil Habib to meet Israeli Minister of Agriculture Sharon because water questions in Israel come under the Minister of Agriculture. I got a good dose, as did Habib, of Sharon.

First, Habib met the then outgoing Minister of Foreign Affairs, Moshe Dayan, who, as always, was flexible and creative, bearing in mind all of the difficulties facing him. Then we went over to see Minister of Agriculture Sharon and his hard line Commissioner of Water, who had been Sharon's Platoon Commander when Sharon had been a young member of the fledgling Israeli Army many years before. And boy, were they tough! So I had already had an introduction to Ariel Sharon as a tough Minister of Agriculture, a tough figure on the question of water, and a tough and very dynamic figure in the grandiose schemes of the Begin administration to build and expand Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories.

There was an interval before Sharon became Defense Minister. Weizman, in a fit of annoyance, had resigned from the cabinet as Minister of Defense and had gone out into the wilderness. For a while, Menachem Begin was Minister of Defense, in addition to being Prime Minister. Begin enjoyed being Minister of Defense, but the man who handled the job of Minister of Defense on a daily basis was the Deputy Defense Minister, Mordechai Zippori, a former Army general of the tough, Likud persuasion. I had to deal with Zippori, essentially on a day to day basis, as we went through the escalation of troubles in Lebanon.

Just to give you a flavor of what it was like to deal with a character like this, I'll give you one or two examples. As things heated up [in 1978], the Israelis would respond to perceived or real PLO provocations by strafing and bombing PLO facilities. Our Ambassador to Lebanon at the time, John Gunther Dean, would understandably get very upset at these news broadcasts over Radio Beirut that the Israelis had killed a number of Lebanese. (End of tape)

Q: You were saying that Ambassador John Gunther Dean was...

BROWN: John Gunther Dean would fire off a cable, often in very colorful language, saying, in essence: "When are we going to face down the Israelis? When are we going to stop this carnage? Why doesn't Embassy Tel Aviv do something about it?" This kind of reporting didn't endear him to Ambassador Sam Lewis. After all, we were trying to do what we could. Remember that Sam had had extensive exposure to all of this, in addition to everything else. So it often fell upon me to go to Minister of Defense Eizer Weizman and then, when Weizman resigned, to Zippori to cope with this kind of situation.

I'll never forget one, particularly egregious episode where the Israelis bombed a target. One bomb went astray, hit a cafe, and killed lots of civilians. Ambassador Dean fired off the usual, anguished cable. I went in to see Zippori one on one. He sat me down, gave me a cup of Turkish coffee, and said, "What can I do for you?" I made a vigorous presentation. I said that I didn't have all of the facts, but it would appear, on the basis of press reports, that a lot of innocent, Lebanese civilians had lost their lives. Always in the background was the fact of the use by Israel of American supplied airplanes. It was F-15s and F-16s which were dropping these bombs. Sometimes, they dropped cluster bombs.

Q: American munitions, too.

BROWN: American munitions, too. So there was very distinct tension. Washington would get into the act, and it was a very delicate and contentious business. To my surprise, on this particular occasion, Zippori said to me: "You know, Bill, I've argued against this in cabinet." I almost fell off my chair! I said to myself: "What a cable this is going to make!" Here is this Israeli hard liner who admits this to me in private, if you will. But, after all, I was the DCM or the Charge d'Affaires, or whatever, on this occasion. Zippori said, "Yes, I have argued against this. You see, the problem that arises here, over the long run, is that the Arabs have this image that the Israelis," and here he imitated the Arab pronunciation, "rely exclusively on high tech American weapons. You know, your planes, your munitions, your gunsights, your radar, and so forth. And the odds are stacked against them. The Arabs say that the Zionists and the Imperialist Americans have ganged up against them. They think that it isn't a fair war."

He said, "My argument is that the way we ought to handle this is with cold steel. That is, good, Israeli boys going up there, taking that bayonet and sticking it in the Arabs' guts. Then they come to respect you for what you are." Thus disappeared the idea of a hot cable. Imagine, cold steel! It really isn't very funny, but I relate this story to give the reader a flavor of the mindset of a tough, old Israeli soldier on this. Remember, the Chief of Staff of the Israeli Army at the time was General Raphael Eytan. He was another, tough, old veteran. He still carries steel fragments in his skull from the battles for Jerusalem...

Q: In 1948.

BROWN: He had been heavily criticized for pardoning an Israeli Lieutenant who had choked a Palestinian prisoner to death in the 1978 invasion of Lebanon. He had a very

simplistic view of how to handle the Arabs. In other words: “They are our enemy. Go kill our enemy,” and that's that. So it was quite an atmosphere.

I'll give you another example. Ambassador Sam Lewis was away, and I was Charge d'Affaires. On the new Israeli television service there appeared a scene of Beir Zeit University, an Arab university on the West Bank. It depicted a demonstration which resulted in Israeli Army troops moving in and shooting against Arabs who were throwing stones against them. The coverage of this incident on Israeli TV was particularly chilling that evening, and I protested it on my own, without instructions. I didn't need instructions. I met with Zippori at the airport, where he was waiting to receive Prime Minister Begin on his return from the United States. I said, “Modcha, did you see that scene on television last night? It was outrageous, horrible. There was a scene of a young Arab girl who was hopping down the sidewalk with one leg waving like a rag. She had been shot in the leg. She was the daughter of the President of Beir Zeit University. It was just shocking!”

Zippori's first comment was: “The goddamned media! You see, our own, Israeli media pounced on this without the background. Think of all the rocks thrown at our soldiers! We're trying to restore law and order. And the enemy is our own media!” I said, “Look, haven't you heard of the use of better police tactics all around the world? I mean, with shields and helmets, special police riot units which handle matters of this kind. Why are you using the Israeli Army for this kind of incident? Even tear gas is would be more useful.” He said, “Bill, we used tear gas a couple of years ago. It caused a tremendous scandal. Some lieutenant, in the heat of the moment, threw a tear gas grenade into an Arab school. And the spectacle was on TV of the Arab students choking and gasping, coming out of school, having been exposed to tear gas. With our background of Hitler and the gas used in Europe, we just can't do that kind of thing.” I said, “Okay, I'm no expert in this, but why use the Army?” And we went back and forth on this line. He was highlighting his dilemma in the face of my protests.

So that was part of my introduction to that kind of scene. It was to be repeated when I became Ambassador to Israel, when none other than Yitzhak Rabin or Moshe Arens was Minister of Defense. So I just give you this example. It had been going on for a long, long time. This kind of incident was to bedevil us and to bedevil our relationship for many, many years to come and is a factor, even now.

Okay, that takes us up through the end of the Carter administration [in 1981] and the installation of the Reagan administration. There was the resignation of the Defense Weizman and later the emergence of Ariel Sharon as the new Israeli Minister of Defense.

Q: A quick question, Bill. What was the feeling in the embassy, if you had time to sit down with Ambassador Sam Lewis or anyone else, before the Reagan administration came into office [in 1981]? Did you have a feel for what the new administration might do? The Carter administration had had one type of approach. Here was the new Reagan administration coming in. Was there concern or...

BROWN: Ambassador Sam Lewis was a career officer who had been appointed by the Carter administration. Sam Lewis lays out this experience in his interview in the Oral History. He was in a delicate position as Ambassador to Israel. Would he be kept in that office by the Reagan administration?

Earlier, my home leave had been deferred, and I decided to take it at this time. Ambassador Sam Lewis charged me with going into the Department of State and getting a feel for what the new, Reagan administration was like, as seen in and by the State Department. I got back to Washington, and the new Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs was Nick Veliotos who, earlier on, had been DCM and Charge d'Affaires in Tel Aviv. I went over quietly to the Office of Policy Planning, headed by a new appointee, Paul Wolfowitz.

Seated in Wolfowitz's outer office was Jim Roche. Roche had been on a delegation with Senator Bill Bradley [Democrat, NJ] in 1979, which visited Israel. I had been Charge d'Affaires at the time. I took Jim up to see various Israelis. Roche apparently had remembered me, so that, at the time of this encounter, he said, "Wait a minute," and went in to see Paul Wolfowitz. Then, in my presence, Roche opened the door of Wolfowitz's office and said, "Paul, you can talk with Brown. He's a good guy."

They let me look at some of their draft memos to the new Secretary of State, Al Haig. These drafts, shall we say, were quite pro-Israel in terms of approaching the overall problem of the Cold War and utilizing our relationship with the Israelis for the purposes of overall, American policy. Well, I learned that Nick Veliotos was appalled by their approach, so a split had already developed within the State Department as to who would gain favor and the upper hand with the new Secretary of State, Al Haig. The question was beyond me. This would all play out with the White House.

Meanwhile, there was a whole crowd, of new people, relatively unknown to me, who were Jewish and who had involved themselves in the victorious, Reagan campaign. There was a whole, new set of people who were coming into office. They were preparing to come out to Israel or had already been there, with or without our knowledge. So this presented quite a challenge.

Now, I've spoken of the early arrival of Al Haig. This is before Ariel Sharon became Israeli Minister of Defense.

Q: This would be about April, 1981.

BROWN: That's right. At this time Menachem Begin himself was the Minister of Defense. So Al Haig called on Begin, and everything was rosy. They had talks when Ambassador Sam Lewis and I were present, and they had talks which were even more intimate when we were not present. They even had meetings one on one. This reflected that well known propensity among senior American figures to talk with the Israeli Prime Minister alone and really let their hair down in the hope that this will be reciprocated.

This often is very dangerous. However, they developed a very good, initial relationship. In those initial talks there was consideration given somehow to codify this relationship. That is, describing on paper, this new, strategic relationship between Israel and the United States, given the Cold War overlay which the Reagan administration brought to it.

In June, 1981, the Israeli elections campaign was heating up. Sam Lewis' account of the situation in June, 1981, is set out eloquently in his Oral History interview. One weekend evening, Ambassador Sam Lewis had a speaking engagement and was meeting with a prominent visiting American. There was a senior Congressional figure who was also present. I received a radio call from Sam Lewis. I should add that we had mobile radio as well as telephonic communications. I was in my Chevrolet some place. Sam said, "Get on down to the Hilton Hotel right away. I've got to tell you something." So I raced over to the Hilton Hotel, met Sam outside, and he said, "The Prime Minister has just informed me that the Israelis have bombed the Iraqi nuclear reactor. I've had a quick telephone conversation with Washington. Go to the embassy and write a cable on this, because I'm committed to this speaking engagement."

So I went to the embassy and did the best I could. Fortunately for me, as I tried to put this whole thing into perspective, Bob Ames was at the embassy that evening. He was a very senior, almost legendary figure in the CIA who was making a trip through the area. I told him what had happened in Iraq. He chatted with me to give me his view of the situation. I finally got off a cable. We were in hot water! This newly installed Reagan administration, which thought that it had a wonderful relationship with the Israeli Government under Prime Minister Menachem Begin, now woke up to the fact that the Israelis had used F-16s and, I think, F-15s to provide defensive cover for the F-16s, which had bombed the Iraqi nuclear reactor with stunning success.

On the following day I went in with our Defense Attache, Air Force Colonel Pete Hoag to get a briefing from the Chief of Israeli Military Intelligence. He laid out how they had accomplished this mission. They used a "High, Low" mission profile, flying over Jordan en route to Iraq. He kept stressing the fact that they had used conventional bombs. They hadn't used the so-called smart bombs which we had provided them with. Colonel Pete Hoag kept zeroing in on whether they had refueled the strike aircraft en route, because Headquarters of the U.S. Air Force in Washington wanted to know, among other things, how in the world the Israelis had refueled these F-16s. Were they refueled over Jordan, over Iraq, or over both? The Chief of Israeli Military Intelligence kept saying: "We didn't refuel." That was a fascinating, side issue. For several weeks Headquarters USAF refused to believe that the Israelis could accomplish this mission without refueling.

Well, it turned out that the strike mission against the Iraqi nuclear reactor had been flown from one of the two air bases in the Negev Desert in Israel, constructed by us at a cost of \$1.1 billion in U.S. taxpayers' money. These bases were built at our expense in compensation for the fields which the Israelis had lost when they evacuated their fields in the Sinai Desert, as part of the settlement with Egypt. One of these fields was close to Eilat. From these airfields they had practically topped off the F-16s on the runway to

provide the last drop of aviation gasoline, so that the aircraft could carry out the mission, drop the bombs, and make it back without refueling.

The Reagan administration went into quite a frenzy over this and made stern pronouncements to the Israelis. The administration was very disturbed that the Israelis had done this without consulting us and had carried out the attack with American-provided aircraft, and Lord knows what other American-provided equipment. We went through a very difficult and delicate period in this connection.

I was with Ambassador Sam Lewis when Israeli Prime Minister Begin, in response to the furor in Washington, reminded Sam of the fact that the Israelis had had very detailed and delicate talks with us about the alarming progress the Iraqis were making on this nuclear reactor over the previous six months or longer. The American and Israeli intelligence communities had reported on the movement of equipment from France and Italy to Baghdad for installation at this site. This equipment had an obvious dual use capability for producing nuclear weapons.

The American response to Israeli concerns over reports of the movement of French and Italian equipment to Baghdad had been: "Give us more time. We'll work on this with the French and the Italians." The situation had gone on and on, as Begin described it, and then there was a gap in the American handling of this issue. That gap occurred when the Reagan administration came into office. Begin reminded us that he had heard nothing further from us. Meanwhile, in his description, this Iraqi facility was so far advanced that the reactor would shortly become hot. As Defense Minister and Prime Minister, Begin said that he would be faced with the decision whether to bomb a hot nuclear reactor. He then conjured up the image of a great cloud of radioactive material descending over the poor children of Baghdad, should Israel wait until after the reactor had become hot before destroying it. So, he said that he had to order the strike then, before the Iraqi facility became hot.

Begin's analysis of this situation was very theatrically expressed, but it was a reminder to me of the following. When you're dealing with such complicated relationships of such a delicate nature, in a hot area, be very, very careful when there is a change in the U.S. administration. As a professional, take it upon yourself to remind and keep reminding the incoming administration that this matter is on the agenda, whether or not they know it or not. This was something which later on, when I was an Ambassador, I reminded all and sundry to bear in mind, as the Bush administration entered office. Now this was a transition from one Republican administration to another, from Reagan to Bush. However, I just wanted to remind them at that time of particularly explosive issues that might somehow have fallen through the cracks. My awareness of this matter came from this experience back then which I have just described.

Q: What was the feeling in the American Government at the time? Was it that this Israeli attack on the Iraqi nuclear reactor was a bad thing?

BROWN: Yes. The Israeli air strike on the Iraqi nuclear reactor was a total surprise, American equipment was used, and such equipment had been provided for defensive purposes. Prime Minister Begin looked us in the eye and said, "Of course it was provided for defensive purposes. What else would you call it?" The Reagan administration fumbled around and put a hold on the subsequent shipment of such equipment to the Israelis. This infuriated Begin and the Israeli Government. They said, "How could you possibly do such a thing?"

All of that took place just before the Israeli elections. So Begin reacted furiously to the suggestion that the Israeli strike against the Iraqi nuclear facility might have been politically motivated. He said, "How could anybody dream that I ordered the strike for anything other than the most humanitarian and defensive reasons?" The result was that Begin was reelected by the skin of his teeth, as it were. A very dejected Shimon Peres [leader of the Labour Party opposition to Begin] once again had to suffer defeat. Beyond that, this air strike resulted in immediate pressures exerted by Ariel Sharon, who had been waiting for several years. He finally made it into office as Minister of Defense.

At the time Sharon became Minister of Defense Ambassador Sam Lewis took a well-deserved period of home leave. He had gone through this business with Prime Minister Begin in the wake of the Israeli strike on the Iraqi nuclear reactor. In the furor which resulted from the Israeli attack on the nuclear reactor Secretary of State Haig sent Bud McFarland [National Security Adviser to President Reagan] out to Israel to try to put to rest the controversy over the bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor. McFarland met with Prime Minister Begin and the reported that he had been successful. No sooner had he left Israel than the Israelis bombed PLO installations in Lebanon. This was at a time when we were supporting Phil Habib and Morrie Draper in connection with their cease-fire efforts with the Syrians in Lebanon.

Concurrently, we were negotiating to set up the multinational force in the Sinai Desert. I was heavily involved in that, but that is a Mike Sterner story, and you have interviewed him. All of these things were going on at the same time, while the Palestinian autonomy negotiations remained stalemated. Then there was the departure from office of Sol Linowitz at the end of the Carter administration and the arrival of Fairbanks to replace him.

I pause to illustrate the enormous strains on the embassy in Tel Aviv, with all of these things happening at the same time. I'm proud that Ambassador Sam Lewis brought me into his full trust. In turn we had a tremendous asset in the person of Charley Hill, who was Political Counselor. Charley now prepared to return to Washington to become eventually the Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs. When Secretary of State Al Haig was bumped from office, George Shultz came in to replace him, and Charley became the Executive Secretary of the Department of State, as well as the speechwriter and the key policy advisor for Shultz. That was a relief, but all of these changes made for a tremendous, kaleidoscopic scene.

Now, you asked me about Ariel Sharon. Ambassador Sam Lewis has a whole section on him, which you have on reserve. Let me speak a little bit about Sharon from my own, personal experience.

Q: Let's finish your comments on Sharon and, perhaps, stop at that point. What do you think?

BROWN: We'll go into my comments on Sharon. We can't finish it, but let's see what we can do.

Q: Okay.

BROWN: Let's start it this way. As I said earlier, I had already met Ariel Sharon as Minister of Agriculture and also Chairman of the Settlements Committee. He was a driving personality who moved quickly to bulldoze the sites subsequently used for the construction of West Bank settlements that we are now aware of.

Indeed, I drove up to the West Bank and surveyed the bulldozing that was going on at a site which came to be known as "Ariel." It is now the residence of tens of thousands of settlers. I visited that site and saw what Sharon's bulldozers had done. I said to myself: "Wow! We are entering a new stage." Smaller settlements had already built under the earlier, Labour Party government of Prime Minister Rabin. However, they were nothing compared to the potential of what I saw being bulldozed and prepared, as well as the road infrastructure that went with them. A "whole new ball game was evolving."

As Ambassador Sam Lewis left on a well-deserved, home leave, which covered the period from July 14 to late August, 1981, a new cabinet came into office with Ariel Sharon as Minister of Defense. I don't think that Sharon had been in this new office a day or two when he telephoned me. He said, "Bill, it's Shabat [Saturday]. Why don't you and Helen come down to the farm." I said, "Sure." I knew that he wanted something. We drove down to Sharon's farm in the Negev.

Now Sharon was a man who was a distinguished farmer, in addition to his many other attributes. He had what he described as the largest farm in Israel. It certainly was the largest, privately-owned farm in Israel.

I was treated to what I would say was the Israeli equivalent to a visit to the King Ranch in Texas. He showed us around his extensive farm. We saw his tame Arab shepherd and a thousand head or so of sheep, goats, and so forth. He drove us down into groves of the finest melons and fields of grapes, cotton, and so forth. He really knew his stuff. He was exporting his produce primarily to Europe. He was a very, very accomplished farmer. He treated us to a magnificent meal of roast lamb on a spit, took us through his hacienda-like house there, up into the bedroom where beautiful grapes were growing in through the window. He showed us his Mexican saddles, magnificent tapestries, art, and so forth. He wined and dined us.

I kept thinking to myself: “What is it that he wants from us?” Well, toward the end of this visit, it came out that he wanted to visit the United States right away as the new Israeli Minister of Defense. He wanted to meet at least with Casper Weinberger, then the U.S. Secretary of Defense. I said to him: “Have you cleared this visit with Prime Minister Begin?” He said, “Don't worry about it.” I knew right away that we had a problem.

Indeed, I separately and quietly approached Prime Minister Begin and told him of Sharon's plans. I said that I assumed that Begin was aware of this. At this point Begin was rather taciturn. This told me that Begin didn't yet know of Sharon's desire to visit the United States. So a whole, new tone was now to emerge in our relationship with the Israeli Ministry of Defense.

When Ambassador Sam Lewis returned to Israel from home leave...

Q: This would be in late August, 1981.

BROWN: Yes. When Ambassador Sam Lewis came back and met with Minister of Defense Sharon, Sharon made it very clear that we would have no more easy access of the kind that Sam and I had had to the Ministry of Defense.

Previously, we used to be able to make a quick phone call to former Minister of Defense Ezer Weizman or Mordechai Zippori and nip over there. The word had been passed to the guards at the gate of the Ministry of Defense, and we would be shown up to the Minister of Defense's office. We had serious business, and they knew it. The subjects we used to raise were often acrimonious, but at least we were dealing with gentlemen who were handling us as best they could. They often confided in us their rationale for this or that course of action.

By contrast, Ariel Sharon had his own agenda, and we were to find out, in short order, what this meant. However, part of this had to do with Prime Minister Begin's keen desire to put the U.S.-Israeli relationship on a new basis. That is, a kind of alliance, however this was to be done. Somehow, he wanted to get this on paper and formalize it so that he, Prime Minister Begin, could use it. For his part, Sharon was keen to get something like this on his own terms to enhance his own image.

Well, it was one thing to deal with Secretary of State Al Haig, the former NATO commander and a general officer who was very sympathetic with his Cold War overlay, which could be used to highlight Israel's utility as an alliance partner. It was quite another thing to deal with Casper Weinberger, who had radically different ideas on the Israeli-U.S. relationship. As Secretary of Defense, Weinberger had his own, particular view of the importance of Saudi Arabia, Middle Eastern oil, Egypt, the Suez Canal, and so forth.

So we had a situation where there were some new players involved. The Israelis rapidly came to see that Casper Weinberger was no Al Haig, in terms of both his personality and

his attitude. Therefore, it was understandable that the Israelis tended to favor Al Haig and extract as much as they could from him. Weinberger was a different customer.

Meanwhile, things were heating up in Lebanon, but Phil Habib had managed to negotiate a cease-fire.

Q: This cease-fire was basically with the Syrians, wasn't it?

BROWN: Yes, de facto it was with the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization], although we did not deal with them directly, and with the Syrians leaning on them. Full compliments to Phil Habib in this respect. Therefore, it was a challenge to ensure that this new understanding was implemented. There was this fear that it might break down, and we would have a crisis in Lebanon.

There was also the aftermath of the Israeli bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor. There was the ongoing question of a deadline for the Israeli pullout from the Sinai Desert, which was a critical matter for Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. It was absolutely critical that the Israelis pull out on time. There was the complicating factor of the Palestinian autonomy issue, because the Palestinians wouldn't play, and wouldn't have anything to do with it. The Egyptians were very sensitive to the fact that they were negotiating on behalf of the Palestinians, who didn't want to play. So the Egyptians felt the need to put on the best face they could for the Palestinians. However, they could see that the Israelis were not really going to give them what they wanted. That is, something that would be an Egyptian version of full autonomy, probably leading to self-determination and independence. There was no way that the Egyptians could get this, and they were frustrated on that score.

On the Sinai withdrawal we were working full blast to complete the airfields we had promised to build for the Egyptians to compensate them for the loss of their airfields in the Sinai area. This construction job was a very expensive proposition. We had a very large U.S. Army Corps of Engineers presence, with some of the contractors employing 2,000 Portuguese and 2,000 Thai workers and operating under demanding, desert-like conditions. They were working all out, 10 hours a day, in the Negev to build these airfields to Israeli specifications. These construction jobs were unparalleled as far as U.S. air base construction was concerned. The air bases had to be built to be virtually bombproof. We don't build U.S. air bases that way in the continental United States. We build U.S. air bases in the continental United States to operate from in flying to forward bases overseas. These bases in the Sinai Desert were built to withstand the heaviest kind of bombing attack. They were very expensive, and the completion deadline was sacrosanct.

We had the problem in that the Israeli Minister of Defense Ezer Weizman, said to us: "Do it and get it done. Don't get our unions involved." However, there was an understandable Israeli undercurrent of wanting to get the construction contracts. So there was this whole air base construction problem that I was involved in.

Then there was the question of setting up a respectable force in the Sinai Desert that would meet Prime Minister Menachem Begin's specifications. At the time the Soviets had made it clear that they would veto such a move and that they would not allow a United Nations force to perform this function.

Onto the scene came Michael Sterner, with whom I had entered the Foreign Service. He was an Arabist in the best sense of the word. He had walked the Saudi Arabian pipeline for Aramco before he came into the State Department. He spoke Arabic and had had a series of increasingly senior and responsible positions. He tells his story in another one of the interviews in your Oral History. I often went with him on calls on Begin and other senior officials and then followed up.

I will tell you one incident to highlight the sensitivity of this matter. What Prime Minister Begin wanted were American forces in the Sinai Desert. We couldn't agree to that, for a variety of reasons. It would have to be multinational if it couldn't be a United Nations force. We therefore had to set up something respectable and convincing as a substitute for a U.S. force.

In one conversation, one on one, with me, Prime Minister Begin said, "Bill, I'm not worried about the Sinai at present. We can handle the Sinai. I'm not worried about a year or two, or five years into the future. I'm worried about what happens 10 or 20 years from now. After I'm gone from the scene and, who knows, after Sadat is gone from the scene, are we going to see another Nasser come to power in Egypt and do what he did in 1967: kick out the UN and threaten us? That's why I would like to have this a really stable, convincing, military presence." I said, "Well, Mr. Prime Minister, it can't be a solely American force." He said, "All right, but I don't want it run by a bunch of 'Banana Republics.'" That was a term that often came into his mind. He didn't want to be treated like a "Banana Republic," as he put it to Ambassador Sam Lewis. He said, "I'd like to see really respectable components for this force." I said, "What did you have in mind?" He said, "Well, people like the Australians, the New Zealanders, the Canadians. You know, people like that." I said to him: "How about the British?" He said, "Well," and he slipped away from that alternative.

We therefore had to go out and persuade the right kind of governments to put up the right kind of forces. Mike Sterner, Peter Constable, and others were engaged in setting this force up. It was fascinating to see what finally emerged. I ended up negotiating the follow up and at great length with Eli Rubinstein, who was the Secretary of the Israeli Cabinet, a lawyer who also had a Ministry of Defense background. [Addendum: He is now Attorney General.] Whenever I see Eli, we still joke about this. I'll never forget where he once had me pick up the phone in his office and negotiate on his behalf with Ray Hunt. In other words, he maneuvered me into a situation where I was in his office and sitting over there, feeding me what he wanted. I wanted to say, "Why the hell don't you do it yourself?" However, he had someone else on another phone. It was fascinating. Ray Hunt, by the way, bless him, was subsequently assassinated...

Q: In Rome.

BROWN: In Rome, by terrorists. I'll never forget going to his funeral. Anyhow, we set up, on time, a convincing multinational force for the Sinai. Even now most Americans and, indeed, most American Members of Congress, are totally unaware of the fact that we maintained a battalion of troops in the Sinai playing a crucial role and providing a quiet presence that has worked because the parties concerned want it to work. We negotiated an essential, as far as sharing the expenses were concerned. Basically, it violated the Egyptian amour propre to have a foreign force on their sacred, Sinai soil. So, over the years the Egyptians would chip away, incrementally, at the size and the composition of the force. However, it still remained a very, very important adjunct to a key treaty requirement of the time. Lessons were learned. We could set up, if necessary, a non-UN force. This arrangement created a precedent for such ticklish situations as might evolve. Look at the present situation in Kosovo, where we are using a NATO approach as opposed to a UN approach.

Q: There is a general feeling, and it really stems from Nasser getting U Thant, [the UN Secretary General], to pull out the UN force in the Sinai. A UN force is subject to so many political considerations on a worldwide basis that it is essentially unreliable.

BROWN: There is that factor. Now, the first military commander of this Sinai force was Bull Hanson, a Norwegian general and a very sophisticated gentleman. We always kept an American as the civilian head of this Sinai Force. This position was portrayed as an essentially administrative function for keeping the Force together. Fortunately, we chose excellent people, such as former Foreign Service Officers, to do this. They deserve full credit, to this day. (End of tape)

Q: A question that you raised about the construction of these air bases in the Negev. I have no idea about this but I would have thought that we would have been concerned about Israeli construction because that gets into local politics, and all of that.

BROWN: Yes. In essence, Ezer Weizman, as Israeli Minister of Defense, having extracted the commitment that we would pay for the construction of these air bases, said to us quietly: "Now you do it, because I can't rely on Israeli labor to meet the deadline." It was crucial to him, politically, as well as from the security viewpoint, that these bases should be in place and functioning by the time of the withdrawal of the Israelis from Sinai.

Q: For the construction of these air bases we had essentially "controlled" labor, including non unionized Portuguese and Thai workers. They would not be liable to go on strike, as Israeli workers might be.

BROWN: Yes. It was a very sophisticated operation. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers rented a seven to 10-story hotel, next to what was the Tel Aviv Hilton Hotel. They used

satellite communications and employed American contractors, who then used Thai and Portuguese sub-contractors. We kept a really hard, constantly updated program going here and we met the deadline. Through it all we wondered what would be the eventual use of these air bases and in what situations.

Well, strange are the ways of the world. One use was to provide a base for the Israeli bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor. Later on, another matter was, of course, the whole question of U.S. use of these bases. As Ambassador to Israel later on, I went up with the Apache helicopters which were secretly flown from Germany to one of these airfields, where they trained in the spring of 1990. It wasn't too many months after that that these bases were used in Desert Storm. We had no direct knowledge that the war would come, but it was awfully nice that our guys were able to train on one of these very air bases.

Q: Just to go back to the bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor. If you look at it from a strategic point of view, we had this policy of non-proliferation. Saddam Hussein, the President of Iraq, even in those days, was not considered a tame person. He certainly was complicit in the whole attack on Iran. He was regarded as a dangerous character. There were suppliers from Germany, Italy, and other places, and maybe even the Soviet Union, bringing in equipment to Iraq to give him the ability to produce nuclear weapons.

BROWN: All under a UN regime, all under the relevant UN facility. It was all done in accordance with the regulations. Technically, this was done with UN inspectors. This Iraqi nuclear reactor was UN inspected and certified.

Q: So this was considered by us to be a relatively clean operation. What I'm getting at is this: was there any feeling in the U.S.: "Gee, I wish the Israelis hadn't attacked this Iraqi nuclear reactor, but thank God they did!"

BROWN: Yes. How shall I put it? Look at Al Haig's writings, the body language, his reported remarks, and so forth. He was in effect saying to the Israelis something like: "Hey, guys, you have to understand the sensitivities back here, but you did a good job!" Others on the Washington scene were railing against this Israeli attack on the Iraqi nuclear reactor at the time. Years later, another Secretary of Defense [later Vice President], Dick Cheney, openly thanked the Israelis for having done this. You can argue various sides of the case.

In my presentation of this matter I used as an example all of the under currents which involved certain, very sensitive elements of the U.S.-Israeli relationship. There is no status quo. Things keep moving, and surprises, usually bad surprises, keep happening in the Middle East. You can take the Israelis only so far with assurances that you're looking at the problem and that you're seeking a solution of it. However, when it gets into something of this potential horror, you'd better come up with something convincing and stick with it, or you risk a real surprise. That has certainly been my experience.

Now, we are now talking about the summer of 1981. I've gone through these various

exercises, many of them concurrent. I'd now like to take you into the fall and winter of 1981. By this time Israeli Minister of Defense Sharon had been to Washington, and he and Prime Minister Begin had run up against Casper Weinberger. I would like to highlight that and give you a little story just to show the delicacy of this portion of the U.S.-Israeli relationship.

Begin and Sharon presented a memorandum covering a strategic relationship between the U.S. and Israel. During one of his visits to Washington, Sharon went through a melodramatic presentation of what the Israelis could do, if the Cold War turned hot, possibly involving the Iranian, the Turkish, or the Persian Gulf situation. In other words, the Israelis had the capability, if they were supported, of moving armored forces great distances, leapfrogging them, and so forth. This, of course, chilled somebody like Weinberger.

Weinberger's response to this presentation was, shall we say, pretty weak tea. He spoke of something like emergency hospitals to deal with local disasters and so forth. This happened at one of those times when I was Charge d'Affaires in Tel Aviv. I had to bring this matter up to Prime Minister Menachem Begin and make an oral presentation on it.

I started reading from a Weinberger draft, which I had privately recognized as awfully weak tea" vis-a-vis what the Israelis wanted to hear. Prime Minister Begin finally said, "Mr. Charge," and whenever he used the term of address "Mr.," you knew that he was being particularly curt and official. Otherwise, he would say, "Sam" or "Bill." He said, "Mr. Charge, let me read that piece of paper," and he reached over to me, and I passed it over to him. He read it and perused it for a while. Then he said to me: "Have you heard the story of the 'Unter den Linden?'" I said, "No." He said, "The story goes something like this. A rich, Prussian 'Junker' [a title of German nobility] fell in love with a poor, Jewish girl in a Berlin environment. He had several, passionate meetings with her. As the relationship became increasingly passionate, she said, 'When and where do we meet next?' He said, 'Well, as soon as possible, but, please, not along the Unter den Linden.'" This, I guess, was one of the main thoroughfares in Berlin.

Q: It was a main street with trees. In other words, it was under the Linden trees.

BROWN: In other words, the Junker was saying: "Honey, I'll meet you over the fence and down the alley. You're a poor, Jewish girl, and I don't want to meet you in public." Begin continued: "As I read this text, I am reminded of this story of Unter den Linden." In other words, he was asking, "What is this?" It was a pretty embarrassing moment for me. I decided that in my reporting of this meeting I would handle it that way. I prepared a cable which told the Unter den Linden story.

Well, the Israelis eventually got a bit more out of it. Not all what they wanted, but that's the way it went.

Q: Basically, our position was that we were not going to have an essentially official,

strategic relationship with Israel...

BROWN: We weren't going to have an official, strategic alliance relationship, which would create problems for our relationship with the Arabs, our oil interests, and so forth.

Q: By the way, did Sharon or Begin ever try to play the line with Casper Weinberger: "You're Jewish and we're Jewish?"

BROWN: On the contrary. I believe that Mr. Weinberger, whether it's true or not, was considered half-Jewish in the Israeli book. He had been raised as a Presbyterian, or at least was brought up as a Protestant. They learned long ago, with the likes of Barry Goldwater and several other cases to be very, very careful in handling gentlemen of such backgrounds.

Now, things went along. Sharon took firmer and firmer charge of the Israeli Ministry of Defense. His role on the political scene grew, and we got to the point where the Lebanese situation was heating up. It is now late 1981. Phil Habib was employed again in an effort to prevent a breakdown in the cease-fire arrangements which he had so brilliantly engineered. Habib came on another visit to Jerusalem. At about this time Prime Minister Begin had slipped in his bathroom and broken his hip. Therefore, Habib didn't get to see Begin, who was in pain and recuperating. Instead, Habib got to see Sharon.

The meeting with Sharon was set up at the Israeli Foreign Ministry up in Jerusalem. The Foreign Minister was Shamir but he was not present. In November, 1981, Ambassador Sam Lewis escorted Shamir to Washington. I was Charge d'Affaires. Habib visited Damascus, [Syria], and then came to Israel. With Prime Minister Begin injured, the meeting took place with Sharon. That meeting is reported in Ambassador Sam Lewis' oral interview and also in a book jointly authored by Zeev Shiff and Ehud Yaari. The title of the book is something like, *Israel's Lebanon War*.

Obviously, Zeev and Ehud had gotten hold of the American cable reporting this meeting, which I strongly suspect Phil Habib leaked. The presentation is set forth in straightforward form, but there's a little portion of it that didn't get into the cable, which I'd like to dwell on. In the jockeying back and forth between Sharon and Habib, sort of wise guy talk, Sharon was somewhat critical of Phil Habib's efforts in Lebanon. On the one hand Sharon nominally praised Phil's efforts but, on the other hand, he criticized them. In response to this Habib said something like, "Well, what do you propose?"

Sharon then laid out what later became the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. This meeting was held between December 4 and 6, 1981. My Political Counselor and notetaker at that stage was Paul Hare, a top officer who later became an Ambassador. He was the son of a former American Ambassador to Lebanon. Habib and the Israeli Foreign Ministry types participating in the meeting were stunned by Sharon's remarks. He presented them with the caveat that he was just speaking as an individual. He said, "What I've been saying to you hasn't been cleared by the Israeli cabinet. I've just been speaking to you as an

individual.” Well, hell, he was the Israeli Defense Minister. He laid out a campaign for pushing up the coast of Lebanon, taking out the Palestinian establishment, military and otherwise.

What was not in the cable, as I recall it, was that someone, and I think that it was I, said, “What about Beirut?” The version of this conversation by others is that Beirut was never discussed at this meeting. However, my recollection is that Beirut was handled this way. Sharon made a sweeping, enveloping motion with his arm, which could mean that he would just go around Beirut, or it could mean: “I’ll surround it and then we’ll see what happens.” By this sweeping motion of his arm Sharon could have meant that the Israelis could bypass Beirut or he could have meant that they would encircle it and then reduce it in a way that Sharon liked to do.

The other thing that Sharon said quite bluntly was that such a plan would put the Syrians in a strategic dilemma. It would cut the road that goes from Beirut to Damascus, passing through Zakleh. The Syrians would either have to withdraw their forces from southern Lebanon or face being cut in half and decimated. Well, that formulation had Habib, me, and, I would say, the Israeli Foreign Ministry types present at the meeting on edge or right out of our seats. Phil Habib then said, “This is not 1967.” In other words, you just can't get away very easily with doing something like that.

So that was it. We dashed off a cable, which was subsequently the basis for the passage incorporating this view of Sharon's in Zed Shiff and Ehud Yaari's book. Sharon had been careful to say, “This is just a personal view, etc.” However, what we saw over the following six months was a whole series of call-up's of Israeli reserves and mock mobilizations so that what eventually happened was certainly no surprise. The only surprise was what day it would be done. There was no question in my mind that the Israelis were gearing up to do this, unless, by some means, we or somebody else could do away with the Palestinian threat to Northern Israel.

I dwell on this just a moment because it's often said that Begin's son, Benny Begin, was furious at the way his father had been allegedly manipulated by Sharon. However, I think that, with all due respect, Prime Minister Begin was much more aware of the situation, as Ambassador Sam Lewis has pointed out. There were Israeli cabinet meetings on this subject before the final attack on Lebanon was made. In dealing with that subject at cabinet meetings, Sharon had to tone it down to make it appear that the Israelis would be going 45 or 50 kilometers deep into southern Lebanon. That is, the approximate range of a PLO Katusha rocket which could hit northern Israel. Allegedly, the Israelis would take out that chunk of Lebanon and thereby limit their objective, rather than plunging on and doing what they ultimately tried to do: set up a whole, new Lebanese Government, knock the Syrians out of Lebanon, and establish the Israelis as the alternative to the Syrians.

Now in early December, 1981, Habib returned to Washington. I was still Charge d'Affaires and I got an indication that something was being developed on the whole Golan Heights business. In Sam Lewis' interview in this series, and I had forgotten this,

he says that I alerted Washington to rumors suggesting that we use some very strong language to head off the possibility that the Israeli Knesset [Parliament] might pass legislation formally annexing the Golan Heights area.

Remember that in 1967 the Knesset passed legislation in the wake of the Israeli victory in the war of that year which, you could say, in effect annexed the Golan Heights area, as well as Jerusalem. These are two, different matters. However, the way the language of the legislation was worded in both cases, the Israelis could look us in the eye and say, "No, that's not annexation." In the case of the Golan Heights in particular, they could say, "It falls under our administrative jurisdiction." This could be represented to be something which was legally a little less than annexation. Then, under the Labour Government of Israel, they proceeded to settle the area. That is, they put Labour settlements of farmers, light industry, and so forth up on the Golan Heights. I had forgotten that I had sent in such a cable, and my thanks to Sam Lewis for putting that on the record in your Oral History.

In any event, Ambassador Sam Lewis returned to Israel, I believe, on Monday, December 13, 1981. Rumors were increasingly heard at this time that there was a bill before the Knesset annexing the Golan Heights area. It was presented by Knesset Member Glass, who was an independent. The bill was routed to a committee, and we were told by Israeli Government officials not to worry about it. We were told that this was one of those private member bills which had been routed to a committee and that it would die there. It would allegedly be pigeonholed.

Nevertheless, we were concerned about this bill. I had sent in a cable, suggesting that we use very strong language to block it. However, before any such language came back to us from the Department of State, Prime Minister Menachem Begin roused himself from his sickbed, was carried into a car, taken to the Knesset, put in a chair and wheeled into the Knesset, in a lightning series of moves. He put the Labour Opposition on the spot and engineered the rapid passage of a Knesset resolution annexing the Golan Heights. Of course, this very much upset Washington and the Department of State.

Against his whole background of seize the opportunity and seize the day, which was not peculiar to Begin, he faced everybody with a *fait accompli*. This action had a souring effect in those circumstances. I'm willing to continue...

Q: I think that this is a pretty good time to stop. We're now moving up to...

BROWN: We've moving up to the Sharon trip to Washington in May, 1982, and, shortly thereafter, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

Q: This would be a good place to stop. So we'll pick it up at that point the next time we meet.

Today is May 6, 1999. Bill, let's pick up the story in May, 1982.

BROWN: Things were really heating up. Let me take you through the buildup to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and its immediate aftermath. This was in 1982.

Just a bit of background here. The PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] had unsuccessfully tried to overthrow King Hussein of Jordan in September, 1970. This effort failed, and the PLO was then driven out of Jordan and escaped into southern Lebanon.

Meanwhile, the Lebanese internal situation had deteriorated to the point that the Christian Phalangists invited President Assad of Syria into Lebanon to cope with their problem with the Palestinians. So, in effect, Assad was the man who came to dinner but never left. His forces are still there in Lebanon. Assad moved his forces into Lebanon with an invitation from the Christian Phalangists. I don't claim to be either a Syrian or a Lebanese expert. However, my impression is that this was the fulfillment of a widely-held Syrian ambition. That is, whatever the Sykes-Picot arrangement reached during World War I between the British and the French regarding the establishment of a Lebanese Republic under French tutelage, from a Syrian viewpoint, this was all one piece of a larger Syrian entity.

It was the case then and, I believe, it is still the case that there was and is no Lebanese embassy in Damascus, [Syria]. Lebanese political figures either asked to go to Damascus to see President Assad or were summoned there to see him. With the introduction of the Syrian Army into Lebanon, Assad so strengthened his hold on Lebanon that, at the risk of only slight simplification one could say that it became virtually a Syrian protectorate or appendage. That is, rivalries continued, but thousands of Syrian troops were the power on the scene, and Assad could and did play one faction against the other. In a larger sense Assad could play on the Lebanese scene, vis-a-vis the Israelis as he sought to recover the Golan Heights lost to Israel in 1967. That was and remains the situation.

In this connection, the instrumentalities Assad used changed from time to time. During my time in Israel the instrumentality Assad used was the PLO. I would say that the PLO presence in southern Lebanon was approved of by Assad to a degree. Not only countenanced but encouraged as well, within certain limits. The PLO had to understand that the Syrians called the shots. Within those limits the PLO could build up their paramilitary organizations. They could, and did, attempt provocations against Israel, using mortars, rockets, demonstrations, infiltrators, hang gliders, and so forth. The Israelis responded to these cycles of provocations by the PLO with increasing vehemence.

Q: A question here. From the point of view of the American embassy in Israel, and looking at the situation at the time you were there, I would have thought that the Syrians would do everything they could to keep the PLO from staging such provocations. These provocations amounted to sticks used to annoy the tiger. As sure as anything, this would lead to the use of Syrian troops at some point.

BROWN: I would respond to that in this way. We saw this kind of behavior as a risky game, particularly with, shall we say, a hawkish Israeli Government dominated by the Likud Party. Ezer Weizman is a former President of Israel. He is now depicted in Israel as a paragon of peace, flexibility, and diplomacy. However, when he was Israeli Minister of Defense he led the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1978. This invasion went deeply into Lebanon and caused a flap in the UN, leading to the passage of UN Resolution 425.

However, if you try to look at this situation from the point of view of President Assad of Syria, he lost the Golan Heights to Israel in 1967. This area of traditional Syrian territory had already been settled by the then Labour Party Government of Israel. Those settlements weren't expanding enormously, but they were turning the Golan Heights into a fertile, agricultural and light industrial complex. Assad probably calculated that he would keep the pressure on Israel by these means. It was a tricky, risky business, but with Assad's hands on the reins, from time to time he had to tighten them and pull them back. So when Phil Habib did his shuttle diplomacy act, prior to the situation which I am now describing, remember that he always went to Damascus as well. The Syrians have good diplomats and wily foreign ministers. There was also President Assad himself, who is one of the wiliest negotiators on the face of the earth. There was never an admission that the Syrians called the shots. The Syrians had their own "Palestinians," if you will, who were potential rivals to Yasser Arafat, living in Damascus, both then and now.

So this was a dangerous game for the Syrians to play. The tempo varied, and it had the Israelis constantly on edge. At times, I can tell you, this situation became a very serious domestic problem in Israel. To a large extent, Israelis living on Israel's northern border with Lebanon were adherents and supporters of the Labour Party of Israel. There were kibbutzim [Israeli collective settlements] and so on dotted across that area.

However, on the subject of handling foreign policy vis-a-vis Assad of Syria and the PLO, I would say that along the northern border of Israel there was a nearly universal demand: "Do something! We cannot let this situation continue," with women and children in bomb shelters, an atmosphere of terror, and so on.

So by 1978 the Israelis had already created a kind of security zone in southern Lebanon. They had already allied themselves with southern Lebanese dissidents, such as Major Hadad and his entourage, a dissident, Christian faction, which was also allied with a Shiite element in southern Lebanon as well. I think that it is worth pausing just to take note of the fact that public opinion in the United States presently considers that these southern Lebanese dissidents are mostly Christians. In those days, this wasn't true. There were Shiite Muslim units, allied with Major Hadad and under his command, paid for and supplied by the Israelis, facing what we now call the Hezbollah, a rival radical group that rose among the Shiite community in Beirut and extended into southern Lebanon. So there was an intra-Shiite struggle going on over the years. In more recent times the pro-Iranian Hezbollah won out.

In any case, the scene heated up. It reached the point where the Israelis were increasingly

strafing and bombing deeper and deeper into Lebanon. Phil Habib, in an exercise of brilliant diplomacy, had brought about a cease-fire. Now the situation was beginning to fray again after nearly a year or so of a cease-fire. I think that it may have been slightly less than a year, in fact. The situation got worse and worse. Remember that, as of July, 1981, a reshuffled Begin Government was now in office, which had in it a very strong Minister of Defense, Ariel Sharon, with his own agenda. On December 4 or 5, 1981, he stunned Habib and myself, as well as his own Foreign Ministry officials by laying out a plan for the invasion of southern Lebanon.

Simultaneously, there were some other developments which I would like to touch on, at least briefly, because it is so easy to focus on only one. What I would like to leave our readers with is the terrific responsibilities carried by Ambassador Sam Lewis and the American embassy in Tel Aviv in coping simultaneously with the Israelis on a variety of hot subjects.

President Anwar Sadat of Egypt was assassinated in the autumn of 1981, which left the Israelis very, very nervous as to what would ensue under Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak as Sadat's successor. Mubarak, for his part, was committed to reaping the full fruits of the peace treaty with Israel. That is, getting the Israelis out of the Sinai. The peace treaty with Israel called for a staged demilitarization of the Sinai border between Egypt and Israel. Nominally, the withdrawals were equal, as both sides had to pull back a little bit. However, it was really designed as a thin strip with no Egyptian troops and then another, and wider, strip behind that which each side would have no armor or artillery. Then there would be a further strip behind that, which was the subject of intensive negotiations, involving very painful decisions for Israel. The Israelis had to demolish a very expensive series of bases, installations, and military infrastructure which they had installed in the Sinai area since 1967. It was very painful for the Israelis to do this.

The Israelis also had to remove Israeli settlers from this area of the Sinai. It was particularly painful for Prime Minister Menachem Begin to preside over the withdrawal of every last Israeli from the Sinai. One of the functions of Ariel Sharon, as the new Minister of Defense, was to go in and root out those settlers from such beautiful settlements as Yamit, which was like a gem in a sea of sand. The settlers initially resisted this removal but were finally ejected. We saw this process night after night on television in Tel Aviv.

But that wasn't the end of that story. As the deadlines approached, Prime Minister Begin summoned Ambassador Sam Lewis and made it very clear that he was aware, through his intelligence sources, and he knew that we were aware, that the Egyptians were defaulting on certain key provisions concerning the Sinai, such as trenches that were supposed to have been destroyed but hadn't been. Egyptian tank positions were still in place, and there were still Egyptian military personnel in positions where they shouldn't have been. Begin worked himself up to the point that he finally said, "Maybe we'd better consider delaying an Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai, unless and until this situation can be cleaned up."

Well, Washington, of course, was very distraught at this. Begin went on to say, "Perhaps the new Secretary of State, General Haig, could come over to Israel, and we can settle this." Well, the Falkland Islands War broke out, so Haig sent his trusted deputy, Walter Stoessel, a distinguished, career diplomat and former Ambassador to the Soviet Union and Poland, to review the situation with the Israelis. Stoessel came to Israel, and Prime Minister Begin ran him through the wringer. He laid down all kinds of provisions that had to be met and assurances that had to be provided. He urged Stoessel to fly to Cairo and get these things done, and the process went on and on.

Meanwhile, in the midst of all of this, the Israelis were bombing southern Lebanon. I remember once, while Ambassador Stoessel was in Jerusalem, he was invited down to Tel Aviv to the Foreign Ministry by Minister of Defense Sharon. When he got there, we learned that Israeli F-16s had just conducted another, very dramatic raid. Defense Minister Sharon looked at us and said, "Why the long faces? These are your airplanes, F-16s. Look at the brilliant job that they've done! They're the finest available. You ought to be proud." In other words, he was rubbing it in.

I'll never forget what happened toward the end of this process, with the deadlines upon us. We had negotiated a multinational force, to be headed by an American civilian director, assisted by General Bull Hanson, a Norwegian general and an outstanding man.

In typical style Prime Minister Begin extracted the maximum that he could from Ambassador Stoessel. We ended up in the Prime Minister's residence at about 11:00 PM or midnight. An exhausted Stoessel gave his latest readout and assurances from Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak that things had been cleaned up and so forth. Begin said, "I want to thank you very much. You've worked very hard, and I deeply appreciate that. However, in view of what has happened, and given the reluctance of my cabinet, I'll have to take all of this to my cabinet for approval. I would like to go over some very important issues with you." There, on the couch, he had Defense Minister Sharon and other top people.

Begin said, "I think that in view of these circumstances it would be useful for the President of the United States to write me a letter. As a matter of fact," and he reached in his pocket and brought out a draft of such a letter. He said, "This is the kind of letter that I would appreciate receiving from the President of the United States." You can imagine the contents. The letter included a statement that, "All assurances given by the United States Government to the Government of Israel remain valid and will be fulfilled, especially those since 1973." Of course, that meant reams and reams of all kinds of assurances. Begin said to Deputy Undersecretary Stoessel: "Surely, you wouldn't have any difficulty in reaffirming all of the commitments that you've made to us." What could Stoessel say but: "Well, of course."

At that point I had an image of some little old lady in one of the Israeli ministries pulling out file cabinets of commitments, including both written and oral commitments, implied and official and unofficial commitments, etc. But that was Begin's style. Therefore,

having finally extracted these oral assurances from Deputy Undersecretary Stoessel, Begin let us go, I guess, at about 1:00 AM.

Well, Ambassador Sam Lewis and I, as well as the other members of the American team, then dashed over to the American Consulate General in Jerusalem, where we had to notify Washington immediately of the apparent resolution of this crisis. General Bull Hanson was in town or due to be in town soon. He had to be briefed and brought up to speed on the commitments that had been made concerning the Multinational Force. There were a few surprises for him as well.

I think that the Egyptian Defense Minister was in Jerusalem and had to be taken care of. In the middle of all of this, at about 2:00 AM, while we were working furiously, having worked all day and all night, I got a phone call from the Director General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, David Kimche and his cohort, Hanon Baron. These were two outstanding individuals. They said that there was a little more that Prime Minister Begin wanted to bring up. They asked if they could come and see us.

I said, "David, as you know, we're here in the American Consulate General." I was alluding to the fact that no Israeli official had EVER entered the American Consulate General in Jerusalem. Symbolically, this would have been impossible for an Israeli in ordinary circumstances. However, David said, "That's all right. We'll come over and see you." So they came over. (End of tape)

Q: You were saying that the list of the other matters that Prime Minister Begin wanted to bring up really sent you up the wall.

BROWN: It was an addendum to what Begin had already negotiated with Stoessel up to 1:00 AM that morning.

Q: Was this typical of Begin?

BROWN: I would say, yes. Look, Israel is a small country which has a survival syndrome and a style of its own. It is deeply suspicious of its Arab neighbors, no matter what. At this point Israel was about to give up the Jewel, this vast territory, the Sinai. This was some 90 percent of all of the territory that the Israelis had seized in 1967. This was a territory from which they had pumped oil, which had beautiful eco-tourist potential, and which gave Israel strategic depth against a renewed, Egyptian attack. It's occupation had put the Israelis on the Suez Canal. Giving this up, before the Camp David Agreement was reached, had been unthinkable for many Israelis.

Anyway, Prime Minister Begin was determined to extract what he could in exchange for giving up the Sinai. He would never again have this kind of a chance with the Egyptians and he knew it. Once the Sinai was returned to the Egyptians, Israeli leverage with the Egyptians would be very much diluted, to put it mildly. So Begin was making the best of it. We were grinding our teeth, but that was about all that we could do. As I said, all of

this was going on simultaneously.

Q: While we're at it and while this was going on, what reading were you getting, both within the embassy in Tel Aviv and from our embassy in Cairo, about why the Egyptians were not fulfilling all of their obligations?

BROWN: Stuart, this is the Middle East. Pardon my cynical comment, but you really have to keep your eye on everything. Egypt has its own internal problems and its own bureaucracies. Some of those bureaucracies are military bureaucracies. Sometimes they are at odds with each other. Words, interpretations, and instructions get mixed up, and so forth. We checked the situation regularly but were not in a position to deny what the Israelis were telling us, if I may put it that way. However, at the eleventh hour, the situation was cleaned up.

At the same time Begin's, and particularly Sharon's remarks, were laced with such observations as Sharon put it: "I've told them, and you can tell them that I told you that I've told them. If they violate their commitments again, we'll be back in there in 24 hours." There was no ambiguity about that. This was the situation after the nice play on words. Ezer Weizman was long gone as Defense Minister. He had had a very good relationship with Anwar Sadat, but Sharon was the tough guy. After all, Sharon had emerged as a great hero in the breakthrough at Suez and the encirclement and defeat of the Egyptian Army during the Yom Kippur War of 1973. The Egyptians knew that they were dealing with a tough individual in the person of Ariel Sharon. So, as I said, the Israelis were extracting every particle of advantage that they could, while they could do so.

Now, let's go back to the Lebanese front which, as I've said, was heating up. Following Sharon's accession to power as Minister of Defense and his revealing his plans for the invasion of Lebanon to Habib and myself in December, 1981, there were further intimations of Israeli preparations to do this, if necessary. The same point came up during Sharon's visits to Washington. In his meetings there, Sharon tended to be melodramatic, depending on his interlocutor, his mood, and so forth. Of course, we were in the position of trying to dampen down all of this. So the services of Phil Habib were again in dire need. Nevertheless, the situation continued to spin out of control. In negotiating the cease-fire agreement Habib could not be in direct touch with the PLO, for that was verboten for American diplomats. We found out later, and you'll see this in George Shultz's book, that without Shultz's knowledge, William Casey, Director of Central Intelligence, had authorized Bob Ames and others to open their own channels with the PLO, unbeknownst to the State Department. However, the policy was that Phil Habib could not negotiate directly with the PLO. They were cheek by jowl, and there were Lebanese, French, and other interlocutors used to contact them. The cease-fire agreement included a prohibition on PLO attacks on Israel. The Israelis interpreted that to mean across the board. The Arafat interpretation of the agreement was that this commitment referred only to the Lebanese border. The PLO, in this view, was free to engage in the struggle against Zionist imperialism around the world. The PLO considered that, as long

as the Israelis didn't attack them, they would not attack the Israelis on this particular Lebanese front.

This was a particular bone of contention between the two parties. This situation came to a real crunch and was used, either as a pretext or the reason, however you want to characterize it, for the invasion of Lebanon itself. On June 3, 1982, I believe, the Israeli Ambassador in London, Shlomo Argon, was shot and seriously wounded by a Palestinian terrorist while coming out of a function at a hotel. He was not killed, but he became virtually a vegetable. This was an unfortunate, tragic case. That was, if you will, the proximate provocation which led to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Prior to this, as I said, apart from Sharon's remarks to us in December, 1981, numerous Israeli reservists were mobilized and deployed toward the North.

Israeli reservists would be mobilized at a moment's notice, and the Israeli military and reserves would come out, crank up, and head toward the North. They were perceived as leaning forward in their foxholes and were just ready to go across the border. We would go to the Israelis and say, "What are you doing?" They would say, "It's just an exercise," and there would be a pullback. However, there was no surprise, as far as Israeli preparations for an attack on Lebanon were concerned.

So the Israelis went into Lebanon. Remember that in the discussions of this action the initial description of the campaign was most frequently portrayed as limited out of consideration of the concerns expressed by the more nervous Nellys in the Israeli cabinet. The invasion was portrayed as a cleanup of the Palestinian Katusha rocket capability in Lebanon. A Katusha rocket in those days could go about 40 or 45 kilometers and was frankly a terror weapon. The Palestinians were not aiming them at military targets.

Q: They mounted them on the back of trucks.

BROWN: Or even on the ground. You could also put them on the back of a truck. The Palestinians had a couple of pieces of artillery on hand. I think that these were 130 mm guns, which could reach targets in the Israeli northern border area. So the Israeli attack on Lebanon was initially portrayed as a limited operation.

Well, it was not limited or the limits soon went far beyond those described both to us, to the Israeli cabinet, to the Israeli Opposition, and to the Israeli public. One thing rapidly led to another. The Israeli Defense Forces went into Lebanon, and it wasn't just to a depth of 40 or 50 kilometers. The objective wasn't just the Zakharani or Letani Rivers. The operation went on and on.

We protested to the Israeli Government and so forth. However, by our own policy, we were not allowed to send in our own embassy military attaches, so we did not have someone up there, moving with the Israeli Army. We had to rely on what the Israelis would tell us. They would say, "Resistance was encountered, another PLO provocation occurred and it was necessary to move farther into Lebanon." Pretty soon the Israeli Army

was at the door of Beirut.

Q: I've been interviewing people like Bob Dillon, who was our Ambassador in Beirut at the time. He was not happy with the reporting he was getting because, as he said, "The Israeli Army is doing this," and would report it to Washington. Washington would say, "Well, our embassy in Tel Aviv tells us this or that."

BROWN: And what our embassy in Tel Aviv was telling the Department was what the Israeli Army was telling us.

Q: Ambassador Dillon was getting reports from the front.

BROWN: From his viewpoint, he was getting reports from the front, but what was the front? These reports were from elements of the Lebanese armed forces at or near the front, or whatever civilian and other sources he had available. When we would pass this on to the Israelis and ask for their comments, they would dismiss these reports as rubbish. They would call these reports tainted, one-sided, and so forth.

Q: This situation raises the whole issue of reporting. First, you obviously could report to the Department what the Israelis were telling Embassy Tel Aviv. However, did you attach qualifiers to these reports and say, for example: "These guys are lying like hell a lot of the time?" Or did you just say, "This is what we have been told." In the normal course of events in Washington, if an Arab source says that the front is here, and the Israelis say that it is there, the tendency will always be to say that the Israelis are much more truthful than the Arabs.

BROWN: Yes, but remember that there are different channels of reporting. First of all, as the Israeli Army crashed across the Lebanese border, Minister of Defense Sharon was totally unavailable to us. He was up at the front, so we didn't see him for days. In that kind of situation, shall we say, he was one of the most active Israeli Defense Ministers that you could imagine. Even though he was no longer a general on active duty, he was right up there with the troops. Clearly, Sharon was trying to maximize whatever he could do.

Professionally speaking, our military attaches were getting their military read-outs from the Israeli military. The same thing applied to what our intelligence people were getting. We were left to deal with the Foreign Ministry under with Shamir, who was now the Foreign Minister, and with the Prime Minister's office.

Remember also that in the very early days of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon there was almost a sense of euphoria in Israel. Now I'll have to be careful how I describe this. Israelis were saying: "At last, we're going to clean up this mess, these constant provocations against Israeli border settlements by the PLO." So there was an initial cheerful period. The invasion of Lebanon was not regarded as a lark, but, let's face it, the PLO didn't have a regular army, whereas the Israelis had armored forces and knew what

they were about. The Israelis had their plans and they implemented them. Here and there the Israelis bumped against this or that Syrian Army outfit which didn't quite withdraw as quickly as they should have. This developed into an escalating series of problems. We're talking about conventional, Israeli armor striking North in a characteristic, heavy push, leaving pockets of resistance in certain areas of encircled or bypassed Syrian Army units.

The Israelis were initially telling the world that they weren't attacking the Syrians but were just trying to clean up a PLO, terrorist phenomenon. Well, one thing led to another, and the fighting got worse and worse. A situation emerged where, as it developed, the Israeli Army surrounded Beirut and ringed it with tanks and artillery. Beirut, of course, was divided into Christian and Muslim sectors. The Israelis took the Christian sector and were now right on the edge of the Muslim sector, in which the PLO and a large, swollen Muslim population were located. The Israelis began hitting this area with air attacks, tanks, and direct artillery fire.

A day or two before the Israeli invasion of Lebanon began, which was on June 6, 1982, I believe, Phil Habib was in Europe. He was immediately rushed to Jerusalem. We took him up to see Prime Minister Begin, who solemnly assured him of the limited objectives of the Israeli attack. When Habib told Begin that he'd be going on to see President Assad of Syria, Begin said, "You can tell Assad that we're not attacking Syria. We're trying to clean this situation up. See what you can do."

During that very early period of the Israeli attack on Lebanon, remember that the Syrians had moved many anti-aircraft missile batteries into Lebanon, and the Zakleh area of Lebanon immediately leaps to mind. As the war broke out, up went the Israeli Air Force, the Syrian Air Force went up to meet it, and was immediately shot down. There was an enormous disparity between the two air forces. The Israelis lost nothing and shot down, I forget, something like 50 or more Syrian aircraft in major air battles.

The Israeli Air Force virtually wiped out the Soviet-supplied, Syrian Air Force. In the process, the Israelis used their latest techniques in which our Air Force people were very interested. At the risk of dramatizing the situation, you had a kind of prototype of Desert Storm, the war against Iraq in 1990-91. That is, the Israelis carried on a really integrated, air-ground struggle. The Israelis knocked out the Syrian Air Force and knocked out the Syrian radar and missiles, all at the same time. They also knocked out something like 225 Syrian tanks including the vaunted Soviet made T-72 tanks, and anything else that got in their way. This was all done in the name of "cleaning up the Palestinian mess."

Habib flew to Syria, met President Assad, and at 3:00 AM sent us a FLASH cable to report his meeting with Assad. Ambassador Sam Lewis and I had moved during the night up to Jerusalem to get a readout of the situation from Phil Habib. We wanted to be able to contact Prime Minister Begin, which we did at about 4:00 AM. Habib reported that President Assad sat there, absolutely calm, as if he hadn't lost his tanks, his air force, and his missiles. Assad put on a great act. Prime Minister Begin subsequently reported this to the Israeli cabinet. The net effect of it was that Assad was not about to come to Begin's

terms or do anything to help Menachem Begin in this mess.” From Begin's viewpoint, that reaction by Assad freed his hands to continue with the invasion of Lebanon, and continue they did. Habib...

Q: At this particular juncture, what was your reading, that is, yours and Ambassador Sam Lewis' reading, of where Prime Minister Begin stood on all of this? He had had this accident...

BROWN: Remember that a major aspect of the situation was the dominant figure of Minister of Defense Sharon. The picture that emerged was that Begin was being carried along by Sharon. However, Begin was no fool. He was the Israeli Prime Minister. Perhaps Begin's son, to this day, harbors deep resentment at the way his father was misled, but I doubted then, as I do now, that Menachem Begin was ever really in the dark.

Q: As far as you were concerned, you were dealing with an active Prime Minister Begin, who was carrying on a war.

BROWN: We were dealing with a hyperactive Defense Minister, [that is, Sharon], and a Prime Minister who was uncomfortable but who had among his top objectives the destruction of the PLO [in Lebanon]. Furthermore, if you read Ze'ev Shiff and Ehud Ya'ari's book, Israel's Lebanon War, Begin had already been in touch with the Phalangist leadership in Lebanon and had funded them to the tune of \$100 million or so. In other words, Begin was looking forward to another part of the Israeli agenda. Begin's agenda involved not only the cleanup of the Palestinian mess but the destruction of the PLO as a paramilitary, terrorist structure in South Lebanon. Beyond that, Begin was looking toward the emergence of an independent, Christian-dominated Lebanese Government which could hopefully stand up to President Assad of Syria and be more, shall we say, susceptible to Israeli persuasion, to put it mildly.

So all of that play was going on at the same time. The Israelis were dealing with the Gemayels, the Bashirs, etc. [all Lebanese Phalangist leaders], hoping to install them in power and get rid of the Syrian presence in Lebanon. Now, in this situation Phil Habib, moving desperately to bring the fighting to a halt and negotiate another cease-fire, moved to the American Ambassador's residence at Yahrzeh, in the mountains above Beirut. Here we have the phenomenon of a street smart, outstanding American negotiator, Phil Habib, with all of his experience worldwide in negotiating hot situations, deeply involved in what became, more and more, an emotional involvement for him. He was watching this panorama unfold in Beirut, below him.

The Israelis were insisting that they were not doing certain things which Phil Habib damned well either saw or heard, or at least thought he saw or heard...

Q: Apparently, the Israelis, with their artillery, were very close to our Ambassador's residence.

BROWN: There were situations where Habib reported that Israeli artillery was firing from positions a couple of hundred yards away from him. The Israelis were denying it. Habib was saying: "For God's sake, they're right next door to me."

Q: He was holding out the telephone to pick up the sound of the firing of Israeli artillery.

BROWN: He certainly was, and I'll come to that. I'll read you a very short passage which relates to all of this. It appears in George Shultz's book.

Remember also that we were now in a new era in communications. Phil Habib had the use of a TACSAT, which transmitted through a small military satellite. Washington had instant communications with him, via this satellite. We didn't have this facility in Tel Aviv, but we had phone connection with the State Ops Center. So Phil Habib was now turning into an observer and not just a negotiator. He became a passionate observer or player in the whole thing. It became a very emotional experience for Habib.

At this juncture Ambassador Sam Lewis was in Washington, coping as best he could. Al Haig's tenure as Secretary of State was suddenly ending. George Shultz, in his wonderful book, *Turmoil and Triumph*, eloquently describes the scene where he had been tapped to leave the Bechtel Company and become the Secretary of State. However, pending his hearing and confirmation by the Senate, he couldn't make decisions. At President Reagan's request, Shultz phoned Haig and said, "The President thinks that it's time for you to leave your position as Secretary of State." This was okay, but Al Haig then lingered on in office, pending the swearing in of George Shultz.

At this time things were very messy back here in Washington. As you can see from the Shultz book, in the highest circles in Washington, there was a furor going on regarding how to handle this situation. Ed Meese [Attorney General], Jim Baker [Director of the Office of Management and Budget], and Casper Weinberger [Secretary of Defense] were livid at what the Israelis were doing. Among them, Weinberger was calling for a cutoff in supplies to the Israelis, sanctions, and so forth. President Reagan, however, didn't want to do this. Meanwhile, the situation got worse and worse.

Phil Habib's reporting from the hills above Beirut became more and more shrill, and so did his recommendations. His recommendations were not coming to us in the embassy in Tel Aviv. They were going by TACSAT right to the Operations Center in the Department of State and, of course, to the NSC [National Security Council]. For example, he recommended cutting off supplies to the Israelis. He said that they would never stop what they were doing, despite their assurances to the contrary.

In this context, just to give you a little flavor, during this relevant period, somehow I have it in mind that I negotiated nine out of 10 cease-fires. Most of them were done by phone. Some of them were, perhaps, 10 minutes long. Some of them lasted for perhaps two weeks. I've forgotten many of the details, but I was constantly in touch with David Kimche and Hanon Baron in the Israeli Foreign Ministry, who were reporting directly to

Prime Minister Begin and other players on the Israeli side.

Q: Did you feel that the Israeli Foreign Ministry at that time was really one of the “players?”

BROWN: No. Or, perhaps, only in the sense of giving their judgments to Prime Minister Begin. David Kimche, who had been a top Mossad [Israeli intelligence organization] man and who had been installed in the Foreign Ministry as the new Director General, had good access to the Prime Minister. Someone had once used the expression that Kimche was the “Prince of Lebanon.” He had been a case officer for the top Christian families of Lebanon, the Gemayels, the Chamouns, and so forth. He was considered “Mr. Lebanon” in the Israeli Government, so he had that extra cachet and aura about him.

In any case the Lebanese situation worsened. The Israelis had surrounded Beirut and were bombarding it with artillery, tank fire, and air strikes. They had cut off the water and the food supply to the civilian population. Washington was just going up the wall at this situation.

The second thing, in communications terms, that I would mention to you is that this was a TV War. TV, including Israeli TV, showed the world, including Israeli audiences, pictures of Arab women coming out with dead babies and children with their limbs blown off as a result of Israeli attacks. They were coming into the streets, wailing and so forth. From a humanitarian point of view, it was just dreadful. It was terrifically poignant. This impacted directly on Israel's image, ruining it around the world. These TV images stirred up various Arab populations, including the people in our Consul General's consular district on the West Bank of the Jordan, as well as ours in the Gaza Strip, as well as the Arabs in all of the neighboring countries. All of the Arabs and Muslims were just frantic over these scenes on TV. These images were now beginning to have an impact on Israeli public opinion, the more so as the bodies of Israeli soldiers started coming home for burial. The Israelis rolled over their Opposition, but snipers, mines, explosive charges and so forth began to take their toll.

The Israeli people began to realize that they received not only fresh fruit and vegetables from Lebanon, but body bags as well were starting to come back to Israel. This really began to have an impact on them.

I'll read you a short passage from George Shultz's book, Turmoil and Triumph, covering one of the peaks of this situation in Lebanon. This is taken from pages 58 and 59 of the book. Shultz writes that one day: “I came into the Department at 5:00 AM. Habib was screaming in rage on the TACSAT. He said that the Israeli shelling of Beirut was the worst that he had seen in eight weeks of war. We had to get the Israelis to stop. Charley Hill was talking to Habib in Beirut on a telephone, on the one hand, and Deputy Chief of Mission Bill Brown, in Jerusalem, was talking on a telephone in his other hand. Brown was also holding two receivers, talking to Hill, on one hand, and Prime Minister Begin on the other. Begin was calmly denying that any shelling was taking place. This had just

been confirmed by Defense Minister Ariel Sharon.

[Begin...] “said, 'There is no intent to occupy West Beirut. If there had been such an intent, I would write to Ronald Reagan,' Begin said. [He added]: 'The United States was being fed hysterical, inflated reporting,' Begin said. Hill relayed this to Habib. 'Oh, yeah,' Habib said, and he held his TACSAT earpiece out the window so that we could hear the Israeli artillery firing. Hill counted eight shells within 30 seconds from IDF [Israeli Defense Forces] artillery batteries located just below Habib's position. When Bill Brown reported Begin's assurances, we told him to tell Begin that at that very moment he was reassuring us, we could hear the noise of Israeli guns. Begin telephoned Bill Brown again. It was now 5:10 AM in Washington. The Israeli Chief of Staff reported that the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] had been using a great variety of weapons. The IDF had fired back, but only at the [point of] origin of the firing against them. The Israelis were not advancing at all. Begin said, 'Do you think that the Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defense Forces is misleading me?’”

Well, I'll stop right there, just to highlight the kind of situation that we were dealing with. This is not in Shultz's book, but I'll just continue with it. Here I was, as the Charge d'Affaires, talking to the Prime Minister of Israel, under tremendous pressure himself. He was getting all of this on various channels from Washington, and not just from me. Israeli Foreign Minister Shamir was in Washington, and all kinds of people were reporting in on the Israeli side. Begin said, “Do you suggest that my Chief of Staff and my Defense Minister are misleading me?” I said, “I suggest that Phil Habib is reporting this enormous barrage which is going on.” I said, “Perhaps it would be useful, Mr. Prime Minister, if I met with your Defense Minister.” Begin said, “It shall be done.” Shortly thereafter I got a phone call from Defense Minister Sharon. He asked me to come over to his office, and indeed I did, later that morning.

I took with me Paul Hare, our Political Counselor; and our Military Attache, Pete Hoag. When I arrived at Sharon's office, his ministerial office in Tel Aviv was really filled. In fact, there was standing room only. He had generals, colonels, note-takers, maps, and so forth. He proceeded in a very sarcastic, cynical manner to attack our reporting. He said, “If you had a qualified Defense Attache there [in Beirut],” which was a dig at us, “or if you let your Defense Attaches go up [to Beirut] with us, you would see that a lot of this reporting is exaggerated. Not even on D-Day [June 6, 1944 in Normandy] was there such a barrage as Mr. Habib reports, sticking his telephone out the window.”

I said, “Mr. Minister,” and there was no more 'Ariel' and 'Bill' as this point, “I want to stress at the beginning that I intend to report this conversation in its entirety and in as much detail as I can, accurately and objectively. I just want to go through this with you, step by step. The Prime Minister has told me that nothing happened [in Beirut] last night. He said that you had told him that nothing happened last night, that there was no bombardment of West Beirut. Is that true?” Sharon answered: “Well, in response to 'provocations' and so forth, we had to respond.” I said, “Are you claiming that no Israeli tanks moved forward?” He said, “Well, there may have been a little movement on the

fringes, here and there, repositioning themselves and so on. But we are not invading West Beirut,” and so forth, giving his usual spiel. I asked my note-taker to take it all down and closed by saying to Sharon: “Rest assured that I will report every word of yours that I can remember, as accurately and faithfully as I can, as you've given it to me.” Then I left Sharon's office.

I got back to my office at the embassy. As we were sending out the reporting cable on this conversation with Sharon, the phone rang again. It was David Kimche, the Director General of the Foreign Ministry. He said, “Bill, I understand that you had a conversation with the Prime Minister early this morning.” I said to myself: “Aha, and I'll bet you were listening in on an extension.” I said, “Yes, I did, David.” He said, “You reported that the Prime Minister said that nothing happened during last night.” I said, “Yes, that's what he told me he had heard from his Defense Minister and his Chief of Staff.” David Kimche said, “What he meant was that at the time you were talking, at 7:00 or 8:00 AM today, Bill, there was nothing going on.” I said, “Thank you very much, David. I'll report that as well.” In other words, the Israelis saw themselves now in a real “fix,” and so they were.

Of course, that conversation, which is in Shultz's book and which I've just skimmed over, was preceded by another. I'd called David Kimche at 4:00 AM to tell him what Charley Hill was telling me. In other words, I called Kimche to get him to wake up Prime Minister Begin. Well, the situation worsened. There were assurances and very temporary lulls, but the Israelis kept the water cut off. Food shipments into West Beirut were kept to an absolute minimum. This was extremely upsetting. I would pause here and say that, looking back on it, what we were dealing with was not just Begin or Sharon. We were dealing with an Israeli approach to crisis management of a conflict with Arabs. That is, if it comes to a showdown, you go for the jugular vein, you get your hand on the Arab's throat, whether it's surrounding his army on the other side of the Suez Canal or taking the Golan Heights, or whatever it is, you keep your hand on your opponent's throat until you get what you want. This is in contrast with their perception of an American approach, which is more humane. You go in and do what's necessary and then you negotiate. For the Israelis, allowing a paramilitary structure led by Arafat, whom they hated, to remain able to oppose them in any way was anathema. The Israelis were out to destroy this Arab paramilitary structure and, if necessary, to destroy Arafat. Indeed, we were concerned at the time that the Israelis were out to assassinate him if they could get to him.

Now, in all of this, as the situation worsened dramatically from Arafat's viewpoint, he began, through interlocutors, to approach Phil Habib with something that would allow the final resolution of this situation. That is, a cease-fire and a pullout of Arafat and his forces. This happened in August, 1982. There were all kinds of dramatic breakdowns and so forth, in which I was involved. However, I think that, rather than go on in great detail, I'll pause there. Ambassador Sam Lewis returned from home leave and engaged directly with the Prime Minister. I assisted in all of this. It went on, day and night. It was agonizing and it was horrible. Among other things, we were dealing with a very emotional Phil Habib. I think that I left Tel Aviv when the basic deal had been negotiated. That is, Arafat would be allowed to leave Lebanon, with his PLO [Palestine Liberation

Organization] troops. The Israelis gave us assurances that nothing would happen to the Palestinians in the refugee camps.

The Syrian forces were called the Arab Deterrent Force, or the ADF. They were allowed to get out via the route from Beirut, leading to Damascus, which had been cut by the Israelis. Under this arrangement, the Israelis would avert their gazes so as to lessen the humiliation of the departing Syrians and some of their Palestinian adherents. Some Palestinians went with the Syrians to Damascus. This is all described eloquently in Shultz's book.

I left an exhausted American Ambassador. I turned over my office to Bob Flatten, who was my successor as DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission]. I said, "Go to it, friend." Reflecting back on that, I have to say that I was an exhausted DCM after three years of this. I was in good shape, physically, but I was exhausted. I said to myself: "How much the more so Ambassador Sam Lewis must be." His fun was only just beginning, because, shortly thereafter, there came such things as the massacres at the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila and the surprise Reagan peace plan announced, I think, on September 1, [1982], without prior consultation with the Israelis. Ambassador Sam Lewis had to go up there and deliver this proposal to Prime Minister Menachem Begin at his residence in Nahariya, as it was released worldwide. Begin reacted very, very strongly, saying that Israel would not be treated as a banana republic.

After a fantastic tour in Tel Aviv, my wife Helen and I left Israel and went on to the University of New Hampshire. However, before leaving the subject of Israel, there are a couple of other things that I'd like to cover.

Q: And then I will have some questions.

BROWN: I alluded earlier on to the question of the tremendous strain on an embassy which was not all of that large, handling so many crises at the same time. We had a brilliant, forceful, energetic Ambassador. He had recruited a wonderful collection of Foreign Service Officers for service in the embassy in Tel Aviv. They traveled widely in Israel. Some of them spoke very good Hebrew, so through the contacts they made Ambassador Sam Lewis was better able to keep his fingers on the pulse of the various strings in the Israeli political spectrum.

In those days you might remember, notwithstanding our best efforts, we were unsuccessful in our effort to implement that portion of the Camp David discussions which was incomplete. That is, a regime to accommodate Palestinian autonomy. The Israelis stiffarmed us on this issue. The Egyptians were not willing to go beyond their position. The Palestinians would have absolutely nothing to do with it. Of course, President Assad of Syria and others were shrilly condemning the Egyptians as a bunch of sellouts to the Zionist enemy and so forth.

So our contacts with Palestinians were essentially those of Brandon Grove, then Consul

General in Jerusalem, with people in Jerusalem and Muslim Arabs living on the West Bank of the Jordan River. We had another, embassy responsibility, the Gaza Strip. Well, the Gazans weren't interested, any more than the West Bankers, in getting into autonomy talks. In other words, our engagement with these people was very limited. However, we arranged for Arabic training for an officer who already spoke Hebrew. I think that his name was David Greenlee. We sent him to an intensive, Arabic language immersion course at ULPAN. As a result, he could talk with "Israeli Arabs," or, these days, you might say "Israeli Palestinians" or Palestinians with Israeli citizenship, however you want to describe it. He was therefore also able to go to Gaza, should that area show any signs of progress.

The strain on these officers, their wives, and their family lives was enormous, over a protracted period. Ambassador Sam Lewis would do everything that he could in terms of embassy functions and inviting them in to chat with him. He had an open door policy. They could debate with him. Sam and Sally held functions at home, including these officers in their manifold social and representational activities. Sam was also very demanding. He was a real professional diplomat. He was a stickler for the right procedure, as well as ensuring that their jobs were done in terms of substance. That embassy really hummed. (End of tape)

Dealing with the Israeli military establishment requires very good and well rounded people who can take it, because the Israelis are very difficult interlocutors at times. On the one hand, they love to shmooze [talk]. On the other hand, they can be quite sharp and shrill. They have a propensity to try and extract what they can from you and maneuver you. The Israeli press is sensationalist par excellence. It will do virtually anything to get an exciting story. If necessary, it will engage in misquotes, gross overinterpretation, and distortions.

In this sense I'm speaking as far as certain individuals are concerned. There are also other kinds of problems. An American diplomat working in Israel receives a large number of visitors, many of whom have their own agendas, and often are at odds with each other. At times they are at odds with elements of U.S. policy. Some of them parade themselves as having the inner ear of the highest ranking policy makers in Washington, including the White House. In other words, they suggest that you forget what the American embassy is telling you. They more or less state: "I'm giving you the real story." They speak for constituencies which are often at odds with each other.

Much has been made of the various Israeli lobbies in the United States.

Q: AIPAC [American Israeli Public Affairs Council], of course, is the big one.

BROWN: AIPAC is the big one, but there are others. Some of them are liberal in terms of political orientation. They extend across quite a broad, political spectrum. Previously, I alluded to the late Prime Minister Menachem Begin's cultivation of the Christian Fundamentalist communities in the United States, to the dismay of both my Israeli and

American liberal friends. However, “There was gold in them there hills,” as far as the Likud Party was concerned, and they cultivated the American fundamentalists.

There were other Christians interested in Israel, including those who were deeply concerned with access to Christian shrines in the Holy Land and the state of Christian communities there.

There was a growing Arab-American community in the United States. The number of these Arab-Americans living in the United States was increasing, as the situation in Lebanon deteriorated. Muslim Arabs living in the West Bank of the Jordan River area, and particularly in Jerusalem, Nazareth, and Bethlehem, were growing in number. Bethlehem, which we used to think of as a Christian town, where Jesus Christ is traditionally believed to have been born, was rapidly becoming a Muslim town. The Christian element in Bethlehem, ably represented by Mayor Freij, was steadily becoming more of a minority. That trend has continued over the years.

Many Christian Arabs in the Holy Land migrated to the United States. Some of them felt impelled to go into politics and, to a lesser but increasingly significant degree, they were making their views known through certain members of Congress.

There were other American elements who were disturbed at the way the Israelis handled certain matters. I'll give you an example. During my time in Israel I found that we had to deal with a problem which I had never known of previously. That is, a group known as the “Black Hebrews.” [Addendum: they now refer to themselves as the “African Israelite” community.]

An American gentleman who changed his name to read “Ben Ammi Carter” and who came from either Chicago or Detroit, reportedly had a rather apocalyptic vision of the world. According to him, there would be a great disaster or series of disasters, involving fire and water. In his view his group, whom he considered the “forgotten Hebrews” or the “Black Hebrews,” should reestablish themselves in the Holy Land and prepare for this apocalyptic event. Then they would reemerge and live in the post-apocalyptic era. They began moving as individuals to Israel, entering the country on visitor visas and then illegally staying on. They would go down to towns like Dimona in the Negev area, where they would pick up odd jobs. As their presence increased, the Israeli Ministry of the Interior began to ferret out these Black Hebrews and crack down on them. The ministry did this because, after Ben Ammi Carter had established himself in Israel, he set up what some people would call a cult or sect.

The Black Hebrews became a consular problem for the embassy in Tel Aviv. They were American citizens but were a very different group of American citizens. They developed means of support from their followers in the United States. One result of this was that African-Americans visiting Israel for whatever purpose were often stopped at Ben Gurion International Airport and very thoroughly interrogated. They were often subjected to body searches and so forth. Many of them deeply resented this treatment and protested to their

Congressional representatives in the United States.

Ben Ammi Carter had some advisers around him who were styled as princes. Members of the group lived apart from other people and had their own, rigorous approach to life. I think that they were strict vegetarians, although I am not sure of this. They lived on a very sparse diet, dictated by the leadership. Women members of the group were supposed to thin down so that the whole membership would be able to survive a protracted apocalypse. They believed that a mountain would unfold, fire would envelop them, and they would go inside.

Bear in mind that I can't speak of this group from any first hand experience. My information was based on accounts which were reported to me by other people. Reportedly, the leaders applied very severe discipline to their followers. Members were supposed to give the leaders their passports. All of their Social Security checks and anything else of value were to be handed over. The circumstances of birth and familial relationships were dominated by the leadership. Pretty soon some members began to defect out of fear.

This situation created real, consular problems. I was involved, along with Ambassador Sam Lewis, in trying to negotiate some sort of resolution of this set of problems with the Israeli Government and, more particularly, with the Israeli Ministry of the Interior which, at that time, was headed by Dr. Yosef Burg. He was a sophisticated, Germanic Jew who spoke many languages and could pun in all of them. He was a real gentleman, but we found that we got nowhere with him in discussing this issue. So this was a problem which continued to fester during my first tour of duty in Israel. When I came back to Israel as ambassador many years later, I found that I was faced with something which I had to deal with. We'll talk about that later.

Q: I think that off mic you mentioned that it was during this time that you sensed a certain hostility on the part of African-Americans in leadership positions who visited Israel. Could you talk about your sense of this?

BROWN: Yes. I think that you are talking about a phenomenon which was a reflection of American domestic developments. Bear in mind that Martin Luther King and his followers enjoyed the support of many, very dedicated, liberal Jews, some of whom paid with their lives for this support during the time of the civil rights movement.

Q: Some of them lost their lives in Mississippi.

BROWN: Yes. Many African-American leaders had worked on overlapping, political agendas with leaders of the American Jewish community, at both the local and regional levels. I could cite many of them, including Congressman Charles Rangel [Democrat, NY] and others, who had a warm, working, political relationship with liberal Americans. These included some who happened to be American Jews as well.

I leave it to analysts of the American political scene to describe this situation, but my impression is that tensions grew in certain sectors of the African-American community vis-a-vis the American Jewish leadership. Leaders of these sectors apparently felt that the cake wasn't being sliced properly. They seemed to feel that certain African-American communities were very much getting the short end of the stick. In some cases more radical African-Americans felt that they had been discriminated against by local pawn brokers and business people, some of whom were Jews. Words and rhetoric aside, these African-Americans felt that the deck was stacked against them and that American Jewish leaders had not exercised the right kind of leadership in addressing these particular African-American problems.

Already during my first tour in Israel that feeling was occasionally apparent during the visits of certain African-Americans to Israel. I won't say that this view was held by all African-American leaders. By no means all, but by the leaders of certain groups, including those who had younger members, say those who were 40 or younger. One would notice this tendency in the entourage of these leaders, including such evidence as the body language displayed and the questions asked. This made me feel very unhappy, and I'm sure that this attitude affected the Israelis whom these African-Americans met, as well.

Well, in that atmosphere concern was expressed about the plight, if you will, of the Black Hebrews down there in the heat of the Negev Desert area. They were living in an unregulated status and were liable to deportation. Occasionally, officials from the Israeli Ministry of the Interior mentioned possible deportation of the Black Hebrews as a matter under consideration. So sometimes there was some conflict in that respect. I was involved in that as well.

Rarely did I see Arab-American visitors to Israel in those days, but there were American Christians who might not have been Arabs but who felt deep, deep pain over the plight of Christian Arabs within Israel. This tendency was noticeable across the denominational front. You would find this attitude among both Catholics and Protestants, to say nothing of Orthodox Christians. A large majority of the Christian Arabs in the Holy Land were followers of the Greek Orthodox Church. We didn't get into their problems too much, but I was keenly aware of the difficulties faced by Greek diplomatic counterparts in that respect.

Q: Bill, I have a number of questions that I would like to ask before we leave this subject. First, what was the feeling, at the time, of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon? Much has been made of the fact that Secretary of State Haig basically winked when Ariel Sharon talked about invading Lebanon. What were you getting at that time, about this particular matter?

BROWN: I was getting an earful. You have accounts, including Haig's own book, Caveat, in which he defends what he said and did. He denies having given Sharon the green light or permissive wink, or whatever you want to call it, for Israel to invade Lebanon. There

are other accounts available in published form to which I would call your attention, including the book, Israel's Lebanon War, by Ze'ev Shiff and Ehud Ya'ari. The same subject has been treated elsewhere.

At this particular time and on this particular issue I had a very good contact in none other than Mordecai Zippori, a hard line Israeli a member of Likud and a member of the Herut before that. He was a former career military officer who had risen within the Likud Party and the political structure to become deputy defense minister when Weizman quit, and Prime Minister Begin took over the portfolio himself. Begin made Zippori his deputy defense minister. Zippori ran the day to day affairs of the Ministry of Defense. He was the gentleman with whom I dealt on Lebanon and other, military matters as well. Subsequently, in the new cabinet, when Ariel Sharon came in as Minister of Defense, Zippori and Sharon were at odds, so Zippori was moved out of that job. They made him Minister of Communications.

Now, there was no love lost between Sharon and many other ex-military types, including Zippori. For his part Zippori said to me: "What is the real message on Lebanon?" I gave him chapter and verse on U.S. policy on Lebanon. Zippori would shake his head and say, "Bill, that's not what I'm hearing." It got to the point, during the preparations for the Sharon visit to the United States in May, 1982, and other matters where we were delivering the line as set forth in State Department cables of instruction to us, only to find that the Israelis were getting other versions of U.S. policy. As instructed, we faithfully presented the official line to the Israeli Government, chapter and verse. So the official message was being delivered, but Zippori was not alone in questioning what the U.S. message really was regarding Lebanon. For purposes of this discussion I have chosen to highlight what Zippori said.

We finally got to the point where in the absence of Sam Lewis I invited Zippori to my residence and showed him the green copy of an action cable from Washington. I said, "Here it is, chapter and verse. You'll notice that the name on the bottom of this cable is the name of the Secretary of State, Al Haig. Here it is!" He read the cable, digested it, and said, "Thank you very much, Bill, but I have to tell you that that's not what's being reported in the Israeli cabinet meetings. I sit there and listen to another view of the matter."

What he meant was that Minister of Defense Ariel Sharon was conveying, by his own means and in his own way, his version of what he thought was American policy. He had visited Washington and talked with Secretary Haig and others. Don't forget that the Israeli ambassador to the United States at this time was Moshe Arens who, for all of his American accent and American upbringing, was a hawkish, Likud representative. I consider him to this day to be a good friend, but he was then as always a Likud member. If you look at the memoirs of former Secretary of State George Shultz and others, you'll see that Ambassador Arens was delivering the "Begin line." He saw Secretary of State Haig, when he had access to him.

In this particular case, I called someone in Washington on a secure phone. I said, “You have given me an appreciation of what Al Haig said, in a meeting with Israeli Defense Minister Sharon, or with Ambassador Arens. There were note-takers, both Israeli and U.S. present. I'm not disputing that report of what was said. However, was there a subsequent meeting?” My interlocutor said, “Well, after that meeting there was a private meeting with Secretary.” I said, “Well, can you tell me what happened at that meeting?” My interlocutor said, “No, that was an 'Eyes Only' conversation.”

I was left with this lingering concern that something may have been said at the subsequent meeting which was then elaborated, distorted, or spun by an Israeli, unbeknownst to me. Those things happen. And they happen, not only in U.S.-Israeli relations but they happen in many other cases.

Q: The Israeli embassy in the United States, probably as much as the American embassy in Tel Aviv, was also in bed with our cabinet officials, members of Congress, and other figures. Were you concerned that, because Ambassador Arens was there in Washington, there was a spin that was coming out to Tel Aviv that the Israelis were not playing a straightforward game, or was it a political tactic? Was that a concern of yours at the time?

BROWN: You said rightly that the Israeli embassy in Washington had been, is, and will be heavily involved with American figures, across a very broad spectrum. This doesn't just involve the Israeli embassy in Washington. There are Israeli consulates and the UN Mission in New York, friends, and so forth. The Israelis in the U.S. work energetically, day and night, across a very wide spectrum of issues. Ambassadors are supposed to echo and present the views of their government. Ambassador Arens was no ordinary diplomat. He is and was a Likud Party member or, if you will, before the Likud Party was established, a member of the Herut Party, born, bred, and raised in that way, long before he even emigrated to Israel. So Arens, as an ambassador, would see things first as Israeli ambassador, in a very prestigious and important post, but also as a prominent member of the Likud. Remember that as a prominent member of the Labour Party Yitzhak Rabin had been Israeli ambassador to the United States.

In any case, Arens went back to Tel Aviv after being ambassador to the United States and became Israeli Minister of Defense. And he is once again Israeli Minister of Defense, as we speak, in 1999. As is the case in the United States Foreign Service, an Israeli ambassador to the U.S. in certain situations may be a career diplomat. In my time I dealt with an Israeli Ambassador, Moshe Arad, an excellent career diplomat who happened to have been appointed through the influence of Shimon Peres, who is a member of the Labour Party. However, whatever his personal feelings, he echoed and presented the views of the Shamir Government later on, as faithfully as he could. He did his job. So it varies greatly, Stuart. However, one must never forget the possibility that, with all of this confusion which can exist, particularly in times of crisis, even within the American body politic at its highest levels, an Israeli Mission can get a variety of conflicting signals from the U.S. Government.

That subject is dealt with in George Shultz's memoirs where he discusses having a frank discussion with Arens. He knew Arens, had dealt with him before, and was acquainted with Arens' hawkish reputation, if you will. Shultz said to Arens: "Look, I want to be straight with you. We have a crisis here which is very severely impacting Israel's image and which now has reached the stage where it gravely affects our relations with you. You had better do this or that. Otherwise, this will have very deep implications for us."

In the situation which I have highlighted here, that is, when Yasser Arafat [the PLO leader] was on the edge, the Arafat structure almost broke up. It felt itself surrounded and beleaguered. The Israelis had to decide whether to allow the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] to ease off, to let them slip out of their encirclement, or to let them go someplace else and regroup. Should the Israelis let this Arafat, who was dedicated to their destruction, regroup elsewhere with his military and paramilitary forces and start all over again? Or should the Israelis attack him? What should they do?

An understandable, American or European approach might be: "For goodness sake, you've humiliated Yasser Arafat and you've broken up his presence and structure in Lebanon. Let him go to a place like Tunis. He won't be a problem there." Well, some Israelis would go along with this kind of attitude. Other Israelis would have a very different view. In fact, Arafat's fortunes went way down as he was shipped or transported to Tunis. However, he made his comeback in a very different atmosphere.

Q: When you were in Israel, one of your advantages was that you were coming from "outside." This hadn't been your area of experience. Did you see a strong element of what I can't describe any better than racism as far as the Israelis' attitude toward the Arabs was concerned. Did they feel that the Arabs were a lesser breed? Did they feel that if they fired artillery at the Arabs, after all, this wasn't quite the same thing as having artillery fired into an Israeli kibbutz, or something like that? Were you able to see anything like that?

BROWN: Look, there are Israelis with a superb cultural and academic background. We used to use the expression, "Orientalists." These were men and women in the upper strata of the intelligentsia who spoke fluent Arabic, Farsi, Kurdish, or other languages of the Middle East. They were tremendously educated and deeply steeped in the Middle East. However, that didn't make them automatically pro-Arab or pro-Muslim. Some of those individuals were, in the modern term "peaceniks." Others were tough. They had gone through Oxford and other great, European universities, or the finest Israeli universities. They had had classical educations. However, their outlook, training and experience contributed to an existing hard line mentality.

Over time there is nothing like around the clock confrontation to harden prejudices on both sides. This phenomenon was also noticeable in this case. The Israelis had a significantly expanding Israeli Arab community. The demographics of all of this situation continued to work. During my first tour of duty in Israel, and this trend continued during

my second time in Israel, the proportion of Israeli citizens of Arab origin was increasing. This was without reference to what the Israelis call “*aliyah*,” immigration of Jews from Europe into Israel. The Israelis worried about the true loyalties of their own, Arab citizens.

There were other entities involved in Israel. I would mention the Bedouin, a lesser minority on whom ordinary Arabs looked down. The Israelis used the Bedouin as trackers in the Israeli Army in operations against Arab terrorists. They spoke a form of Arabic and fiercely resented what they felt was Arab discrimination against them. They were the lesser beings of the Sinai Desert.

Another important element here was the Druze, who straddle the Lebanese-Israeli border and also live up in the Golan Heights area. The Druze of Lebanese-Israeli border region threw their lot in with the Israelis. They not only received but “*demand*ed” full Israeli citizenship and the right to serve, even the right to be conscripted in the Israeli Defense Forces, where they served loyally and became some of the toughest soldiers. You may talk about tough Israeli tactics in handling Arab riots and demonstrations. The Israeli Border Police, and particularly the Druze elements thereof are the toughest. They can swear in Arabic, using the lowest form of Arab obscenities. Their own formula for handling a riot by an Arab crowd is awesome, to put it mildly.

So there are these overlays that have an impact here. On any given day I could show you a peacenik with outstanding Orientalist credentials. I could show you a professor who might be concurrently a colonel in Israeli Military Intelligence and who was a governor of some region on the West Bank. The Israeli government often used these gentlemen with their Arab, Muslim academic backgrounds. Some of them may have started out gentle and then turned tough. At the same time, rising within the Israeli system were Sephardic Israelis who were the sons and daughters of people who had been driven out of Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and so forth. They would bring to the table very strong attitudes on how to handle Arabs.

There were Jews of Ashkenazi [i.e., European] origin who were liberal, on the one hand, and supporters of the Labour Party in relative terms. However, having handled successive conflicts as members of the Israeli Defense Forces, they had hardened over time. There were others who, like Menachem Begin, were seized with the Holocaust kind of mentality and who tended to exaggerate and equate President Assad of Syria with Hitler and, along with him, other bad characters in the Arab world.

In all of this there were excellent Israeli radio and communications specialists who carefully monitored the sermons being given on Friday mornings in the various mosques located nearby and throughout the Middle East. They listened to the words of Anwar Sadat of Egypt before, if you will, he became enlightened on the prospects of peace with Israel. I saw a collection of Sadat's earlier remarks which were chilling in echoing certain, negative comments about the Jews.

Then, behind all of this, there was propaganda being ground out by the Arab state propaganda machines. As we dealt then, so we were dealing later, even at the height of Israeli-Egyptian peace negotiations, with an Egyptian press which was turning out, and I saw these, stereotyped cartoons of Menachem Begin as a cobra. The cobra was reared up and had its hood out, facing you, with its venom spitting at you, marked with the Star of David. The Egyptian press contained the crudest forms of incendiary cartoons and propaganda being ground out, even at the peak, if you will, of Israeli-Egyptian peace negotiations. These would be called to our attention. We would be urged to bring these to the attention of the Egyptian authorities, who would dismiss these as examples of a free press and evidence that people have their feelings.

Q: It's an example of the Middle East.

BROWN: To say nothing of Soviet propaganda. During my time in Moscow and on a daily basis I had had a stomach full of articles and illustrations in Pravda and Izvestia of hook-nosed Jews, with their hands and feet drenched in Arab blood. There would be illustrations of Israelis in Storm Trooper boots stomping on innocent Arabs. All of this horrendous propaganda from various sources went on. This is something that you cannot just dismiss. It had its effect. These stereotypes from all sides, and I stress this, emerged on different sides of the equation.

Q: In a way this is something which would be somewhat removed, but still within the same context, or perhaps the consular context or even beyond that, but what about extremely Orthodox Jews? Who was it, was it Ludovicker and other sects...

BROWN: Already during the first of my three assignments in Israel, and this was a much longer period of time than I expected to spend in that country, Israeli coalition politics had worked to the benefit of these emergent, political parties. First of all, there were the Orthodox Jews, and their organization was and is called the National Religious Party. They were hard line, they recorded a significant vote, and members of this group held important positions in the Israeli cabinet.

Then there was the group called Ultra Orthodox Jews, who were even more conservative than the others. These people belonged to a number of smaller parties. Israeli elections to Parliament are conducted on the basis of proportional representation. You don't vote for individuals but rather for a party list. If a given party or even one person posing as a party could get 1% of the total vote in a given electoral district, he or she would get a seat in the Knesset. So this arrangement drives various constituencies to coalesce to get that 1% or whatever additional number of votes they could get. The elections themselves are just the first stage. Then, in the later negotiations, they could bargain on that basis for the formation of coalitions. The Labour Party and Likud, the two major parties, approach, and are approached by, these lesser parties, which ask: "What will you give me?" So finally there may be a Knesset member who is a liberal, Labour Party sympathizer. However, the arithmetic drives him to negotiate, say, with an ultra Orthodox group which is being wooed by the Likud Party.

In that process of bargaining, what are they asking for? They're asking for more money in exchange for the support of so many seats. They may also want cabinet or sub-cabinet positions. As an extreme example, I've known of cases involving an ultra-orthodox party, which was anti-Zionist. Their position is that they do not believe in a Zionist government. They believe that a true government will be formed only after the Messiah arrives. Only then, they say, you can have a Zionist government. Until then, they say that they will not accept full ministerial positions in a government which is allegedly Zionist. However, they can be something else. They might accept sub-ministerial positions or the position of Director General of a government ministry or service. Meanwhile, they want their own schools and don't want to do military service, because that runs against their religious principles. However, they want the equivalent of what veterans get after performing Israeli military service. For example, this might include so many years of guaranteed educational benefits. They want their young men to go into special schools, or "Yeshiva," where they study the Torah as they teach it. They also ask for hospitals, community centers, and other goodies. In short, they want a guarantee that they will continue to share in the power structure. They want so many seats and committee assignments in the Knesset and so many positions as cabinet ministers, sub-ministers, and positions as senior civil servants. However, they do not want to serve in the military and they do not support the Zionist program.

Then there are splits and divisions among these smaller parties and groups. There are also rivalries of very peculiar origin, based on the Lithuanian, Polish, and Baltic groups from which they come. For example, a man may be designated as the unquestioned leader of a sect. Very often this position is inherited or comes down from a brother, nephew, or other, family member. These people are so revered that it may be difficult for an outsider fully to understand. Often there are rival sects with their own, particular views on how questions involving diet, marriage, family life, and education should be resolved.

Until now I've been speaking of a significantly European-based form of ultra-orthodoxy. A relatively new form of ultra-orthodoxy has emerged...

Q: This was during your first tour in Israel.

BROWN: Yes. It emerged, but it wasn't nearly as strong as when I came back to Israel as ambassador. However, it's worth noting. A Sephardic, ultra-orthodox group emerged, some of whose leaders had sat at the feet, as it were, of European, Ashkenazi, and ultra-orthodox leaders. These Sephardic leaders have adopted Ashkenazi views and added to them their own spin, if you will. Now they appeal to Sephardic, ultra-orthodox communities who originated in Morocco or elsewhere in Africa. These divisions and splits go on and on. They played a much more significant role years later, when I returned to Israel as ambassador. However, these divisions were already distinguishable.

Q: In the work of the embassy, particularly at the consular level, did you find that the leadership of these ultra-orthodox groups was in Brooklyn or somewhere else in the

world? I assume that these groups could be very demanding.

BROWN: You are speaking of those of them who have an American base. It's true of those communities that, having suffered near liquidation under the Nazis, that is, their fathers and grandfathers were liquidated, many of them re-established themselves in the United States. Then they went forth to multiply. Their families are something to behold. Some of them have 10, 12, and more children. I've been in places where USAID [United States Agency for International Development] funded a wing of their hospital. I was proudly shown a woman who had given birth to even more than the 10 or 12 children.

As you know, with your consular background, the birth of additional children brings a whole bevy of consular problems. People get married and have children. In some cases those kids have American citizenship if their parents had it. They travel back and forth between Israel and the United States. They are educated both in the Israel and in the United States. Funds are raised, political parties emerge, alliances are formed, and rivalries develop. It's a remarkable phenomenon.

Q: Two last questions on this subject. What about human rights reports? We're now well past the period of the Carter administration, which made much of the issue of human rights. However, Congress during the Ford administration required the State Department to prepare annual, human rights reports on virtually all countries of the world. These annual reports are now well ingrained in our system. The section on human rights in Israel were always a bone of contention.

BROWN: You mentioned the Carter administration, in which Pat Derian was Assistant Secretary of State for Humanitarian Affairs. She picked up the humanitarian torch and went at it with a will. In many cases she ran straight into the resistance or hostility of foreign cultures, governments, and officials in various Foreign Ministries who were terribly concerned that a distorted picture was conveyed to Washington or came out of Washington. That included Israeli officials. (End of tape)

Meanwhile, there was a situation developing in the Israel occupied territories which we call the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. During my first tour in Israel there was also the Sinai Desert area, although, at that time, this wasn't much of a problem because the Sinai is so sparsely populated with Bedouin, who are lapping up Israeli largesse. They were being educated, vaccinated, and provided with various jobs by the Israeli Government. It can be argued that they were enjoying life as they never enjoyed it previously, under Egyptian administration. So the Sinai was not a problem in that context.

However, in human rights and reporting terms there was a problem both in the West Bank and Gaza. These are areas which have been under Israeli occupation since at least 1957. The Israeli legal establishment and the Foreign Ministry immediately present the argument that these areas cannot be dealt with in ordinary, human rights reporting circumstances under the various Geneva conventions. The Israelis, as an occupying power, felt that they had certain responsibilities to fulfill. They argued that they were

doing their best to give the people in these areas the best possible standard of living, including health and economic services. They pointed out that there are terrorists within these areas who are working steadily to terrorize the population, as well as to terrorize Israelis, including Israelis who were now moving to, building, and occupying settlements in these areas. Remember, it's not just the West Bank. The Gaza Strip is also involved in this situation. There were not so many people involved in Gaza, but the situation was equally explosive. Clashes were taking place as Palestinian nationalism took hold in the occupied territories through the years and as the Israelis cracked down against this or that demonstration.

Now came the TV age. I mentioned in a previous session of this interview the particularly dramatic and poignant scene of a young Arab girl, who happened to be the daughter of the President of a Palestinian university, shot in the leg by the Israelis during a demonstration there. That sort of image sent our human rights people in the State Department up the wall. It also sent the Israelis up the wall in response to our presentation of this case.

This is not just a problem of a Likud administration under the Menachem Begin Government. This was a problem involving the Israeli occupation of these territories, which were administered by the Israeli Ministry of Defense. So we were not just talking about Menachem Begin and his Likud allies. We were talking about the Israeli military administration, using civilian experts, many of whom were well versed in Arabic and Muslim customs. They were coping with a situation which started during the Labour Party Government, involving small, highly-charged settlements, some of them in highly explosive areas, such as Hebron itself and outside other hot spots.

There were in your face incidents involving highly ideologically and, in some cases, religiously motivated Israelis, some of them speaking English with American-like accents.

Q: That's right. These people, speaking with American accents, seem to be among the most militant of the Israelis.

BROWN: They were very militant. However, be careful, because those apparently American accents tend to be overdramatized in the presentation of these incidents in the media. These people are a minority but an articulate minority. Beware of what later became such an easy way of characterizing them as American-based nuts. No, we're talking about something much broader than that, in which some people with apparently American accents loomed large.

Q: It's easier for journalists to interview them, for one thing.

BROWN: That's right. And some of these settlers are American citizens or claim American citizenship. They may be dual citizens of the United States and of Israel.

By the way, you as a consular officer, with a consular background, can bear witness to our

evolving attitudes during our respective careers regarding matters such as dual citizenship. During my time at the consulate general in Hong Kong I remember and may have told you of my having confiscated the passport of a Chinese who may have gone to Taiwan, using Taiwan documents, and voted there.

U.S. Supreme Court rulings over the years have been such that, by the time I arrived in Israel as DCM [deputy chief of mission] during the American election campaign of 1980, the rules on voting in foreign elections and the implications of serving in foreign armed forces have changed substantially. One day I was coming into the embassy and found myself walking toward the Marine Security Guard behind an Israeli soldier in uniform, who had an automatic weapon slung over his shoulder and a Yarmulke on his head.

He approached the Marine Guard at the entrance gate. I said to him: "Excuse me. Can I help you? Whom are you looking for?" He said, "I'm looking for the consul. I've got to cast my absentee ballot in the American elections." Of course, in those earlier days Americans living in Israel had been tipped off not to take an oath of allegiance to the Israeli Government and not to do this or that. When they were conscripted into the Israeli Defense Forces they were often put under the handkerchief. They were not required to take an oath of allegiance to Israel, so they could look at somebody in the eye and say, "I was drafted. It wasn't my fault. I didn't take an oath of allegiance to the Israeli Government." They would try and maintain their citizenship in that way. Some were able to do this, and some were unsuccessful with this explanation.

Over the years this line of policy evolved to a remarkable degree. Many Israelis served in the Israeli Army, held dual citizenship, and voted by absentee ballots in American elections.

Q: We're getting away from the annual human rights report issued by the State Department.

BROWN: Okay. On the human rights front already, back in my time in the Department of State, this report was beginning to be prepared on an annual basis. In the preparation of these reports the Department seeks first drafts from its constituent posts. For example, the American embassy in Tel Aviv prepares the first draft of the report on Israel. The Embassy also has jurisdiction over American interests in the Gaza Strip. The American consulate general in Jerusalem has in its consular jurisdiction Jerusalem and what we call the West Bank. Many Israelis call the West Bank "Judea and Samaria." So there is a built-in tension here between various reporting elements.

The staff of the consulate general in Jerusalem is bombarded, day and night, with stories of Israeli atrocities and violations of human rights and Arab dignity. These reports relate not only to Jerusalem but more especially to areas of the West Bank. In the preparation of these reports our people visit Israeli prisons and observe the Israeli military justice system and Israeli detention and interrogation practices.

As the Israelis watch this process, they say, “But you've got to distinguish between 'normal' court practices and a situation of 'occupation.' That is a special situation and should be treated separately. We've got the most liberal democracy in the world, with its independent Supreme Court and the High Court. Come and see our judicial system. Come and see how it functions.”

Melding the Israeli normal court practices and those in the occupied areas is a challenge in the best of circumstances. Then you get into critical situations, including the Lebanese overlay, such as I've described here, including Israeli bombardment of Lebanese areas. The atmosphere then becomes supercharged, as it were, across the whole front. Relatives of Palestinians living in the West Bank and Jerusalem are being killed in southern Lebanon. Terrible things happen, and they're being portrayed on television.

Israeli peaceniks in those days were a small but growing group of people. They were incensed at what was happening to their international image and their domestic, civilian life. What is happening to our country, they ask, particularly as this is portrayed on TV. Protest movements have emerged in Israel itself. As the body bags come home to Israel, the protest movements grow in size, and these people are bending our ears with what they see as wrong with Israeli society and, in particular, the Likud government. So already, back then, the atmosphere was getting pretty charged up. By the time I returned to Israel as ambassador, all of this had further developed.

Q: When you left Israel toward the end of 1982, Bill, and we'll stop at this point, did you feel that a very significant thing had happened during your time in the country? That developed almost at the end of the honeymoon feeling toward Israel in the United States. Originally, there had been a feeling in the U.S. that the Israelis could almost do no wrong and that the situation there was almost like paradise. That had been the attitude. Then, all of a sudden, with TV images of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, there was very little left of the previous feeling of little Israel fighting off the Arab hordes. Did you feel that this was happening?

BROWN: Israel suffered terribly from what was happening in the West Bank and Gaza and in southern Lebanon. This had a very significant and negative impact on the Israeli image.

At the same time, other things were happening elsewhere among Israel's neighbors. You have to remember, Stu, that in the midst of all that I've been describing, there was a conservative or fundamentalist uprising in Syria. President Assad responded to this by surrounding the people in several Syrian cities and slaughtering something like 20,000 to 30,000 of his own people, in the most brutal way, using tanks, artillery, and aerial bombardment.

Q: Thomas Friedman covered that very thoroughly in his book, From Beirut to Jerusalem.

BROWN: Yes. Other things were happening elsewhere. There was the situation in Iran, which impacted on the American and Western European views of that country. Even though the Iranians are not Arabs, they are Muslims, and that particular brand of Islamic fundamentalism at that time, and what they were doing to each other, their minority groups, and their neighbors is another aspect of the same situation. Then there was Saddam Hussein, and all of that. There was the assassination of Anwar Sadat in Egypt and riots in Egypt carried out by fundamentalists there. There was the growing plight of the Coptic Christians in Egypt. So other things were also impinging on the overall Israeli image.

It is true that Israel was suffering badly in terms of its image, at this particular juncture. However, it is also true that other things were happening which played into the negative stereotypes concerning Israel in the U.S. and elsewhere.

Q: That is, of the Arabs and Muslims.

BROWN: Yes, of Arabs and Muslims. Unfortunately, those two words are often equated. It's unfair, but there we are.

Q: Well, we'll pick this up from this rather benign spot in Tel Aviv to a really tense situation in New Hampshire. [Laughter]

BROWN: Okay. I spent an academic year teaching a course on Arab and Israeli relations. It turned out that the course dealt at length with the situation in Lebanon. However, the course was ostensibly on Arab/Israeli relations. I taught another course on China at the same time, at the University of New Hampshire.

Q: We'll pick this up, then.

Today is May 19, 1999. Bill, we now have you leaving Tel Aviv, and you're off to the University of New Hampshire. When was this?

BROWN: I left Israel in the latter half of August, 1982. I'm a little fuzzy about the exact date. This is relevant because all hell was breaking loose on the Lebanon War front. I might just say a brief word about this because, two days ago [May 17, 1999], the long-awaited Israeli elections took place. One of the features of that election was that the incumbent Prime Minister, Bibi Netanyahu, used security as a theme piece, implying that his opponents would be weak toward the Palestinians, Israel's opponents, and so forth. This makes me laugh in this peculiar sense.

Netanyahu's main opponents in the race for Prime Minister were Ehud Barak, former Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defense Forces, who has personally killed more Palestinians than, I think, many people would believe. Barak is a man, and I'll talk about him later

when I get to my ambassadorship in Israel, who came up on the route of Special Operations. Barak was a key planner in the raid on Entebbe, Uganda. He wasn't on the plane which landed there, but he was in another aircraft farther back, circling, or something like that. He was a key planner in that extremely delicate and ultimately highly successful rescue operation. Barak was the man who led the hit teams in connection with the hijacking of the SABENA [Belgian airline] airliner. He was dressed up in a mechanic's white uniform. The plane had been boarded and hijacked by Palestinians. He led the Israeli rescue team, dressed as a mechanic. During this operation the whole Palestinian hit team was eliminated.

Barak appeared one night on the streets of Beirut with a colleague who, I think, was Sha'hak. Sha'hak was also a key player, though somewhat in the background, in the Mordecai camp in this recent political campaign. Both Barak and Mordecai were dressed as women who appeared before the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] headquarters in Beirut after a PLO raid. They asked the guard for a light and then, after killing him, went into the PLO headquarters. The two of them then knocked off the top PLO leadership in a very daring raid and were whisked out.

So for Bibi Netanyahu to picture himself as the protector of Israeli security and trying to portray Barak as weak was a bit far-fetched, I thought, as far as the average Israeli's image of Barak was concerned.

The second individual was General Mordecai. He was of Kurdish, Jewish ancestry. He came to Israel at the bottom of the Sephardic scale, was conscripted into the Army, and then worked his way up. Mordecai had a tremendous record as a combat soldier. He was in the Chinese Farm operation, as it was called, on the Egyptian front, which involved an assault on a key Egyptian fortress in which his unit took very heavy losses.

Q: This was in the Yom Kippur War of 1973.

BROWN: Yes. Mordecai was a Brigade Commander in OPERATION LETANI in 1978, before I arrived in Israel. He went deep into Lebanon in response to a terrorist attack. In the Lebanon War of my time [1982], Mordecai was the commander who led the direct assault against PLO regular forces, if you will. That was really no contest. Mordecai had a whole string of tough, military assignments, and I'll come back to that subject when I describe the period when I was ambassador to Israel. He was later the commander of the Northern Front in Israel. I don't think that you could find an individual who was more of a soldier's soldier.

I thought that it was a bit much for Netanyahu to attack Barak and Mordecai as soft. Well, a day or two before the election, Mordecai suddenly withdrew and asked his followers among the voters to support Barak. Two days later, after a strenuous campaign, Barak emerged as the new Prime Minister of Israel.

In my discussion of the Lebanon War I spoke not only of the book Turmoil and Triumph

by former Secretary of State George Shultz, which gives you the Washington perspective in some detail, as former Secretary of State Al Haig left the Department at the beginning of the Lebanon War [in 1982]. Haig was followed as Secretary of State by George Shultz. I also called attention to a book by two Israeli authors, Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, called, Israel's Lebanon War. They describe this war in great detail, the buildup to it, the secret Israeli negotiations with the leadership of the Christian Phalangists, the Israeli funding of the Phalangists, and then the whole campaign in Lebanon, which was led by Ariel Sharon.

I have already noted how, among other things, very early in Israel's Lebanon War, Sharon expanded it from something that had been billed as a "40 kilometer effort" to rid southern Lebanon of PLO artillery, including Katusha rockets and 130 mm. artillery which could hit the northern borders of Israel. He expanded the initial effort to a much larger campaign.

Beginning on June 8, 1982, the Israelis, in a well-planned operation, executed something of great, political significance, the attack on Syrian facilities in Lebanon. This was done, contrary to the impression of many members of the Israeli cabinet. The Israelis attacked Syrian ground, air, and missile defenses around Zakleh. When the Syrians responded by sending in their Soviet-made MiG fighters and using a Soviet air defense system. I suspect that the Syrians even had Soviet advisers present, down to the battalion level, including some in Syria. On the first day the Syrians lost 29 fighters, their entire missile defense system, and something like 200 Soviet-made tanks.

Those events caused a great commotion in Washington, out of fear that this campaign, however it had been described to us, would now lead to an Israeli-Syrian war. Phil Habib [then Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs] was dispatched to the scene. He went to Damascus, Syria, and came back from a futile effort to broker a cease-fire.

Apart from all of that, there was a very interesting, technical aspect here. I would say that in operational terms you could describe this fighting as a "mini-Persian Gulf War." That is, the use of the latest, if you will, techniques to detect and eliminate Soviet-made missile batteries by using their radar emissions. The Syrian jets suddenly heard Beethoven in their ears, just before being shot out of the sky! The Israelis controlled the whole battlefield.

I might add that this was of very great interest to professional U.S. military people from the Pentagon and elsewhere as to how this was done. The Israelis described all of this to us. After all, they were using American-built equipment: F-16s, F-15s, and all kinds of other, sophisticated material which we made and which they improved and supplemented. In technical, professional planning terms, it was quite an operation which was of great interest back in Washington. The lessons of this engagement were applied in subsequent years.

I left Israel with my wife Helen. We took a little side trip to Greece, Turkey, Crete, and

Spain. We arrived at the University of New Hampshire on about September 1, 1982, where I was a Diplomat in Residence. The arrangement was that I could really do what I wanted to do, but I was signed up to teach two courses: one on China and one on Arab-Israeli relations. As we arrived at the campus of the University of New Hampshire, to Helen's chagrin she found that I had signed up for a tiny graduate student's or faculty member's apartment. It was really small, but I was close to the campus and could walk to work.

When we arrived on campus, there was a worldwide announcement of the Reagan Peace Plan, which is described in George Shultz's book. Ambassador Sam Lewis has discussed it in his interview with you. It was a very well-intentioned plan which caught not only the Arabs by surprise but was also a surprise to Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin as well. Begin berated Ambassador Sam Lewis and Washington for springing this on him without prior consultation.

This peace plan went nowhere, although a great effort was put into it. It involved a Jordanian option. I would say that in typical fashion King Hussein of Jordan went along with this plan to a certain point. However, as always, he had an escape hatch open.

Q: Did you have the feeling that this plan was one of those things that was put together in Washington after a great deal of difficulty? However, the field wasn't consulted, as so often happens. This happened with President Carter and his disarmament plan, which was opposed by the embassy in Moscow.

BROWN: That's right. Well, here you have an example of the great problem in dealing with the Middle East in terms of a new initiative. The dilemma, from the Washington policy planning viewpoint, is that, if you consult with other countries, there is a considerable risk of "leaks." If you really consult, since it involves the Israelis and the occupied territories, you have to consult the Prime Minister of Israel in the middle of a war. That's a very difficult thing to do. That remains a dilemma in terms of major policy initiatives involving the Middle East. If you consult other countries, how much time do you really give them? How much real consultation do you go through?

Remember now that President Anwar Sadat of Egypt was dead. President Mubarak, his replacement, was very cautious. He faced great difficulties in view of the Israeli-Lebanon war and how to handle that. Other Arab countries were very concerned about what was described as a slaughter in Lebanon. They were at cross purposes with each other, which made things very difficult. In these circumstances Washington decided to handle this peace initiative in that way.

A great deal of thought and effort had been put into this initiative. We had some really skilled people back in Washington. Nick Veliotis was the Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs. Charley Hill was a key adviser to Secretary Shultz and one of his speechwriters. He was also Executive Secretary of the State Department but he was really much more than that. Also contributing to this peace initiative was Hal Saunders in INR

[Bureau of Intelligence Research]. There was a wealth of really experienced talent in Washington.

In 1985 after his retirement from the Department of State and harking back to this initiative, Ambassador Sam Lewis said in his interview in this Oral History program, something like: “This was a noble effort with very worthy aims. However, the timing was wrong and, if anything, set back our relationship with the Israelis.” So, there we were.

However, in any case I was arriving at the University of New Hampshire at about this time. Here was a brand new peace initiative for the Middle East, the Lebanon War, and the whole bit, just as I was about to start teaching a course on Arab-Israeli relationships.

By the time I began teaching my course, a second event hit like a bombshell. That is, the massacre or slaughter, however you want to describe or characterize it, at the Palestinian refugee camps at Sabra and Shatila just South of Beirut. I don't know whether the exact facts concerning this event will ever be known. However, the Israelis had overall responsibility. They had launched a campaign in Lebanon and had taken this area. Yasser Arafat had departed Lebanon under a deal brokered by Phil Habib [Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs]. One of the key elements of the undertakings given to Arafat in this deal was that Palestinian refugee camps, containing those Palestinians that Arafat was leaving behind, would be protected.

Ariel Sharon was the Israeli Minister of Defense. The Israeli General on the spot was approached by the Lebanese Phalangists, who discussed the general situation with him. Shall we say, under his nose, the Phalangists went in with knife and gun and proceeded to slaughter Palestinians in those camps, men, women, and children. This harks back to the unfavorable comments made by certain Israelis about the nature of the Phalangists in the Lebanon cauldron. In this situation nobody's hands were clean. When one side got the leverage or felt that it had the upper hand, the result was mighty dirty business, to put it mildly.

The slaughter at these refugee camps caused a worldwide sense of horror. Certainly, given the Israeli free press and television, this had a terrible impact in Israel. Ariel Sharon was forced to resign his post as Minister of Defense. A formal inquiry was opened into these events. The Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defense Forces, General Rafal Eytan, was implicated in it, but it was noted that he was about to retire anyway. I guess that his application for retirement had already been submitted. He was allowed to retire with a cloud over his head but he retired in any case. Sharon remained in the cabinet as a Minister Without Portfolio. Overall, the world felt a sense of revulsion, and Israel's image was badly tarnished.

The students I met at the University of New Hampshire who had read the headlines concerning these events turned up in large numbers at my course. I had to limit the size of my class. It turned out that there was a professor who gave a course on Arab/Muslim affairs. I've forgotten his name now. Very briefly, we sort of teamed up to handle the

overflow of students.

For the course on China I found a wonderful professor, Al Linden, who was already teaching a course on China. We decided to teach this course jointly. It is very rare in university terms to have two professors for the price of one, as it were. However, as the State Department was paying my annual salary, the University of New Hampshire was getting a freebee. Whatever we did was fine with the university. The Department of Political Science was delighted to get me on these terms. So I settled down to teach for an academic year.

What a year it was! It gave me an academic year to reflect on my experience in Israel. I brought a lot of books with me, many of which I hadn't yet read. It gave me a chance more or less to step back and try to absorb and digest the whole situation and then convey my views to the students. There is no better way than teaching to force you to synthesize and consolidate your thoughts. Occasionally, I would have an Israeli visitor. Sometimes, he would be a professorial type whom I would be delighted to present to my class to lecture to them. In those early days I gave some radio and other interviews. I gave some speeches because I was really on my own, as it were. I could speak, reflect, or write a book. I was encouraged to move around in the area. So I did some outside speaking as well.

On the China front this experience gave me a chance again to consolidate my knowledge. Remember that I was a Chinese language officer. I had been on the periphery of Chinese affairs for some time. I had been deputy director of the Office of Asian Communist Affairs in the Bureau of East Asian Affairs. I had accompanied Congressmen Boggs and Ford to China. I had been involved in some very important events. I had also served as DCM [deputy chief of mission] in Taipei and closed down the embassy when President Carter broke relations with the Republic of China. I then became technically an unofficial person and set up the American Institute on Taiwan. So there was a lot that I could reflect on.

I had also previously taught a course on China. I don't know whether I mentioned this in a previous interview. When I was deputy director of the Office of Asian Communist Affairs, the Wharton Business School of the University of Pennsylvania had prevailed upon me to come up to Philadelphia and give a weekly seminar on China. There was an explosion of interest in China in connection with the visit to that country by President Nixon. I used to fly up to Philadelphia on Allegheny Airlines on Thursday evenings and give a course for credit for three hours. That was in the spring of 1972, when several students up there turned up for class, dressed in overalls and appearing in Maoist chic. So Secretary of State Kissinger had gone to China, now President Nixon was going to China, and little did the class or I know that I was about to go to China.

So, I had already taught a course on "Modern China," and here I was now ten years later in 1982 with an outstanding professor, Al Linden, who had been voted by the students in the previous year as the University of New Hampshire's top professor. He was an

excellent teacher. To a certain extent, Al Linden and I had a similar, academic background. He had studied in Taiwan and had written several books on China. We had a very good turnout for our joint class because China was now a very interesting subject for university students. Perhaps it was an extra incentive for the students. I was a State Department officer and had a specialized background. We alternated giving the course, although the two of us were always in the classroom. One of us would give the lecture, and the other one would kibitz when it came to question and answer time. Even during the lecture we felt free to interject comments on what the other professor said.

Al had been teaching for many years, so he had had more exposure to more recent literature than I had. To me, professionally, it was very interesting for me to see him, after a discussion with me, use an unusual text, a sort of historical novel, which highlighted the struggles of a fictional widow in an impoverished province during the latter part of the Ching or Manchu dynasty in China. Through this author the students got a unique approach, rather than the standardized approach to written history. Al used this as a technique to stir student interest in Chinese society. In other words, what was this Chinese society, out of which was to come shortly the “Warlord Period,” Sun Yat Sen, Chiang Kai-shek, and, ultimately, Mao Tse-tung? This approach was a real eye-opener for me, a very interesting, teaching technique, rather than the standard, somewhat drier approach, using facts and figures.

I had my own background on China, which Al Linden thought was very interesting. The two of us really enjoyed this course. This was one of the benefits of being on such an academic detail. For a 50 year old diplomat and ex-DCM, the downside was that I had some concern that I would go once again off the radar screen and be forgotten by the Foreign Service personnel system. Remember that by this stage I had already gone off the radar screen by studying Mongolian at the University of Leeds and then translating and publishing a book on Mongolia. You get a little concerned about your career aspirations when you see others forging ahead. You know very well that you've fallen off the screen as it were.

The up side of such an assignment was that you had a reintroduction, if you will, to the American scene. There is nothing like having to interface with students, moving into a campus situation, if you will, and seeing a good chunk of American life for an academic year as it is evolving. The University of New Hampshire was an excellent university. It had a very good reputation, but it was going through hard times, as many or most state universities were experiencing. Like many other such institutions, its main dependence was on the State Legislature.

Q: Which is renowned for being difficult.

BROWN: Yes, difficult. The State Legislature of New Hampshire is feisty on any given day on a variety of subjects. The politics in that state are such that the Manchester Union-Leader, which was published by Carl Loeb, had almost a nationwide reputation for being far right and for choosing, among its many targets, anybody suspected of being a pinko or

a liberal. Well, what better target than the University of New Hampshire, its faculty, and its budget. So the University of New Hampshire was going through a period of hard times, as costs rose and as the university budget was capped. The net effect of all of this was that the University of New Hampshire was beginning to lose talent, particularly in the scientific field. A university can keep professors of high tech only so long in that sort of environment, with professorial salaries subject to a cap. Then, their loyalties to the university notwithstanding, they begin to drift away in a highly competitive salary situation.

The University of New Hampshire is located at Durham, New Hampshire, which is about nine or 10 miles from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on the Atlantic Ocean. Durham is about an hour's drive from Concord, the state capital. It's about an hour or an hour and a half's drive from Boston. It is in an area where a lot was going on, including an election campaign.

Q: You were at the University of New Hampshire from when to when?

BROWN: For one academic year from September, 1982, to the late spring or early summer of 1983. Elections for Governor of the state were coming up. The incumbent Governor was sort of a diamond in the rough. I think that his name was King. He seemed to be a shoe in for re-election, until a reporter stuck a microphone in front of him and said, "Will you solemnly swear before us, on the record, that you will never impose a state income tax?" Governor King said, "My record is well known. I'm against a state income tax and shall remain so, of course, although in an emergency I might have to reconsider, in special circumstances." The reporters then went to the other candidate, John Sununu, who took the oath in public never, under any circumstances, to allow a state income tax to be passed. He won by a landslide. That was an example of New Hampshire politics and still is.

The high tech effect of State Route 128, which was Boston's Silicon Valley, had a particular impact in southern New Hampshire. A person could commute to work in Massachusetts and not pay state income tax. You could live in New Hampshire without paying any income tax, commute to work in Boston or its environs, and live a good life. New Hampshire was able to attract high tech industry with its very low, corporate taxes and other incentives. So New Hampshire, after going through difficult economic times, was beginning to attract all kinds of high tech industry.

Nearby was Portsmouth, which was beginning to restore its historic waterfront, under a process called gentrification. It restored and built up its old buildings, and chic restaurants were established there. They rebuilt a boutique shopping district with various subsidies. It's a lovely area and is very attractive. Across from Portsmouth was the Portsmouth-Kittery Maine Naval Yard, where U.S. Navy submarines had been built for years, and important naval construction was still under way. However, the future of the Navy Yard, like other Navy Yards elsewhere, was in question. Portsmouth was also the site of Pease Air Force Base, where B-52s [very heavy bombers] were stationed. The reconfiguration

of this base was under consideration. All of this was the subject of considerable debate. It was interesting to me that in the midst of all of the anti-war debate and cries for the closure of sensitive areas, there could be none more sensitive for the student population at the University of New Hampshire than being nine miles away from a nuclear submarine base, a naval shipyard, and a B-52 base. However, in the prevailing atmosphere in New Hampshire there wasn't much debate about that. These facilities meant jobs to too many people.

As I looked at the student population at the University of New Hampshire, I felt that it was interesting that the university enjoyed a very good reputation, nation-wide. It was not just another state university. People came from great distances to the University of New Hampshire. The leaders of the university were determined to try to maintain that reputation. As I said, the university faced a budget squeeze.

The University of New Hampshire was also a place attended by the daughters of New Hampshire families. If people had an outstanding son, and if they had the money, they tried to send him to a top university, such as Dartmouth, Harvard, or Princeton. However, daughters were more generally sent to the University of New Hampshire. In extreme cases you found young women who were really going through hard times, sometimes even sleeping in cars, and really scratching out a bare existence while attending the university. These young women were plucky and feisty. The women's liberation movement was beginning to have its effect there. I found these young women were dedicated students and very serious people.

I found that the writing skills of these young people were less developed than I had hoped to find. It really wasn't my business, but there were times when, either in my Arab/Israeli or my China course, I would say, "Look, in every day, real terms, if you young people really want to get a job, you have to be able to write a resume, communicate using decent punctuation, write a decent essay, and really get your point across. If you want a decent job, you'd better sharpen your writing skills." I would tell them, and here Al Linden would chime in, telling them to shape up, because this was very important.

Another interesting feature was that from this area I could get around in New Hampshire. My mother was living in the inland area of New Hampshire. I could go to Maine. I would drive up to Portland and catch a ferry to Nova Scotia, Canada, and drive down to Boston and check in with my old China professors, including John K. Fairbank at Harvard and others. I could attend workshops, seminars, and so forth. At the same time I could catch up with current, American life.

Another thing happened in this respect, which was a surprising development for me. That is, the President of the University of New Hampshire, an outstanding lady scientist, resigned to become President of Brandeis University. The job hunt for a new President opened up. I found this, of course, very interesting, but it became even more interesting when several members of the faculty approached me separately and asked whether they could put up my name as a possible candidate for the office of President of the University

of New Hampshire. I was deeply flattered by these people, who came to me individually. I said that this was an honor, but there was obviously no chance of my being appointed. As the search for the replacement of the President opened, I guess that the field included somewhere between 250 and 300 names. As time went on, somehow the field narrowed, but my name stayed on the list. Later on, as I was leaving the University of New Hampshire, the choice became very serious, as the list really narrowed down.

In about April, 1983, here I was at the end of a wonderful academic year. However, in Foreign Service terms I was off the radar scope, if you will. Not completely, though. On a few occasions I would get a call from Personnel in the State Department, asking me if I would be willing to have my name put up for the position of ambassador to Zimbabwe, or some other African post. I didn't wait a second. I said, "Sure." I would take anything that I could get in the way of an ambassadorship.

One day I came back from a university workshop, and my wife Helen said to me: "You've had a call from a Paul Wolfowitz, the new Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs." I quickly called him. I had met Paul briefly in 1981, when I was DCM [deputy chief of mission] in Tel Aviv during consultations in Washington. He was the Director of Policy Planning in the Department of State at the time. Now he said to me: "I would like to talk to you about becoming my Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in this bureau. Would you come on down to Washington?" I said, "Sure."

I flew down to Washington, and Paul and I spent a very intensive day together. As a new Assistant Secretary under Secretary George Shultz, he was a very intense and active player. However, in the course of his other duties we managed to spend an active day together. We had lunch over at the Matuba Restaurant on Columbia Pike in Arlington. He put me on the plane at the end of the day and said, "I want you for this job." I said, "Yes," and flew back to New Hampshire. I told Helen that we were going to Washington.

At the time Tom Shoesmith was Wolfowitz's principal deputy assistant secretary. I told Wolfowitz that one of my conditions was that he would have to get Tom Shoesmith a "decent ambassadorship." Paul hadn't yet found this ambassadorship for Shoesmith, so there was a bit of jockeying around. He asked me whether I would come on board and maybe take a side office. I said, "No, Paul. Get Tom his ambassadorship, and then I will come into the office." I felt that I had to have that assurance. I reminded Wolfowitz that Tom Shoesmith broke me in as a passport officer in Hong Kong, way back in 1957. Both of us worked for Ed Reaves, the Head of the Passport Unit, but Tom Shoesmith was senior to me in age and experience. I felt a very special kinship with Tom. Here he was on the verge of leaving the bureau, and I wanted to make very sure that things were managed the right way. So there was a little tension there which had to be resolved.

That also led to another side arrangement that before formally assuming my new position, I would go out to East Asia and the Pacific Islands as a USIA [United States Information Agency] speaker, a grantee. This would give me a chance to go out and lecture and meet officials, talk with local ambassadors, and so forth. In other words, get a picture of the lay

of the land. On the division of responsibility in the bureau, the deal was that I would in the beginning I would handle Chinese and Japanese affairs to start with. These were very large portfolios. However, later I would also handle Australia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific, as well China. I had never been to many of these places, although I had served in Southeast Asia. I had never been to Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and the South Pacific islands. So I would now visit those areas, then return to replace Tom Shoemith.

We had another understanding that on this trip I would go to Taiwan, very quietly. I was not billed as a grantee but made an unpublicized side trip from Hong Kong over to Taiwan, because we were still under very strong restrictions as far as officials going to Taiwan were concerned. Obviously, I was about to become principal deputy assistant secretary, and that was much too rich for the then existing guidelines on visits by American officials to Taiwan.

So off I went to East Asia, on an itinerary which took me to CINCPAC [Office of the Commander in Chief, Pacific] to meet the commander there, to visit the East-West Center, and talk with our POLAD [Political Adviser]. From Hawaii I went to American Samoa [an “unincorporated American Territory”] to meet the leaders there. From American Samoa I went to Western Samoa, an independent country, where we had Peace Corps Volunteers. There was a strong, residual presence of New Zealanders there, since Western Samoa had been a German colony until the end of World War I. It then became a New Zealand trusteeship under the League of Nations in the 1920s.

I visited Fiji, which was an important country for me, as I had been in Israel. Fiji provided two battalions, one of them for the UNIFIL [United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon] and the other one for the multilateral forces in the Sinai area. I met with the Fijian Prime Minister, Ratu Mara, who provided these forces to the UN and the multilateral force in the Sinai. Our ambassador to Fiji was a conservative, Far Right Republican. I then went down to New Zealand, where we had a Reagan political ambassador, Malcolm Brown, a former cattleman from California. Then I went over to Canberra, Australia, and also visited Sydney and Melbourne. In Canberra we had another Reagan political appointee. He'd been the biggest Cadillac dealer in Southern California and a close friend of Ronald Reagan. He had wanted to become Secretary of the Navy. However, this didn't quite work out, so he was appointed ambassador to Australia.

I went up to Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. We had no ambassador to the Solomon Islands. Our relations there were handled by our ambassador to New Guinea. I supported the idea that we should have a separate embassy in the Solomon Islands.

I also made a lightning visit to Bangkok, where the ambassador was none other than John Gunther Dean, who had been ambassador to Lebanon. I had never met him previously, but now I met him “in the flesh,” as it were. Dean's DCM was J. Stapleton Roy [later ambassador to China and to Indonesia]. I then went over to Burma, which now calls itself Myanmar. No senior American official had been to Burma in years. I went down to Kuala

Lumpur, Malaysia, and to Singapore. I made a short visit over to my old haunts in Borneo, including Kuching, Sarawak, Brunei, and Sabah. From there I visited Manila, then returned to Washington. This was a fairly heavy schedule, a combination of lectures and meetings with high officials and, of course, with our ambassadors.

Q: Had you been officially appointed as principal deputy assistant secretary at this point?

BROWN: It had been announced that I was to be appointed to that position. So here was a chance for our posts to meet the new, principal deputy assistant secretary who was going to deal with these portfolios. I had very nice entree, with receptions and so forth. It was a fascinating trip.

I got back to Washington, and a variety of things hit me. One of them was Michael Deaver. A second incident was notice from the authorities up in New Hampshire that the list of possible candidates for the position of President of the University of New Hampshire had really narrowed, and I was now on a short list for this position. Soon after I had returned and been installed as principal deputy assistant secretary of State, the word came that I was to get on a plane with Michael Deaver, who was going to go out and do the advance work for the visits of President Reagan to the Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand, a stop in Hong Kong, and then up to Tokyo and Seoul, South Korea. President Reagan was going to visit the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Japan, and South Korea. A major trip, indeed!

So I reported over to Michael Deaver, got on his aircraft, and off we went to CINCPAC in Honolulu. From there we stopped off in Guam because, in those days, the range of the Boeing 707 which we used was such that you overnighted in Honolulu and then in Guam. We freshened up there and then flew to Manila, Jakarta, Bangkok Hong Kong, Tokyo and Seoul. This trip was a fascinating eye opener on Presidential trips and the preparations for them. As you know, Michael Deaver had a small but crucially located office right next to the Oval Office of the President. He was the show maker for President and Mrs. Reagan.

Deaver had a small entourage of White House officials to help him with all of these arrangements. These were people who had experience in setting up Presidential visits. Well, for a visit arranged by Michael Deaver, the red carpet really rolled out. No matter where we put down, Deaver used these facilities to full advantage. In terms of accommodations it was impressive in every sense of the word, including preparations, introductions, entree, and so forth.

We flew to Manila. There was already a lot of trouble in the Philippines over the Marcos regime. Of course, President Marcos and President Reagan were already on very good, personal terms.

Q: This was after the assassination of Ninoy Aquino?

BROWN: No, before. The assassination was to come shortly thereafter. So there was red carpet treatment there, and the Presidential advance party was wined and dined. A magnificent program for the Reagan visit was discussed.

Then we flew to Jakarta. Similarly, the Indonesians were delighted that President and Mrs. Reagan were coming for a visit. Indonesian President Suharto's people gave us a wonderful show. John Holdridge, the former Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs and Paul Wolfowitz's predecessor, was now the American ambassador to Indonesia. Holdridge was a man of great background and prestige within the Foreign Service.

After this, we flew to Thailand, and, we were informed that the King of Thailand had ordered that the Royal Palace should be redecorated for the Reagan visit. The Reagans were to be housed in the King and Queen's residential quarters adjoining the Royal Palace, which was now all aglitter. Our ambassador to Thailand, John Gunther Dean, really knew how to lay it on. This was to be a really royal visit to Thailand.

Then we flew to Hong Kong. Because of the Vietnam situation, you still couldn't overfly Vietnam. You had to fly a circuitous route around it, for security reasons, and that meant that we would have to stop in Hong Kong to refuel. This meant that the Hong Kong authorities had to be brought into the picture.

We then flew to Tokyo, where the Japanese really laid it on. Michael Deaver was considering all kinds of options for further stops. In this respect, this included a possible stop at the ancient Japanese capital of Kyoto [West of Tokyo and near Kobe and Osaka]. In the interest of Japanese protocol, politics, and symbolism the Japanese wanted to have President Reagan visit not only Tokyo but Kyoto as well. Kyoto is a tremendous, metropolitan area near Osaka and Kobe. It is also a site of great, historical interest, including ancient temples, of which Michael Deaver was aware. So we went over to Kyoto. The local authorities were just falling over us in hopes that Deaver would have President Reagan visit Kyoto, as well as Tokyo.

Then we flew over to Seoul, South Korea. Again, we were given the red carpet treatment. There were discussions of President Reagan's itinerary, to include the possibility of a front-line visit to the Demilitarized Zone [on the border between North and South Korea]. A great deal of symbolism would be involved with that.

If I just may digress to describe one particular site, during the visit to the Demilitarized Zone, I kept quiet, because the route took us past the area where I had served as a Marine Corps lieutenant, an artillery officer. Indeed, my battery was positioned South of the Imjim River. The road actually took us past places which, after some concentration, I could now recognize, even though the road we took was now asphalted, and a civilian population was there, as opposed to the scene that I had lived in.

Then we crossed a bridge over the Imjim River, which had been rebuilt. We arrived in the

Demilitarized Zone and were met by a Brigadier General, who was an African-American. He made an outstanding presentation. We were introduced all around and met with some of the troops and with young officers. Of course, security considerations were very serious here. However, we were taken to a variety of sites where President Reagan would be able to look out at the Demilitarized Zone.

At the end of this visit the General said that he had one other place that he wanted us to see. We went up in a motorcade to the back side of a prominent, small mountain or high hill. We got out of the cars and cut through the southern side of the hill into a bunker on the northern side of the hill, where there was a tremendous, panoramic view of the Demilitarized Zone and the Panmunjom area. Waiting for us were five South Korean generals, a dozen colonels and so forth. There was a topographical panorama laid out and a lecture on what it all meant. Through the telescope you could see a huge figure of Kim Il Sung [North Korean leader] and hear the North Korean propaganda coming over loudspeakers. We could see where great battles had been fought, and all of that.

As we were leaving this site, I asked who was the commanding officer of the site itself. He was a Korean colonel. I took him to one side and said, "I'm delighted to tell you that I lived here in this bunker 30 years ago. My fire team built it." Since my team, before I arrived, had taken a direct hit, the second bunker we built was a really secure, underground position, strengthened with huge, wooden beams and packed earth. Really, this was a great experience. I still hark back to it. Of course, the colonel was stunned.

Well, we flew back all the way, non-stop, from South Korea to the big island of Hawaii. Deaver was toying with the idea of having President Reagan stay at a large hotel owned by the Rockefellers, the Mauna Kea Beach Hotel on the big island of Hawaii, on the side facing the volcano of Mauna Loa. It is a magnificent hotel and setting. Deaver knew how to pick his spots. So we luxuriated there and then flew back to Washington. So I really had a most unusual introduction to being Paul Wolfowitz's principal deputy assistant secretary of State.

Let me go into what being principal deputy assistant secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific, that is, EAP, involved, under the relatively new Assistant Secretary of State, Paul Wolfowitz. It was an extraordinary experience. I served under him in that capacity for two years until I went out to be ambassador to Thailand in 1985.

Q: Would you give some background about Paul Wolfowitz?

BROWN: Yes. He was and is a tremendous intellect. He already brought to this job considerable Washington experience. Paul was a member of the Senator "Scoop" Jackson group, people who clustered around or were followers of Scoop Jackson. Jackson was a Democratic Senator from the State of Washington. He was a man who had a "liberal" domestic outlook but was a very strong conservative in his outlook on foreign policy. Jackson and his supporters were intensely involved in the Cold War atmosphere of American politics. He very much believed in a strong U.S. military security posture, vis-

a-vis the Soviet Union. The Senator was heavily involved in such things as the Jackson-Vanik Amendment [which tied U.S. assistance to the Soviet Union to the Soviets' allowing Jews from the Soviet Union to emigrate to Israel] and human rights issues in that respect. He was a very strong supporter of the U.S. military establishment.

Jackson was willing to play the game on Communist China, in the great game involving the Soviet Union. He was a very strong supporter and believer in NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] in the Cold War atmosphere. He was a strong supporter of Israel and a strong, U.S. presence in the Middle East, with a Cold War, if you will, overlay, which Secretary of State Al Haig brought into the Reagan administration. This same outlook was later adopted, although modulated to some extent, by Secretary of State George Shultz.

In that Scoop Jackson group were such other figures as Elliot Abrams, who became Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs and became embroiled in many an issue in that area of the world, including the Contra affair. [Addendum: Elliot Abrams later joined the NSC staff under President George W. Bush and recruited me to lead a delegation to China in May, 2002 on the issue of UNFPA involvement with China's population control program. See the addendum at the end of this series.] Also involved in this group was Jeanne Kirkpatrick, who became our ambassador to the United Nations. Another figure in this group was Richard Perle, a key player over at the Pentagon.

Q: Perle was also called the "Prince of Darkness" because of the relatively pessimistic view he took of many issues. [Laughter]

BROWN: You said it, I didn't. He was an important player in the Department of Defense at the time. These were people who had thrown their lot in with the Reagan administration on foreign policy issues. They were formidable people and were tightly linked together.

In addition, Paul Wolfowitz had a variety of other links in Congress and elsewhere on the Washington scene. This was fascinating to me, shall we say, as a "line officer" in the Foreign Service, coming back from the field, after my brief, academic exposure at the University of New Hampshire.

Paul had inherited from his predecessor as assistant secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, John Holdridge, other people as deputy assistant secretaries. Understandably, Paul Wolfowitz wanted to install a new team. His choice of me was a fascinating business. It somewhat baffled me, but I was delighted. As I may have indicated in previous remarks, a key to this selection was none other than Jim Roche, whom I had met when he was on Senator Bradley's delegation to China and who was Paul Wolfowitz's deputy in the Office of Policy Planning, when Al Haig was Secretary of State. Then Roche went out to the private sector with Northrop Aircraft, now Northrop-Grumman Aircraft. However, Roche continued to be very much involved in politics, and especially security matters. I found out that Jim Roche had cited me as a likely candidate

for Paul Wolfowitz to consider. That is curious because it was significantly based on my Middle East experience, whereas I thought that I was being hired primarily because of my East Asian credentials.

Q: Did you feel that there was a litmus test being applied because you were tough on the communists, or something like that?

BROWN: Well, they had their book on me...

Q: I mean that anybody who had served in Moscow was pretty well inoculated with an anti-communist attitude.

BROWN: I had a strong attitude on this subject.

The second thing about the relationship between Paul Wolfowitz and me was that this was the first time in my Foreign Service career that I worked directly under a much younger man, often for long hours every day. At this time I was now just under 53. Paul Wolfowitz was in his late 30s or early 40s. He was a dynamic individual, in every sense of the word. Sometimes he worked day and night. I always considered that I had a good constitution and I was happy to work long hours, but this was really something.

We now had a new Secretary of State, George Shultz. Paul Wolfowitz had been appointed Director of Policy Planning by Secretary Al Haig. Then, I found out later, when John Holdridge went out to Jakarta to be ambassador, Paul lobbied heavily with Haig and Shultz to replace Holdridge as Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, and he got this appointment.

In work terms, this meant that I was usually in the office by 7:30 AM. I firmly believed that, as principal deputy assistant secretary, I should be available in my office throughout the assistant secretary's work day. Paul was the kind of guy who usually worked until 8:00 PM. His work style was so intensive that, often enough, my best time to talk to him was when I would take one of his briefcases and ride down the elevator to his car at 8:00 or 8:30 PM. I would "get my licks in" at that time. Not that I didn't have access to him, as my office was next to his. I normally had access to him day and night. However, we were both so busy that I treasured these moments when I had him alone, as it were. So, very often I would walk him down to his car.

Paul was then so intensely involved in his work that sometimes he would come back to the office late at night. Well, putting him in his car at 8:00 or 8:30 PM was enough for me. Paul would sometimes go home, have a quick meal, and come back to work till all hours of the night.

He was part of a larger team which was fascinating, and in which I have dwelt ever since. This team consisted of Paul Wolfowitz; Richard Armitage, who was an Assistant Secretary of Defense under Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger; and Gaston Sigur,

the NSC [National Security Council] staffer for Asia and the Pacific.

Regarding Armitage, he was *primus inter pares* [first among equals] among people of equal ability. Compared to other assistant secretaries of Defense, I would say that Armitage had such a relationship with Weinberger that he was senior to the others, in power terms, if you will.

I can remember being in Armitage's office one day. The phone was ringing and all kinds of decisions were being made. On occasion, you would hear the kind of conversation which went this way: "Yes, sir," meaning that he was replying to Secretary Weinberger. "Sir? Yes, done!" Then he would hang up the phone. That meant that whatever had been communicated to Armitage, he had given his caller, whether it was the Secretary of Defense, the White House, or whoever it was, an assurance that whatever had been raised with him would be taken care of. That was it. And by God, it was done, with no if's, ands, or buts. He was that kind of action officer.

Gaston Sigur was a Republican academic. He had come up via the academic route. He had also come up the Republican route. He had thrown his lot in with Governor Ronald Reagan as an academic supporter of Reagan as candidate for the Presidency. Sigur was rewarded with this very important post as the Asian and Pacific Affairs staffer in the Reagan White House.

These three people, and their deputies: I as deputy to Wolfowitz, Jim Kelly as deputy to Armitage, and David Laux, as deputy to Sigur, met and communicated with each other regularly. We met on Monday afternoons in Wolfowitz's office. This was called the "Monday Informal" meeting. It was a very limited meeting. A senior CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] representative was also present at these meetings, an action officer who could get things done. At these meetings real policy, as well as operational issues, would be discussed, debated, and decided. As others in the Department of State learned of our existence and sensed the importance of what was being decided, they would try to attend these meetings, but we excluded them. For example, INR [Bureau of Intelligence Research] would like to have had a representative at these meetings. The functional bureaus [such as the Bureau of Economic Affairs, the Bureau of Consular Affairs, the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, and so forth] also wanted to have a representative at these meetings.

We were exclusive. These meetings were no nonsense affairs. We wanted to get things done, and that remained the basis of these meetings. There was an Air Force General, Lieutenant General Jack Chain, the new Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs, was invited to attend. He was important as we got into political-military issues. The Bureau of Political-Military Affairs was a key player in arms decisions in those days.

The discussions among these people were intimate. The follow-on was often handled by telephone. The three deputies (Jim Kelly, David Laux and I) would contact each other by telephone to make sure that the decisions made at those Monday afternoon meetings were

implemented. During my two-year tenure as principal deputy assistant secretary of State we really worked as a team on the momentous issues that came up in our field. We didn't have that kind of backbiting and infighting that was so crippling in other areas of the Department and other agencies which lacked this kind of coordinating mechanism. It was really, and it remains, my idea of the best arrangement possible. Pick your team at the White House, Department of State, and Department of Defense level. Pick the team members carefully, because this team has to cope with all of the cross-currents going on elsewhere in Washington, within State, Defense, the White House, and within Congress, which are often at odds with each other.

Q: Did you come across evidence of the strained relationship between Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger and Secretary of State George Shultz?

BROWN: Sure.

Q: In a way this arrangement by-passed this strained relationship.

BROWN: It by-passed it, and so this coordinating arrangement was especially useful in view of that increasingly strained relationship between Weinberger and Shultz. As you'll see in his book, Shultz experienced other, major strains with people like Judge Clark [White House Chief of Staff under President Reagan] and Michael Deaver at the White House and other players there.

Q: There were also problems with White Chief of Staff Donald Regan.

BROWN: Donald Regan and Secretary of the Treasury Edwin Meese, and others. That is the way Washington operates. It was not just George Shultz. It was very much the way Washington works. So this coordinating mechanism, if you will, which helped to bypass this tension, was tremendously useful. In medical terms, the blood kept flowing, and it flowed the right way.

Now, there were tremendous inner and intra political conflicts going on within the government. The Congressional scene was really something. Therefore, Paul Wolfowitz, Armitage, and Gaston Sigur had their special, Congressional relationships as well. These relationships crossed boundaries.

For example, Paul Wolfowitz would be dealing with people like Senator Jesse Helms [Republican, North Carolina], on the one hand, and Congressman Steve Solarz [Democrat, New York], way over on the other side of the political spectrum, at the same time. Solarz was the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Asia of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. He was a key player. Paul also had available, if you will, an Israeli Middle Eastern side channel to Congressman Solarz as well, let alone socially and otherwise. Armitage had his own Congressional contacts, in both the House and the Senate and commitments that he could deliver, on behalf of Secretary Weinberger. And so did Gaston Sigur.

It was really something to see Paul Wolfowitz work with Congress. We didn't ignore H [Bureau of Congressional Affairs]. However, Paul Wolfowitz wasn't going to sit around and wait for H to work in its traditional, time-consuming style. Paul was on the phone himself to the relevant Congressman or Senator or their key staffers, and so forth. It was a wonder to behold and a great educational experience for me to observe Paul, together with Rich Armitage and Gaston Sigur, at work.

Paul Wolfowitz had the ear of George Shultz, a very busy man. Paul enjoyed Shultz's confidence. Of course, I had a somewhat special relationship with Charley Hill, Shultz's right hand man. Although I had worked with him on the Middle Eastern circuit, I knew that Charley had some Asian exposure, including Vietnam, as well. That was comforting to know.

Apart from this we had Jack Chain, a bona fide Air Force General and formerly a hot shot fighter pilot. He had come over to the State Department as a Major General and, because he was appointed Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs, he was promoted to Lieutenant General. That was very important as far as Jack's connections with the uniformed services were concerned.

Now, let's talk about some of the issues we were faced with.

Q: Okay, we're going to talk about issues. In the first place, you were there in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs as principal deputy assistant secretary from when to when?

BROWN: I was there from the summer of 1983 to the summer of 1985. I arrived in Bangkok as ambassador in June, 1985. Now, as background, let's talk about some of the issues of the period.

Let's start with China. In 1981 U.S. relations with Beijing had deteriorated to the point that we had to have Presidential involvement over the Taiwan arms issue. John Holdridge was the Assistant Secretary for East Asia and Pacific Affairs. You'll find it discussed in Holdridge's book, which I think is called, Crossing the Divide. You'll also find it discussed in George Shultz's book. I'm sure that there are several other books on this period, one of which I mentioned previously to you, but I've forgotten the name of it.

Q: Is it called, About Face?

BROWN: Yes. I would give you those three books as points of reference.

Q: About Face is by Jim Lilley [former ambassador to Korea]. I'm reading that now.

[Actually the author is James Mann]

BROWN: Those three books are very important contributions on the background of this period. Therefore, I won't go into it in great detail. I wasn't involved in East Asia at the time. I was DCM [deputy chief of mission] in Israel, but there was an important side issue at the time.

You go back to the terms and understandings, written and oral, of the Taiwan Relations Act. You get into our mood, at the time the Taiwan Relations Act was passed in 1979, and the mood under President Reagan, above all. We were determined to develop good relations with China on a strategic basis, involving the great game with the Soviet Union. We wanted increased trade with China and cultural and educational exchange, on the one hand. At the same time, within the context of Reagan's philosophy and the spirit as well as the letter of the Taiwan Relations Act, we were determined to maintain and enhance our unofficial relationship with Taiwan. We sought to ensure that confidence would be maintained on Taiwan, trade and commerce with us and with other countries would expand, and the people of Taiwan would feel secure.

This was opposed to Beijing's determination that, sooner or later, Taiwan was to be liberated by one means or another and rejoined to the embrace of the great motherland of China. Throughout this whole period you have a clash between U.S. and Beijing interests. One of the focal points of many of the Chinese complaints was that the U.S. was violating the spirit of the Shanghai Communique and the whole relationship with China by selling arms to Taiwan of significant, technical quality, in large amounts. Meanwhile, the Chinese failed to see adequate progress being made in bringing the Taiwanese to heel.

This situation escalated into a crisis in 1981, the outcome of which was United States-China Joint Communique (on Arms Sales), August 17, 1982. [For the text see John Holdridge, Crossing the Divide, Appendix C, pp. 277-279.] This was the period when John Holdridge was Assistant Secretary of EAP and Al Haig was Secretary of State, until his departure in June, 1982. This communique was a very important development. We stated in the communique that "arms sales to Taiwan will not exceed, either in qualitative or in quantitative terms, the level or those supplied in recent years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and China." The Chinese took this as immediately capping our arms sales to Taiwan quantitatively and qualitatively. There was no limit expressed in dollars and cents, but it was expressed in terms of a U.S. intention "to reduce gradually its sales of arms to Taiwan, leading over a period of time to a final resolution."

Beijing then pocketed this communique and pressed for the most rigorous implementation of it. As I arrived in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs [EAP], we were faced with this problem. Taiwan in its view needed a great deal in terms of arms, both in quantity and in quality. For, during this period, we were seeing the beginnings of the significant modernization of the People's Liberation Army [PLA] of China, including the Chinese Air Force and Navy as well. We saw China, which had gone through the primitive stages of nuclear weaponry and so forth, pushing to develop these weapons further. It had a long way to go, but it was determined to go that way. So this was a policy

dilemma. As I arrived in EAP, it was apparent that the trio of Wolfowitz, Armitage and Sigur was basically very unhappy with the deal set out in the communique of August, 1982. They were determined that it be managed properly. The Chinese were constantly pressing us for statements, facts, and figures, and complaining about the implementation of the communique.

Meanwhile, our team in EAP canvassed the needs of Taiwan, stripping away the rhetoric of Taiwan and Beijing. In our national interest we determined that Taiwan still needed a very significant amount of arms, both in quantity as well as in quality. Of course, Taiwan had the means to pay for all of this and would have been delighted to pay for more.

At the working bureaucratic level we had inherited strict guidelines on these arms sales to Taiwan. For instance, "Thou shalt not sell an upgraded aircraft to Taiwan." It was during the period when John Holdridge was Assistant Secretary of EAP that we decided that we would not sell to Taiwan the F-X or the F-20, upgraded versions of the Northrop F-5-E fighter planes which they already had. The F-5E was a lighter aircraft which had now been significantly superseded by F-15s and F-16s. However, various aircraft manufacturers were marketing something called the F-X or the F-20, and Taiwan was keenly interested in them. As I arrived in EAP, Taiwan had been told: "Sorry, you're not going to get it." So this posed a big problem, because Beijing was clearly working to upgrade the capabilities of its Air Force, Navy, and Army. The indications were that these improvements were intended to make it possible to strike Taiwan.

So we considered this matter further, and tremendous debates raged within the Washington agencies on this subject. At these Monday afternoon sessions, of which I have already spoken, we knew that we were right. However, other elements of the State Department thought that we were wrong and were strongly opposed to our views. They had the right to present their positions to the Secretary of State and they did. The same debate was taking place elsewhere in Washington, including in Congress and in the academic communities.

However, on a few occasions while the debate was particularly hot, Gaston Sigur would within the Monday Informal meeting context refer to a piece of paper. I saw but never read this piece of paper. He never passed it over to me to read the text of it. Gaston would read from this piece of paper, which was supposedly President Reagan's interpretation of the guidelines on the meaning of the August, 1982, Communique. This piece of paper contained a statement President Reagan had decided that a balance between Beijing and Taiwan would be maintained. If Beijing's forces, in terms of quantity and quality, pulled ahead of Taiwan's forces, the U.S. would do what was necessary to maintain a suitable balance in terms of Taiwan's ability to defend itself.

As I say, Gaston never passed out the text of this piece of paper. I can't remember whether it was typed or hand-written. I rather suspect that he had sat down, one on one, with President Reagan, or in a very small group with the President, and had taken down, after debate in White House circles, what the President had decided. So while the debate raged

elsewhere on the benefits, pros and cons of this issue, we knew, in this core group, what the President had decided. We knew that we were doing the right thing. Now, this terminology had to be dressed up, massaged, and looked at very carefully, because there were other views to be considered here, including the overall relationship with Beijing. [Addendum: See James Mann, About Face, pp. 127-128 wherein the author, based on interviews with Armitage, Lilley and Carl Ford, states that shortly after the August 17 Communique, Reagan dictated a one-page memo stating that the U.S. would restrict arms sales to Taiwan so long as the balance of military power between China and Taiwan was preserved. If China upgraded its military capabilities, the United states would help Taiwan to match those improvements.]

In that same connection, there were other issues which were very secret at the time, but which are now out in print. If you'll refer to public remarks on the record by Jim Lilley, Jim was then the Director of AIT [American Institute on Taiwan]. He had a CIA background. He later succeeded me in EAP. He was a close friend of George Bush, the elder. I think that he retired from CIA did some work in the private sector and then became the Director of AIT, Taipei. As of 1981 he was the man who had to deliver the message to Taiwan: "Sorry, you're not going to get the F-X or the F-20." In recent years Jim has written his memoirs and has spoken and written in public on numerous occasions. He has spoken of the fact that we had special monitoring stations covering Soviet missile launches in China. These were very secret at the time. They were jointly manned by our specialists and Chinese specialists.

You should remember that in the background to all of this the Chinese still had a phobia about the "Great Bear" [that is, the Soviet Union]. We are talking now about the early 1980s. The Soviet Union still looked mighty powerful and threatening from a Chinese perspective. Therefore, playing on this circuit, we were dangling before the Chinese the possibility of limited arms arrangements with them. For instance, the Chinese had a fighter-bomber deployed up in Manchuria which was largely grounded and needed a very significant upgrade. In discussions with the Chinese we conveyed that we would be willing, on a limited basis, to look into the upgrading of these Chinese aircraft within limits. Naturally, the Chinese were plugging for the highest limits, but we were looking at the matter very carefully.

Another issue was this or that artillery shell, or this or that type of Navy equipment, such as a torpedo, or naval armaments of one kind or another. So we were engaged in discussions with the Chinese, in light of the fact that we were discussing equipment for Taiwan. Eventually, out of this came the first visits of senior Chinese military officers to the U.S. This included, later on, the visit of Jiang Aiping, the Chinese Minister of Defense. He was an older man who had a limp. Another visitor was the commander of the Chinese Navy. These were startling visits, after the Korean War. They were startling in view of the fact that these gentlemen visited the U.S. at all. They carried a tremendous amount of baggage with them as they came to the United States.

I can remember being in a very small group with Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger

and Chinese Defense Minister Jiang Aiping as Weinberger was laying out our missile programs and tests and the fact that the Soviets were monitoring our missile launchings near Kwajalein and elsewhere in the Pacific Ocean area. Weinberger was letting the Chinese in on very significant developments and prospects for mutual cooperation. And Jiang Aiping and his associates were lapping this up.

So the whole China question was a major issue, and this was part of my portfolio. Academically, I already had not only a Chinese background, but a Japanese background as well. For a while I carried China and Japan but shunted responsibility for Japan as Paul Wolfowitz got a new deputy assistant secretary for Japan. So I shed responsibility for Japan and had another one added, which was to cover Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands.

Q: I'd like to ask you something. I think that I've alluded to it before on China. Here you were, sort of at the heart of the machine. It's come up today, when we're having trouble with China. It seems to me that on the American political scene, both in Congress, the media, and all of that, somehow we end up by allowing the Chinese still to appear to be the Middle Kingdom. We always seem to go to them. This grates on me, frankly, and I'd like to get your impression of this.

BROWN: Well, we'll finish this section shortly because of time considerations. However, let me address that issue head on because, I can assure you, that this team, this trio [Wolfowitz, Armitage, and Sigur] was determined that we weren't going to play that game with China. We were going to play with China but we weren't going to play the kow tow, on your knees, Middle Kingdom, Lord Macartney visit to Beijing of 1690 or something like that. We were going to go into this matter of relations with China clear eyed and with a very clear, conceptual approach to this. You have to remember that other people within the Reagan administration were “ga ga” about China.

Q: It's like being tossed into Hollywood. They were awash with...

BROWN: You have to remember that, in this regard, as part of the background, when I made the first or second visit to East Asia with Michael Deaver, he had in his mind an extension of the Reagan itinerary that I've laid out. Under this program, President Reagan would go to China, in addition to the other destinations I have mentioned.

Now, Judge Clark, after the first visit to East Asia with Michael Deaver, heard about this possibility from me. Somehow, in the White House, I was intercepted as I was moving from one place to another. I think that it was Dick Childress who hauled me into Judge Clark's office. Dick was a Colonel on the White House staff. This was at the height of the Clark-Deaver controversy.

Clark asked me: “Where are you going” on this visit with President Reagan. I said this and that place, “and maybe to China.” Clark went through the roof, picked up the phone and shouted on it to Deaver: “You're not going to China! This hasn't been cleared with

me!"] I was in the middle of fierce, White House rivalries. I tell you, it's unbelievable how hot these can get at times.

So very clearly in Deaver's mind was the very real idea that he was going to propose that President Reagan make a great, "earth shaking, melodramatic visit to China." Whether this was going to come as an add on to the itinerary that I've already mentioned or separate from it was another question. In the end, other matters intervened.

However, it is true that there were elements in Washington who were going "ga ga," feeling the "Middle Kingdom syndrome," and so forth. However, this team of Wolfowitz, Armitage and Sigur was determined to keep this whole relationship with China on a more nearly normal, balanced basis, bearing in mind that China needed us more than we needed China in the great game with the Soviet Union. It was a very tricky operation to do this, at times.

Before I break, I want to give you another issue, among many others. Normally, the Australia-New Zealand portfolio was a rather sleepy one in EAP. I don't wish to denigrate in any way the wonderful work that career Foreign Service officers had done, both at post and at the deputy assistant secretary level and the desk level in this regard. However, let's face it. Relations with Australia and New Zealand usually amounted to emphasizing "hands across the sea," ANZUS [Australia, New Zealand, and the U.S. treaty arrangement], and so forth. Well, as I came aboard in EAP, things were changing. Suddenly, dealing with Australia and New Zealand became a very hot portfolio.

Traditionally, New Zealand had been a small but critical player in the ANZUS relationship. ANZUS meetings were held annually at the Secretary of State/Foreign Minister level. Meetings would be held in Australia one year, in New Zealand the next year, and in the U.S. the third year. A formal communique would be issued, usually emphasizing the Soviet threat. Suddenly, we were faced with the phenomenon of a challenge by the opposition Labour Party in New Zealand, not only to the New Zealand Government, but to the whole idea of the visit of nuclear capable U.S. Navy ships to New Zealand.

There was some history behind this issue. The Greens in New Zealand, the anti-war element, had grown over the years, both within and outside the New Zealand Labour Party. They played on the nuclear phobia. There was a kind of mania on the nuclear issue in that part of the world. This was the case, not only in New Zealand, but in the small, Pacific Island territories as well. The very mention of nuclear conjured up the worst scares of runaway radiation and the destruction of these pristine, South Pacific shores. I used to joke, it seemed that even a radiated watch was enough to excite people.

The policy supported by the United States Navy and the United States Air Force at this time was that we would neither confirm nor deny that a B-52 bomber, an F-16 fighter, a cruiser, a destroyer or an aircraft carrier - in other words, any U.S. Navy ship or military aircraft - which was capable of carrying a nuclear weapon actually had such a weapon on

that aircraft or ship. This was a position followed on a worldwide basis. That position was written in stone.

The message to the Soviet Union or to any other country that was interested, was that any U.S. Navy vessel from a destroyer or larger, or any U.S. aircraft of the level of an F-15 or F-16 aircraft on up, is capable of carrying a nuclear weapon. We would neither confirm nor deny that it was actually doing this. So, in effect, we were saying: "Moscow, you can put that in your pipe and smoke it." This meant that not only submarines but surface ships making courtesy visits on the periphery, or anywhere they might be, were capable of carrying a nuclear weapon.

In addition, significant elements within the United States Navy, including submarines and certainly aircraft carriers, as well as certain other ships, were nuclear-powered. Now, the Greens in New Zealand, which had a following and in the New Zealand Labour Party, jumped into the issue. They said, "If we form a government, and we will eventually do so, no nuclear-capable vessel will be allowed to visit New Zealand." This struck at the very heart of our approach, not only to ANZUS, but worldwide ship and air visits.

Therefore, we had to be concerned, not only on the New Zealand front, but on the Australian and other fronts as well. The Australian aspect of the ANZUS relationship was far more important than the New Zealand aspect. Moreover we had to worry about the Japanese, the Danes, the Dutch, and God knows who else, in other words the shakier partners on this kind of an issue in Europe. That is, the little guys who felt that they might be blown to pieces in some untoward nuclear conflict in which they had so little to say. So in terms of principle and policy, what you might otherwise write off as a pimple on the posterior of progress, suddenly became a major issue.

In Australia we not only had this issue. We also had the issue of Joint Australian-American defense facilities. There were and there are in Australia facilities which have the ability to monitor the launch and flight of Soviet, or any other, missiles. As these missiles are launched, they produce a flame and heat and go into an arc over the earth. Those joint Australian-American facilities, using military security satellites, were extremely important. Back here in Washington in the Pentagon, and in our national security system generally, these facilities were important to the daily monitoring of Soviet missile flights and their nuclear-capable missiles.

However, the presence of these joint defense facilities in Australia, for the most part jointly manned by Australians and Americans, became a political issue in Australia. These were commonly referred to by some Australians as the "American bases." Well, they were jointly manned facilities. I once had to remind the then Prime Minister of Australia, Bob Hawke, of this when he referred to these facilities in my presence as the "American bases." I had to intervene and say, "Excuse me, Mr. Prime Minister, you mean the joint facilities." He said, "Oh, yes, the joint facilities."

This issue grew and grew and became politically significant at the time. For, as Secretary

of State George Shultz headed first to his annual meeting with the ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] countries, which was held on a floating basis among the ASEAN capitals, and then on to a scheduled ANZUS meeting in Wellington, the capital of New Zealand, Muldoon, the incumbent Prime Minister of New Zealand, called a snap election. As we were proceeding to the ASEAN capitals, the New Zealand election took place, and Muldoon was defeated. The New Zealand Labour Party, led by David Lange, which had an anti-nuclear platform, was elected, just as we were headed for our annual, ANZUS meeting in Wellington, of all places!

So Secretary Shultz, accompanied by Armitage, Sigur, Wolfowitz, and their deputies, including myself, plus the CINCPAC [Commander in Chief, Pacific] Admiral Crowe, who was traveling with us and who was very much concerned about this issue, were on the plane as we flew to Canberra, the Wellington. There was a divided Australian Government at the time. Within the ruling Labor Party at the time there had earlier, on strictly domestic grounds, been such a convulsion that, as the Australians ran into their national election campaign, the then nominal leader of the Australian Labor Party [ALP], Bill Hayden, was approached by his fellow stalwarts within the ALP and told: "Bill, under other circumstances you should be the Prime Minister of Australia. However, we can't win this election with you as party leader. We want you to step aside and yield your candidacy to Bob Hawke, because he can win the election for the ALP. However, you'll be made Foreign Minister in the new government." This was a position of significance, so, grinding his teeth, as it were, Hayden, who had many chips on his shoulder both domestically and otherwise, reluctantly stepped aside. Bob Hawke then became Prime Minister.

There was a palpable tension between Hawke and Hayden. They never traveled together, and there was a constant, ongoing battle between the supporters of Prime Minister Hawke and Foreign Minister Hayden. Well, in this crisis situation we were scheduled to land in Canberra, confer with the Australians, and then fly to New Zealand and have the ANZUS meeting there. By a special arrangement, when we landed in Canberra, Shultz drove directly to the Prime Minister's residence and had a one on one meeting with him. The rest of us tagged along and caught up with Secretary Shultz later. We met with Foreign Minister Bill Hayden in the livingroom outside the inner sanctum of the Prime Minister's residence. I had to hold Hayden's hand while Prime Minister Hawke and Secretary Shultz were inside, settling how to handle this crisis within ANZUS.

Then they came out, and we had dinner together. Bill Hayden was just burning. A nice, affable dinner was going on, but he didn't have any idea of what Secretary Shultz and Prime Minister Hawke had decided. Then Shultz and we left the Prime Minister's residence, boarded the plane, and flew to Wellington, New Zealand. This happened in July, 1984.

In fact, we flew through a major winter storm which was so strong that we had to fly to a New Zealand Air Force base, board a New Zealand military aircraft and continue the trip to Wellington, with winds blowing across the runway at 60 miles per hour, as well as

snow.

That night I found myself invited, on an urgent basis, by the New Zealand Permanent Secretary of Foreign Affairs, to meet with me and our Australian counterpart. This was the gist of the conversation. He began: "Gentlemen, welcome. I am instructed to inform you that an election has been held in New Zealand, and the opposition Labour Party has won. So we are now in a caretaker situation. We are expected to prepare a communique while you are here. You all know the position of the outgoing Prime Minister and that of his government, which is business as usual. In other words, the outgoing Government had prepared the traditional ANZUS communique. However, let's face reality. We all know the new Prime Minister-elect's policy on such things as visits by U.S. Navy nuclear-powered ships. So bearing in mind that reality, I suggest that we now proceed to prepare a communique on the basis of a new draft, which I brought along with me. It is prepared on an ad referendum basis."

The Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs people at this same meeting clearly felt that we had to face a new reality. They were working for Foreign Minister Bill Hayden and they could well anticipate what the position of New Zealand Prime Minister Lange would be. This was already in the public realm. They wanted to look at the newly-prepared, New Zealand draft.

I said, "Gentlemen, our policy is as usual. I come here, representing Secretary of State George Shultz, who will meet tomorrow with the Prime Minister and also with the Prime Minister-elect of New Zealand. However, as far as we are concerned, we're dealing with the government of the day. It may be a caretaker government, but it is the government of New Zealand today, tomorrow, and during this ANZUS meeting. Therefore, the draft communique which the outgoing New Zealand Government proposed looks fine to us. That is our position."

Well, the New Zealand Permanent Secretary said, "Come on, Bill, let's face reality." I said, "That IS the reality. That's the draft which we have already approved." I knew where I was coming from. At times it is very important at that level to know where you're really coming from.

On the following day we held the ANZUS meeting, and the communique which had been proposed was approved, as planned. Underneath it all, there was great unhappiness on the New Zealand side at the professional level, because they were about to go to work for a new government, and they knew what its stance was. However, Secretary of State Shultz, after a very spirited policy session within our delegation (during which Shultz said to those who argued for immediate sanctions, I learned in the U.S. Marine Corps never point a rifle at someone unless you intend to shoot him), made a very important decision. He said that he would tell David Lange, which he did, that our annual application for approval for U.S. Navy ship visits to New Zealand would be submitted in December, 1984, six months later. If Lange asked him for time to consider this, he would give Lange time to put his government together and reconsider. We would therefore withhold any

action until after that application for ship visits was submitted in December, 1984, and was acted upon.

In a side meeting with Shultz, Lange said, "You mean that you are not going to impose trade sanctions against us?" Secretary Shultz said, "No, I don't believe in mixing trade policy with defense policy." There was fear in New Zealand that the U.S. market for wool and wool products, mutton, lamb, and dairy products might be lost. New Zealand had already lost its traditional, privileged place in the British market, as a result of Britain's having entered the European Common Market. New Zealand was very dependent on the U.S. for exports of its high quality milk, butter, and such products. Lange was visibly relieved at Shultz's answer. When the press, both New Zealand and Australian, turned out for Shultz's press conference, the first question was whether Shultz had discussed these issues with Prime Minister-Elect Lange. Shultz said, "Yes." The following question was: "What did you say?" Shultz said, "We do not believe in mixing trade policy and security issues."

Wow! The journalists headed for the telephones, and a beaming David Lange could confirm this in his own press conference. The New Zealand press could say, "We're off the hook." Well, New Zealand wasn't off the hook. Shultz was a gentleman, and he had this all worked out in advance with Australian Prime Minister Hawke. The Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs then had to pick up the line Hawke and Shultz had previously agreed upon - that we would wait until Lange's new government responded to our request for ship visits and then announce our reaction.

The eyes of many countries were on us. They wondered what this New Zealand outcome meant, as the U.S. started talking about ship visits to Chinese ports. There was great interest in this issue elsewhere. However, how comforting it was, in very difficult times, to work with a coordinated U.S. team.

Now, I'll just finish with this comment on how this New Zealand business worked out. New Zealand appointed a new ambassador to the United States. He had once been Prime Minister. The line that he gave us, reiterated through various channels, was that Lange was working on the problem with the roots and branches of his Labour Party, which had taken this anti-nuclear stance. That is, no visits to New Zealand ports by ships powered by nuclear reactors, let alone visits by ships that might be carrying nuclear weapons. The message to us was: "Give Lange time, and he will work it out."

Well, I didn't see much movement there, but we kept getting these assurances that Lange was working on it and that, in the fullness of time, this would be worked out. So we put in our requests for a ship visit, involving the smallest class of destroyer conventionally powered destroyer which was technically capable of carrying a nuclear weapon. It was the USS BUCHANAN. We deliberately shaped this issue to make the matter as easy for the Lange Government to handle as possible.

The night before the New Zealand Government decision was announced, the New

Zealand chargé d'affaires called me and said that he had just had a phone call from New Zealand. (End of tape)

As I was saying, the night before the day for the decision on U.S. Navy ship visits by the New Zealand Government in December, 1984, the New Zealand chargé d'affaires called me and said, "Please keep this strictly confidential, but it's in the bag, and you will get approval for the ship visit." I said, "Well, I hope so." I certainly didn't see any evidence to support this.

In the meantime we had done all sorts of contingency planning. We tried to work the New Zealand and related academic circuits, with speakers like Max Kampleman and Paul Wolfowitz. Paul and I gave speeches which were shaped to deal with this issue, not only for a New Zealand audience but also for Australian and other audiences. We tried to shape it in the larger, philosophical, policy element, emphasizing how important it was for deterrence, vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, to have this kind of policy.

The trouble was that by this time in New Zealand, many didn't give a damn. The threat perception wasn't there. Way down in that part of the Pacific Ocean, who really cared any more about Soviet submarines and NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] politics? They just weren't concerned about them. The "hands across the sea" aspect of ANZUS of the post-World War II era now meant very little to them.

During World War II, when good New Zealand and Australian boys went off to fight in the Middle East, leaving the homeland stripped bare, defenseless against Japanese submarines the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps victories at such places as Guadalcanal, and the Battle of the Coral Sea, had tremendous impact. It was the Australians and New Zealanders who came to us after the war and pressed us, in view of then prevailing security conditions, involving the Soviet Union, Communist China, and so forth, to enter into a security type arrangement which culminated in the ANZUS alliance signed in 1951. They were very serious about this, and it remained extremely important to them in political and security terms for many years. However, this outlook was fraying at the edges by the 1980s.

That was the background to what we were trying to do. We weren't just working, under the leadership of Paul Wolfowitz, on the straight diplomatic front. We were working with everything, including USIS speakers, planted articles in the New Zealand press, interviews and of course quiet talks with New Zealand military leaders who were very distressed. However, it was a real uphill struggle and our application for a visit by the USS BUCHANAN was denied. There were huge headlines and reverberations in Australia as well. The question then was what was the U.S. going to do?

By this time the new desk officer for Australia and New Zealand Affairs was Jon Glassman. He is now a retired ambassador. I bumped into him recently at a reception.

Q: Where does he work now?

BROWN: He works for the Northrop-Grumman Aircraft Company in Baltimore. Jon's had a very interesting career. You ought to interview him.

Jon and I had been working on this issue. Jon came, I would say, from the Wolfowitz school and was a career Foreign Service officer. We learned that New Zealand Prime Minister David Lange was making a visit to the United Nations. Well, to get to the United Nations from New Zealand, you normally pass through the West Coast. We found out that he was arriving in the U.S. in Los Angeles and then flying to New York. We heard that he was putting the best spin that he could on the whole matter. Lange had a distinct propensity, when he could get away with it, of saying that the issue of U.S. Navy ship visits was no big deal. He was saying: "This was just a minor ripple. Uncle Sam is unhappy, but they'll adjust to it."

After discussion of this matter in EAP, it was decided that somebody had to go and deliver the message to Lange. Guess who was chosen? I was chosen. So I flew out with Jon Glassman, and we intercepted Lange at a hotel cafeteria in Los Angeles, very early in the morning. He was traveling to New York on an late morning flight after a radio interview. We set up an appointment so that we could call on him after this radio TV interview. The New Zealand side wanted to make sure that the press would not be available. So they avoided choosing the hotel site for our meeting with Prime Minister Lange. They chose the residence of the New Zealand consul general in the suburbs of Los Angeles.

Glassman and I figured out how to handle this meeting. First, Glassman leaked to the press that we would be meeting with Prime Minister Lange out at the consul general's residence. We went to the appointed spot and were ushered in. There was Lange with about four or five people on his side of the table and the two of us on the other side of the table. They all pulled out their notebooks and pens, including Lange, and he said, "Okay, what have you got to lay on us?" It was the only time during my career when I had a Prime Minister taking notes on what I said.

So I laid it out. I said that I was very sorry that things have come to this point, but I said that he would recall the background to this matter, including Secretary Shultz's meeting with him. I noted that he had had our application for a visit by the USS BUCHANAN to New Zealand for a considerable time. He had made a very grave decision, which would have certain consequences. Specifically, we were going to cut off intelligence exchanges with New Zealand and would cut off all forms of military exercises with New Zealand ships and planes, including ANZUS exercises. We would continue to exercise with Australia, but no longer with New Zealand, until this matter was resolved and the 'status quo ante' was reestablished. New Zealand military officers who were in the United States at senior training courses would be allowed to finish this academic year, but after that we would not approve any more. At various liaison levels our relations would be reflected in this way.

Lange said, "Well, that's a pretty heavy load." I said, "Well, it is with great regret that I convey this to you. I hope that this situation can be righted by the necessary decisions subsequently on your side." I shook hands with him and then went out and met the press. I didn't go into all of the details with them, but I wanted to counter Lange's distinct tendency to say that what has happened was no big deal. Lange later met with the press and said that I had laid quite a load on him, but he said that he thought that New Zealand could digest it.

It has taken nearly 15 years to work out of this situation. I think that Secretary of State Madeline Albright went to New Zealand in early 1999. New Zealand still has not come off its stance on nuclear ship visits.

Q: Well, it's in the New Zealand Constitution, isn't it?

BROWN: I don't know, but they are still saddled with some of the consequences. However, the whole world has changed. The Soviet Union has collapsed, and the issue is not so important. However, it matters to me, Stuart, in the sense that we are reportedly now supporting a former Prime Minister of New Zealand, Mike Moore, to fill the trade slot in the World Trade Organization, versus a Thai candidate. My attitude would have been, with all due respect, that Mike Moore is a great guy, but until the T's are finally crossed and the I's are dotted, and so forth, we should not support him. At the time, this was more than just a very interesting episode. It was also a lesson for the Australians, and for others who might consider doing something similar to what New Zealand had done.

Q: Of course, this was the whole point of it.

BROWN: And beyond that, at the time, involving the NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] allies and others. Why not break now and then come back?

Q: What shall we put at the end as the subjects of a further interview? Where shall we pick up the next time?

BROWN: We could go back to China, I think. Then we also should be dealing with the Marcos episode, the murder of Ninoy Aquino, the Philippines, and a bit about Thailand, Indonesia, and so forth.

Q: How about the Pacific Islands, too?

BROWN: Yes. I'll discuss the islands to some extent.

Q: Today is June 16, 1999. We have a guest here, Dr. Katherine H. S. Moon, who is an assistant professor of political science at Wellesley College. We'll take a little excursion here. Bill, could you discuss the role of women, and particularly women officers, in your

experience in the Foreign Service, starting, perhaps, in the 1950s, when you entered the Service? Could you review changes in attitude and how women were employed? Professor Moon, any time that you have a question, please feel free to ask it.

BROWN: Well, you may remember that I entered the Foreign Service in 1956. There were several women in our class at the Foreign Service Institute. At that time quite a bit was made of this. That's not to say that they were the first women Foreign Service officers. However, it was still rather remarkable to have women in the Foreign Service. Our class averaged about 26 or 27 years of age, because the male officers, like myself, had frequently done military service, and the draft was still in effect. Indeed, in my class one or two officers who had not previously served were drafted into the service during our course at the Foreign Service Institute.

The women officers were a bit younger, on the average, than the male officers were. However, they had usually done a year or two of graduate work after obtaining their undergraduate degrees. They struck us as very intelligent and very sharp. They wouldn't have made it that far, had they not been intelligent and sharp.

In practical terms my first post, as you know, involved consular work at the consulate general in Hong Kong. That's where I first met women officers working in the Foreign Service. They were, however, of a particular type. They were what I would call "mustangs." You know that term. They had come up through the ranks, having entered the service as secretaries, or other administrative types for example. They were commissioned as consular officers. They were tough! That kind of duty would toughen anybody, because you were dealing with Chinese, 90 percent of whose stories, told during eight hours a day, turned out to be false, in whole or in part. For the most part these Chinese applicants were saddled with false stories, which they couldn't change, regarding their name, their place of birth, and the whole family history they told. That was one peculiar aspect of immigration policy involving Chinese persons over the previous 50 or more years.

Q: Under the immigration law we only gave 100 immigrant visas to Chinese born in China.

BROWN: This was under the Asian Exclusion policy. So they came up with false stories, based on a claim that their grandfathers or great grandfathers had been born in the U.S. Therefore, the claim went, they were entitled to passports as U.S. citizens. That led to huge distortions over many, many decades. So the Chinese applicants we were interviewing were telling a lie or a distorted story. In most cases they couldn't back off from this story because of family pressures.

This experience tended to harden attitudes among the consular officers. Among these were women officers who, in most cases, had come up through the ranks and then were appointed as consular officers. They were more or less destined to remain in the slot of consular officer. That was their career. They might be transferred from one consular post

to another, but that was essentially it.

I didn't meet a substantive, woman officer of any rank until I met Edelin Fogarty in 1961 or 1962. She was the senior economic officer at the American consulate general in Singapore. This was a very important post. The consulate general was independent of other Foreign Service posts, like the consulate general in Hong Kong. Therefore, her position was one of significant responsibility. Edelin went on to a post in Mexico and was DCM [deputy chief of mission] in Stockholm. I think that that was about it, as far as her career was concerned.

I would say that, as a career officer in those days and in that environment, she just about reached the peak of her career, unless someone in that position had a brilliant record and got a major boost from a supervisor. The chances of a woman, career officer becoming an ambassador were pretty slim. There were some women ambassadors, but there were very few.

Remember that in those days any woman officer who married a male officer was expected to resign and be separated from the Foreign Service, because of an alleged conflict of interest. The point seemed to be that a suitable spouse of a Foreign Service officer could not be another Foreign Service officer.

There were cases that I witnessed, much later on, in 1983 or so, which underscored this point. Howard Schaffer's wife, Teresita Schaffer, was of the rank of minister-counselor, that is, the level of a DCM [deputy chief of mission]. I remember that she had to leave the Foreign Service, due to an alleged conflict of interest during the period that Howard was an ambassador. Then Howard retired from the Foreign Service, and she became an ambassador. He became her dependent. Now we're in the modern era.

As we went along with adjusting to a new role for women officers, I always had my eye out for good, women officers. After some women won grievance cases and as the Department was swept along with other federal institutions, an emphasis developed in the Foreign Service to identify them and promote them. Naturally, we felt, although we need not get into specific names and cases, that - how shall I put this - some women were exploiting this opportunity. In other words, they played it for all that it was worth and vaulted up in the service. Other women officers played the game straight.

I'll give you a current example of a woman officer whom I very much admire, Molly Williamson, whom I knew as consul general in Jerusalem. I think that Molly had put in a tour of duty somewhere in an Arab country, though I'm not sure of where. She was serving in Embassy Tel Aviv when I arrived in Tel Aviv as ambassador. It was sort of the end of her tour in Tel Aviv. She was transferred elsewhere. Then, lo and behold, she came back during my tenure as Ambassador and became consul general in Jerusalem.

Now, Jerusalem, like Hong Kong, was always a truly independent post. To this day, the American consulate general in Jerusalem files its reports to Washington separately from

the embassy in Tel Aviv, in the name of the consul general. Since its consular district [especially East Jerusalem and the Israeli occupied territories West of the Jordan River] is very heavily Palestinian, it provides a unique perspective. In the past most Israelis tended to think that the American consulate general in Jerusalem represented the enemy and that Americans assigned to the consulate general were a bunch of pro-Palestinians. In other words, it's a very delicately situated post, doing a very delicate job. Therefore, you have to have very good people assigned there.

Molly Williamson did a great job as consul general in Jerusalem. Then she moved on to be deputy assistant secretary of State for International Organization Affairs. Following that, she was assigned to a job at the Department of Defense as a Deputy Assistant Secretary. I hear that she is a deputy assistant secretary of Commerce right now. She has done very well. I would say of her, strictly in terms of her merits, that she is a shining example of what a woman Foreign Service officer can do. Pat Byrne, our Ambassador in Rangoon Burma was another example.

During my career we saw some breakthroughs by women who had come up the career ladder through, let us say, the consular and administrative route. During the Reagan administration, we were beginning to see this breakthrough. I've forgotten her name, but in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, there was a woman Foreign Service officer appointed during my time as ambassador to Papua New Guinea.

Q: Was it Mary Olmsted?

BROWN: No, Mary Olmsted served earlier as ambassador to Papua New Guinea. She is a member of the great Olmsted family. This other woman was appointed ambassador to Papua New Guinea, which was beginning to come apart as a society. It had gained independence from Australia. It had strong Australian backing and subsidies. However, its parliamentary democracy was beginning to decline and elements of tribalism were impinging more and more on the structure. There was growing unemployment in Port Moresby, the capital. The crime factor in Papua New Guinea was rising to the point that this woman ambassador was mugged twice on the golf course in broad daylight, around noon. Some men came out and mugged or threatened her in some way.

I think I'd better pause there. Kathy, if you have any comments there, please feel free to speak up.

Q: (Katherine Moon) One question would be whether you would have some time, later on, for me to ask you some questions. I'm working particularly on women and especially on cultural issues. My specific question for now is that, when you served in your various capacities, to what extent were you aware of matching the cultural environment which you were in, whether in Israel or in any other posts? I mean the cultural environment. If you're working in Taiwan, versus Israel or somewhere else, to what extent do gender relationships, male/female relationships, expectations, or decorum affect your work? These are very different considerations from those in effect in certain parts of the U.S. I

would assume that you would have to have a careful fit in a given post. For example, sending women Foreign Service officers to Saudi Arabia, as opposed to sending women to Stockholm, where there would be radically different experiences.

BROWN: Well, during my career and in my various posts I really did not run into that kind of problem. My posts included several in Asia, in Russia, New Delhi, and then later in Israel. In all of these places, in one way or another, women were breaking through, whether on a token or other basis. Women were beginning to reach senior positions in these posts. Naturally, the great preponderance of our relationships were with male counterparts in the various countries I served in. However, looking back, I don't see that matching the cultural environment, in your words, was a major problem at my particular posts.

Q: (Moon): What about the way foreign nationals viewed American women?

BROWN: Ah, well, that could vary. In my particular recollection, American women Foreign Service officers were given entree, access, and so forth that they would hope for and expect. For instance, I had a woman officer as a Labor attache in Israel. There was no problem there, whatsoever, that I recall. She just did her job. There was a highly organized labor scene and structure. Israel was a country where Golda Meir had risen up through the organized labor route to be Prime Minister of Israel. There were far fewer women than men in the Knesset, the parliament in Israel, but they were outspoken, tough, and independent.

Regarding the Chinese context, I don't recall seeing women Foreign Service officers in senior political or economic positions at that time. However, women were being assigned to China. Now, as I am a member of the Board of Directors of AIT [American Institute on Taiwan], I was delighted a couple of years ago to visit Taiwan and to see that a male officer was the political counselor, and his wife was the economic counselor in this unusually structured office in Taiwan. I believe that this couple has gone on to serve in the American embassy in Beijing as a pair.

Q: (Kennedy) These are Americans?

BROWN: Yes. They are Foreign Service officers. Both have reached, independently, the same level and managed to get joint assignments. Later on in their careers, you may see a question when one of them rises to be senior to the other. That may be the case in this particular marriage. I'm just speculating now, but she may become the senior of the two of them, earlier on. Then you would have to be careful for a conflict of interest, lest she become his rating officer and prepare his Officer's Efficiency Report. Something might have to be done about that. I found that, as far as manifestations of local attitudes, in professional terms, there was no particular problem. Women Foreign Service officers on my staffs obtained suitable access to foreign nationals and did their reporting.

In the meantime the whole question of representation changed dramatically during my

career. So the number of times that officers below the ambassador or DCM level were expected to give dinners, with their spouses, for their counterparts, declined dramatically. Toward the end of my career there were far fewer such occasions.

Q: (Kennedy): There were more lunches.

BROWN: There were more lunches, one on one, or other small, professional occasions. That took care of the situation, rather than the more formalized and larger occasions for entertainment in the evening, which were more tedious, from my viewpoint.

When I was ambassador in Thailand, Margaret Macmillan became my consul at the American consulate in Udorn [northeast Thailand]. She was way out there, just about alone, in an area not far from the Laotian border, which was the site of fighting and so forth. This situation may have been a bit unusual from the Thai viewpoint but, by golly, as I read her reports, she certainly got around and did the job.

Q: (Kennedy): I think, too, that one of the things that you have to remember is that, when one of our officers goes out of the embassy or consulate, he or she is not going out as a man or a woman but rather as a representative of the United States. In other words, it's a bit like a 500 pound gorilla going out and seeing people. This opens doors and ensures respect and seriousness on the part of the foreigners they meet. This might not be the case in other aspects. It is also true of some of our very callow young men who go out to see someone and are accorded respect because they represent the United States, not because of their own personalities.

Bill, let's move ahead. We've now already covered your going into this job as deputy assistant secretary of EAP.

BROWN: Perhaps it's worth mentioning the relations between senior career officers and political appointees as a new Assistant Secretary takes over a regional bureau such as EAP. Paul Wolfowitz was a remarkable political appointee. He represented what I would call the "Scoop" Jackson [the late Democratic Senator from the State of Washington] school of former Democrats who supported President Reagan. Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, Ken Adelman, Elliot Abrams, Jeanne Kirkpatrick, and others of that school had evolved to be supporters of Reagan's foreign policies and were then appointed to appropriate jobs.

Wolfowitz had a tremendous grasp, intellect, and dynamism. He inherited a team of deputy assistant secretaries and ambassadors of different backgrounds and outlooks. Different people handle this kind of problem in different ways.

It was said of Dick Holbrooke [Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs], who was a very young and intense assistant secretary...

Q: [Kennedy] During the Carter administration.

BROWN: During the Carter years. I don't know whether this story is apocryphal or not, but I heard this story from more than one source. Holbrooke reportedly told the deputy assistant secretaries he had inherited: "We are going to paint your offices. Would you move downstairs until we complete the job?" When the offices were painted, only then did they find that they were not welcomed back to their offices. They were out and transferred elsewhere in the Department. At times that practice even extended downward. If Holbrooke didn't like an office director, he would handle the matter in the same way.

Wolfowitz was a gentleman, but he wanted changes in personnel and practices. This process took a little more time, but changes were made, and we ended up with a great team at the deputy assistant secretary level. I was the principal deputy assistant secretary. I started out with China, Japan, and Korea. However, the understanding from the beginning was that that was too broad an area of responsibility. I ended up with China, Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands. We got Bill Clark, who had retired from the Foreign Service after being DCM [deputy chief of mission] in Tokyo and who was a Japan specialist. He came back to the Department to handle Japan and Korea as deputy assistant secretary. John Monjo, who had a great background in Indonesia and Malaysia, had been chargé d'affaires for a long time in Jakarta, pending the resolution of the question of Mort Abramowitz's candidacy as ambassador to Indonesia.

Abramowitz's assignment didn't go through. The Indonesians did not extend agreement to Abramowitz. The result of all this was that Monjo was running the embassy in Jakarta for a long time, until we found a new candidate as ambassador, John Holdridge a China specialist who had gone with Secretary Kissinger on the secret trip to China and had been Wolfowitz's predecessor as Assistant Secretary for EAP. You are probably aware of his book, Crossing the Divide. Holdridge was five years older than even I, and of course, much older than Wolfowitz.

Speaking of ambassadors out in the field, at that time, whom Wolfowitz inherited, there was an interesting mix. You had former Senator Mansfield as ambassador to Japan. He was a lifelong Democrat, a former Senate Majority Leader, and a great figure in his own right. If you will, he was a political appointee of relatively advanced age but he was still hearty and enjoyed great respect. In China our ambassador was a very senior career officer, Art Hummel, who had been born in China, the son of a great Sinologist. Over in South Korea we had "Dixie" Walker, an ardent, Reagan Republican academic from North Carolina. Initially he had hoped to be ambassador to China, with his Chinese academic background. However, he ended up with a very interesting time in South Korea as our ambassador.

I think that Mike Armacost was the ambassador to the Philippines. I get a little mixed up between him and John Negroponte. I think that Armacost came first as ambassador to the Philippines. Down in Malaysia we had a gap, and Tom Shoesmith, whom I replaced as principal deputy assistant secretary in EAP, became the ambassador there. In Bangkok we had John Gunther Dean, a career Foreign Service officer, who'd been ambassador to Denmark, Cambodia, Lebanon, and now had several years under his belt as ambassador

to Thailand.

Then we had political appointees in Australia, New Zealand and Fiji. The ambassador to New Zealand was Malcolm Brown, a Republican cattle dealer from California. In Australia we had a man who was a wealthy Republican car dealer and supporter of Reagan. I've forgotten his name. On the wall of his office, were not just the ritual photographs with the President but the intimate photographs, showing Ronald Reagan with a cowboy hat, relaxing in a hammock, photographs with all kinds of personal inscriptions by Reagan in the margins.

In Fiji we had Fred Eckhardt as ambassador. He was a member of the Conservative Party and had run on that ticket. He was from Greece, a town in upstate New York. The three of them (Malcolm Brown, the ambassador to Australia, whose name I have forgotten; and Fred Eckhardt) were all Republican political appointees who criticized Foreign Service officers as liberals and the way they saw things being run out of Washington. That's the picture of the diplomatic representatives that Wolfowitz had inherited.

At a Chiefs of Mission conference, attended by all of the ambassadors from countries of East Asia and the consul general from Hong Kong and which met in Honolulu or some point, the Assistant Secretary discussed our policies in the area. Those attending the meeting had a couple of days and nights together for discussions. These three ambassadors, posted in Wellington, Canberra, and Suva subsequently staged their own mini-conference. They filed a report critical of U.S. aid programs, which they thought were too liberal; Peace Corps programs; and all of those other goodies coming out of another side of Washington. As I said, they were conservatively minded and wished to express themselves as such. That's the situation that we inherited.

This was important because, as senior Foreign Service officers, we were in the middle here. What was our job? Our job was both the glue to keep certain facades together and the lubricant between gears that sometimes have a bit of sand in them. We had to implement policy. We had to work on the political scene in Washington on many different levels and fronts, dealing with many different people of many different persuasions. I'll give you an example.

Kathy, as I'm sure you're aware, the Department of State has a Bureau of Congressional Affairs, or "H," as it used to be called for short. It was traditionally headed by former senior staffers of this or that Congressman or Senator. Their job was to handle the Department's relations with Congress, back and forth. They sure weren't enough for the likes of Paul Wolfowitz. Paul was on the phone, day and night, as the occasion warranted, working with Congress on his own. The spectrum of his Congressional contacts ranged all the way from Senator Jesse Helms [Republican, North Carolina], on one side, to Congressman Steve Solarz [Democrat, New York], on the other. Solarz was the Chairman of the House Sub-Committee on East Asia. He was a fast-moving, dynamic individual, whose legislative assistant, Stanley Roth, is now the Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs. That's how Stanley, among other reasons, became such an expert on

Asia, through all of those trips by Solarz during all of those years.

Q: (Kennedy) I'm interviewing Stanley Roth, by the way.

BROWN: Paul Wolfowitz belong to a wonderful team including Gaston Sigur, was a Republican academic appointee to the NSC [National Security Council] and Richard Armitage, who was the Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs at the Pentagon. This trio of Wolfowitz, Sigur, and Armitage met weekly in Wolfowitz's office, with their deputies, including myself, Armitage's deputy Jim Kelly, and Sigur's deputy, David Laux. There was also one very senior gent from the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency]. Policy and the implementation of policy were really settled at those informal meetings in EAP [Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs]. We stiffarmed the efforts of other people to attend those meetings, once they learned how important they were. At the risk of repetition, I'll just say that this three-person committee was a marvelous example of what the right team can do.

Traditionally, Kathy, my experience in Washington was that you had a great deal of tension between various agencies. Well, look at the book by George Shultz, Turmoil and Triumph, in which he speaks of the troubles which he had with members of the White House staff and with Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger in particular. While all of that was going on, at a personal and very senior level this trio of people I mentioned was oiling the works and doing what was necessary to get the job done. This team knew what they were about and had a mandate. Naturally, there were other tensions within the bureaucracies, but we got the job done. I've often cited this as a model for contemporary and future situations. later, when I went to Thailand as ambassador, Jim Lilley replaced me.

Q: (Kennedy) I have interviewed Lilley.

BROWN: Jim Lilley and his son are coming out with a kind of autobiographical book on East Asia. As I've mentioned this team was very unhappy over the terms of the U.S.-China Joint Communique on Arms Sales of August 17, 1982. This incorporated language to the effect that we would cap arms sales to Taiwan over time both quantitatively and qualitatively and that there would be a diminution of these sales over time as well.

However, we were also aware of a critical, Presidential decision regarding Taiwan which Gaston Sigur conveyed orally to us, sometimes reading from a piece of paper. President Reagan had dictated a memo stating, despite the terms of the communique, if the arms balance changed between Beijing and Taiwan, we would do what was necessary to restore it, so that Taiwan could defend itself.

With few exceptions, the rest of the Washington bureaucracy didn't know of this Presidential commitment. But we had a mandate and we knew it. So, we just went about doing our business. We were careful not to be excessive, but on the basis of the technological quality and quantity of arms available in Taiwan, when we determined that

Taiwan was lagging behind Beijing, or a breakthrough was taking place in terms of arms by the PRC [People's Republic of China], we did what was necessary to right the balance.

With that background in mind, there were some fascinating episodes. One episode that I will just briefly mention was an aircraft case. There had been a proposal, and I'm sure that Taiwan had a role in generating it, that the United States would build an F-X fighter, sometimes called the F-20 which would be a better, defensive aircraft for Taiwan. This was in view of the fact that the PRC was beginning to move ahead in improving its Air Force and its strike capability. However, with the communique of August, 1982, in the background, the proposal for the U.S. to build a new fighter aircraft for Taiwan was ultimately rejected. So Taiwan was left with its aging F-104s and light F-5s. In the middle of all of this a representative of the General Dynamics Corporation came to see me on what I would call an informal probe along these lines: "We are well aware of your policy on aircraft sales to Taiwan. However, would you allow us to go ahead on something like this. Taiwan would build its own fighter aircraft, and we would provide the wind tunnels and other equipment to monitor this aircraft out as such a project goes along. General Dynamics would not be manufacturing the aircraft, but eventually parts and other, relevant components might be provided to Taiwan. This aircraft would be a defensive aircraft, in view of the PRC's advances in its ability to strike Taiwan from the air."

I said, "Okay, we'll consider this." I went to the Wolfowitz, Sigur, and Armitage team. and we developed a case for approval. There was a fight about this proposal. I won't go into all of the personalities involved. However, getting the right people behind you was so important in this case. Over in P-M [Bureau of Political-Military Affairs], a functional bureau in the Department of State whose tasks included the approval or rejection of export licenses, not only for munitions, but for things like aircraft as well. P-M would ultimately play a key role in this decision.

Well, the Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs was Major General, later Lieutenant General, Jack Chain. Jack had been a fighter pilot, and came over to the Department of State as a Lieutenant General. [Ultimately, he was promoted to be a four-star general heading the Strategic Air Command (SAC)]. We brought Jack into this picture. Below him, in P-M, there was some resistance, but Jack ultimately approved the General Dynamics proposal. He said, "This is an awfully expensive answer to Taiwan's air defense problem. However, if they can build such an aircraft, with the proper engine, and if this aircraft has BVR, that is, "Beyond Visual Range" capability, then you have an attractive outcome. If this aircraft can launch a missile at a target beyond visual range, I'll tell you that although the opposing aircraft may be faster and may be able to dive and climb better, you can shoot him out of the sky beyond visual range, and that's the critical consideration."

In the Department of State this decision went all the way up to Secretary of State George Shultz, who approved the project notwithstanding the argument of some that to do so would violate the August 1982 Joint Communique.

Q: (Kennedy) Jim Lilley makes the point in his interview, and this is something that I sensed in some of my interviews, that you have to be very careful with issues involving the People's Republic of China. The main thing is: don't get them mad. This may be the wrong phrase to use, but there is a view that we can't afford to upset the Chinese. The opposing view is that the Chinese aren't necessarily our friends, while the Taiwanese are important to us. Did you find that kind of division of views emerging?

BROWN: Yes, I know what you're getting at, and the short answer is, "Yes." Now, one could characterize this difference of views in different ways. In our team we felt that we were cautious about China. We weren't looking for a confrontation with Beijing. In fact, we were looking, at limited arms sales to Beijing, relaxations of trade restrictions on and other tradeoffs. However, we also believed that we had to be firm with the Chinese and had to draw a line in many areas. We felt that we had to call things as we saw them. Otherwise, there was the danger that the Chinese would just take and demand more concessions.

Q: (Kennedy) I was thinking that you almost characterized the people you were dealing with, within the Departments of State and Defense, as virtually falling into two camps on China-related issues like this.

BROWN: In broad, simplistic terms, yes. However, the key camp at that time, and I'm talking about this Wolfowitz, Armitage, and Sigur group, was the decisive camp. And I would add to this group of three Secretary of State George Shultz, Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger, and so forth. This group determined policy. It had an outlook and mandate. We were not trying to antagonize the PRC. However, by law we had a Taiwan Relations Act which set us on a certain policy course toward Taiwan and which reflected certain principles.

Meanwhile, we were seeking to open new avenues and achieve greater cooperation with the People's Republic of China and we were doing this. We were dangling in front of the PRC limited, military cooperation. They were trying to upgrade a fighter-bomber aircraft called the F-8 up in Manchuria, few if any of which, actually flew. The PRC was in bad shape in terms of their aircraft industry, and they wanted to upgrade the F-8. We said, "Let's look at this aircraft," because we were playing the anti-Soviet, strategic line at the time.

Until recently, I would have never mentioned this, but as Jim Lilley and others have pointed out, we had jointly-manned stations in China in accordance with a very secret program negotiated with the PRC, under which we were monitoring Soviet missile launches. We were willing to look, on a limited basis, at certain items of naval equipment for China. We were approaching a careful relaxation of technology flows to China. This latter point, of course, was a subject of great debate within the Reagan administration.

We finally worked out a program for licensing sales of hi-tech goods to China. We were using color codes to describe action to be taken. "Green" meant "automatic approval" on

licensing. “Amber” denoted those areas which were a combination of civilian uses but possibly had military applications and therefore had to be handled carefully. “Red” meant cases with clear, dual use (that is, military as well as civilian) which were not approved. We had a great deal of debate on these issues within the U.S. Government. We had to bring Richard Perle of the Department of Defense into these discussions. With his well-known outlook, he was initially very cautious. However, Wolfowitz, had a special relationship with Perle and could work with other people to persuade him. Perle didn't have to worry about Wolfowitz, Armitage, and Gaston Sigur being softies vis-a-vis Beijing and was attracted by the argument that we could use the Chinese to undermine the Soviet Union.

We were not naive back then. I always had in my mind that what we were doing was right. However, the danger was that, in the future, this practice might be abused and misused. Remember that in all of these discussions at this time P-M, in the State Department, was the final arbiter of licensing below Secretary Shultz. Later on, during the Clinton administration, this responsibility was shifted to the Department of Commerce. When it shifted to Commerce, then a dynamic process of sales promotion took place, and the main consideration tilted more to commercial sales than to strategic issues. Institutionally, I regret that this was done. I hope this responsibility will come back to the Department of State, although I am not sure that it will. I think that as a result of the latest scandals, this responsibility is coming back to the Department of State as the agency making the decision. Of course, the final decision will be made in the White House.

Let's talk a bit about the Foreign Service and Presidential trips. I've previously covered my first trip to Asia in July of 1983 with Michael Deaver to set up visits by President Reagan to Manila, Djakarta, Bangkok, Tokyo and Seoul. Let me now talk about the second trip and the background to it namely, the assassination of Senator Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino in the Philippines, in August, 1983. He was stepping off a plane at Manila International Airport and was killed as he was going down the stairs from the aircraft. A great scandal and uproar emerged. Our reaction was complicated by the fact that President Reagan and President Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines had a personal relationship. Vice President George Bush had had his picture taken with his arm around President Marcos as a reflection of that close, personal relationship. So a furor built up in the late summer and early fall of 1983. What should we do about this? There was considerable debate about this. Should President Reagan go to Manila, or cancel his trip?

Now, in September it was customary for the Secretary of State to move up to New York to meet leaders from all over the world on the margins of the annual UN General Assembly Debate. Paul Wolfowitz and Armitage were in China together, so I filled in for Wolfowitz up in New York to support the East Asian portion of the Secretary of State's visit up there. I was on immediate call for whatever was necessary as the Secretary met with senior leaders from East Asia. If any problems came up, I would give the Secretary my views.

Suddenly, Charley Hill, my good friend from Tel Aviv days, turned up in my temporary

office in his capacity as Secretary Shultz's right hand man and said, "You're on. Go in and see the Man." So I went into a meeting between Charley, myself, and Secretary Shultz. I was wondering what this was all about. Shultz said, "With the assassination of Aquino, should the President go to Manila?" I said, "Well, Mr. Secretary, there are those who would argue this way and those who would argue that way." I set out the pros and cons of both positions. The Secretary said, "That's not the question. My question is what do you recommend?" I replied: "Kill that visit by whatever means are necessary. There will be those who will tell you that this meeting could be held in Baguio [in the mountains North of Manila]. There will be those who will say that the President can be helicoptered into Manila and that he doesn't have to travel in a motorcade. There are going to be demonstrations, and this situation is going to get worse. So kill that visit to the Philippines. However, keep the rest of the visit on to the rest of East Asia. There's no reason why Indonesia, Thailand, and other countries should pay for the sins committed in Manila." And that was that. Secretary Shultz didn't indicate how he felt, and I never heard anything further about this from him.

Well, the debate grew in Washington about President Reagan's trip to East Asia. One evening when I was working late in the office, the phone rang, and the voice on the phone was Larry Eagleburger, then the Under Secretary of State. He said to me: "Get your butt over to the White House to Mike Deaver's office right away!" So I did. Deaver received me graciously, reflected back on the trip to East Asia which we had already taken, and said, "Bill, we are aware of your views on canceling the President's visit to the Philippines, while keeping the visits to the other capitals. Now, here's what's going to happen. We're going to get on a plane quietly. We're going out to East Asia and are passing the word that, due to the press of Congressional business, the President will be unable to visit the Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand. Now, we know your views, which have been conveyed to us, but that's the decision."

Soon thereafter, said Deaver, we were getting on the plane to go out and convey that position. Then we'd fly to Japan and South Korea because President Reagan would be visiting those two countries, and Deaver added, "Maybe China, as well." Either present at this meeting with Deaver, or popping his head in, was Dick Childress. Dick was a Colonel assigned to the NSC [National Security Council] staff, covering Asia. As that meeting with Deaver broke up, and we went down some stairs, we passed the office of Judge Clark [then Chief of Staff of the White House]. Clark and Deaver obviously had a rivalry, among many others. Judge Clark said, "What happened?" Childress said, "You tell him." So I told Judge Clark. When I mentioned a possible visit by Deaver to China, Clark simply exploded. He nearly went through the roof. He picked up the phone, called Deaver, and said, "You're not going to China without clearing it with me. That was never in the agreement we had." It was a frenetic conversation, during which time I kept quiet.

I was thinking to myself: "My God, I hope I haven't inadvertently angered Michael Deaver by telling Judge Clark that Deaver said we might go to China." That is just a little insight into the tremendous tensions and rivalries which you'll see set forth so graphically in Secretary George Shultz's book. As a senior Foreign Service officer new to the game,

you have to be extremely careful.

Later, on Deaver's instructions, I called Ambassadors Holdridge and Dean, both of whom happened to be in the U.S. at the time, into my office and told them that Deaver wanted them to accompany us as far as Djakarta to help ease the pain for the Indonesian and Thai Governments. They were apoplectic at the proposed scenario. They asked why should the governments of Indonesia and Thailand suffer for the events in the Philippines. These were two, very senior ambassadors. Finally, I said, "Gents, we are loyal soldiers. That subject has been debated, and all three of us are getting on the plane tomorrow. Our job is to smooth this out the best way you can."

So we flew out to East Asia. We flew to Honolulu and Guam as quietly as we could, without the usual fanfare. Then we flew, non-stop, from Guam to Jakarta, arriving there early in the morning. This may be repetitious.

Q: (Kennedy) There's a certain amount of repetition, but it doesn't make any difference. Go ahead. We can edit it later on.

BROWN: With Ambassador Holdridge arriving with us, the poor DCM [deputy chief of mission] in Jakarta was told to get Deaver an appointment with President Suharto. He couldn't arrange it. It was on a weekend, and the Indonesians had a sense that there was something wrong. In the end, the best thing that we could do, through our military attache was arrange a call on the Chief of Staff of the Indonesian Armed Forces, General Benny Moerdani. He was a straight-talking guy and very powerful.. We passed our message to him. The next morning, at an early morning departure breakfast for us, the Indonesian officials sat down at the table with us. One of their diplomats sitting at my table asked, "So you're canceling the whole visit to Asia?" I said, "Well, not exactly." He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Well, President Reagan will be visiting Japan and South Korea."

I'll never forget the shocked expression on this man's face. He and other Indonesians - and later the Thai - took this development as a slap in the face. It meant that under the transparent excuse of the press of Congressional business, meaning the Aquino assassination, the President was scrubbing the visit to Southeast Asia, while still favoring the Japanese and the South Koreans. The Indonesians were quiet but furious. Then we flew to Bangkok. Ambassador Dean had managed to contact the Royal Family of Thailand. They were polite but the reception was a bit chilly.

Q: (Kennedy) Was it understood that everybody...

BROWN: Everybody saw through the excuse given of the press of Congressional business.

Q: (Kennedy) Canceling the visits in Southeast Asia is not something that you can hide.

BROWN: Well, that was the official reason given. The message delivered in Manila by

Michael Deaver was a hand-written message by President Ronald Reagan to his “good friend,” Ferdinand Marcos.

Then we flew up to Tokyo and South Korea, and the reception there was great, because these visits were still on. We flew from Seoul back to the U.S. and shortly thereafter half of the South Korean cabinet visiting Rangoon with President Chun Doo Hwan was killed by a bomb attack by North Korean commandos.

That gives you a view of the whirlwind of White House diplomacy. The Deaver mission did not go to China on that trip. We visited China in November, 1983 immediately after President Reagan's highly successful visits to Japan and South Korea. (which included a presidential visit to the DMZ.)

Deaver's November 1983 trip to China was a marvelous experience for me. Here I was a little more on my own, in terms of language. When we arrived in Beijing, Deaver and Ambassador Art Hummel got together. They were exchanging niceties, and I said, “Let's cut to the quick. We're meeting the Chinese tomorrow. Art, you've heard of the successful visits to Korea and Japan. In short, the President will be traveling to China with a party of 800.”

Ambassador Hummel exclaimed: “800! We can't do that here.” I said, “But that's what it is. It's a party of 800, traveling in 13 large airplanes, including all of the support and logistics, such as the Cadillacs and so forth. I am sure that Mike Deaver will fill you in. The President probably will want to visit some place like Xian, and some other site as well, so we'll have to negotiate the matter of internal flights within China. The President likes to travel in his own aircraft. And probably we'll want to bring in our own helicopters as well.” Ambassador Hummel said, “That's impossible! Nobody travels inside China in his own aircraft. Internal travel is always done on Chinese aircraft.” I said, “Well, Mike will get to that a little bit later.” Meanwhile I urged that Deaver lay his requests right on the line with the Chinese from the beginning. Otherwise, I warned we would lose leverage.

The next morning, as we met at that long, negotiating table with the Chinese side headed by Han Xu, the man opposite me, knowing that I spoke Chinese, asked: “How many will be in the President's party?” I said, “About 800.” He said, “What?” I said, “Yes, 800. They will be traveling in 13 aircraft. They'll tell you later on.” But that wasn't the end of it. I had urged Deaver to be very polite but firm. I said to Deaver, “Don't put the hard issues off, or you will have lost it. Go in and ask for what you want and expect. Negotiate it right then and there, or you won't get it. You want your own, Presidential aircraft to fly you from Beijing to Xian? Put that on the table. Do you need U.S. helicopters? Put that on the table, too.” Deaver did this, and, of course, the Chinese gagged a bit. However, in the end we got it.

This trip was marvelous in another way because Deaver, during this site survey, went to Xian, Suzhou, where the most beautiful ladies, lace, and china come from, Shanghai and

the Yangtze River. Now, Gaston Sigur, from the NSC [National Security Council] staff, was sitting with me on this site survey trip with Deaver. Gaston said, "Come on. The President isn't going to visit the Yangtze River." I said, "Maybe not; that's between you and Deaver, but Deaver and we are going there."

Deaver arranged to charter a luxury boat on the Yangtze River. We went up the river and passed through the Yangtze gorges at night, when Deaver and the rest of the party were asleep. I stayed awake all night to see this. How many chances do you get to see the Yangtze Gorges at night, with searchlights and all? We then turned around above the gorges. When Deaver and the others woke up, we were now above the Gorges, and we did the traditional cruise through the Gorges during the day. So I did two passages through the Yangtze Gorges during that visit. There was magnificent cuisine, but everybody in the party got sick as a dog. By the time we were in Suzhou, they were all sick. By the time we reached Shanghai, Deaver had to be hospitalized. However, it was a great experience from my viewpoint.

As a senior Foreign Service officer advising someone like Deaver, I was now in the inner sanctum and I had to be very judicious. At the same time, I had to be very frank and forthright with my advice on such questions as negotiating with the Chinese.

Q: At that time what did you say to Deaver and the others about negotiating with the Chinese?

BROWN: Well, I just gave you an example. Be polite but firm. Deaver was a good diplomat in that sense. He had already dealt with considerable numbers of the high and mighty in this world during his career. However, I told him to be firm as far as what his bottom line was. I urged him not to slip into the easy way of putting off decisions, because this means that you will lose out in negotiating with the Chinese. In this case Deaver took my advice, and it worked out.

Meanwhile other things happened. I've mentioned the assassination of Senator Benigno Aquino in the Philippines. That was a major event. Another event was the shooting down of a KAL [Korean Air Lines] passenger aircraft.

Q: This was done by the Soviets over the Kamchatka Peninsula.

BROWN: Yes. A third event was the murder of half of the South Korean cabinet in Rangoon by North Korean assassins in 1983.

Q: This happened in Burma.

BROWN: Yes, in Burma, just after Deaver's group had visited Seoul. This was really big stuff.

Now, let me mention one aspect of the case of the shooting down of the KAL aircraft.

Ironically enough, when I was political counselor in Moscow, I had dealt with the Russian who is now Soviet chargé d'affaires in Washington. His name was Oleg. He later became Soviet ambassador to the Philippines.

In late 1977 or early in 1978 a KAL flight, using an aircraft chartered from Pan American Airways, had gone way off course and was forced down in the northern part of the USSR. The aircraft made a forced, emergency landing on the edge of a frozen lake, and a couple of Koreans and Japanese passengers were killed. We were involved in this incident, because the aircraft was chartered from Pan American Airways, and our allies, the South Koreans and the Japanese, were involved. I had been in contact with Oleg in connection with this incident. At the time, he was the North American desk officer in Moscow.

When the KAL flight was shot down over the Kamchatka Peninsula by a Soviet fighter aircraft in 1983, Lawrence Eagleburger [Under Secretary for Political Affairs at the time] obtained a tape of the radio report by the Soviet pilot who shot the plane down. I listened to this tape, along with Eagleburger and the principal deputy assistant secretary for European Affairs [EUR], Mark Palmer, who understood Russian. Later he was ambassador to Hungary.

This tape recorded the conversation between the pilot of the Soviet aircraft which shot the KAL airliner down and his ground controller. We couldn't hear the ground control end of the conversation the pilot was having, but we could hear much (not all) of what the pilot said. It was really remarkable. He said, "Okay, I've got the target in sight. Right. I'm moving around the target's left hand side. I'm going around the front and continuing around the back of the target aircraft. Okay. I have him in my sights. I'm locking onto the target. Missile has been launched. The target has been destroyed. I'm returning to base."

We agreed to recommend publicizing this recording as we had it without editing. Then, in through the door of Eagleburger's office came the Soviet chargé d'affaires, who had been summoned urgently to the Department of State. I said to him in Russian, because I recognized him as Oleg with whom I had dealt in Moscow: "I haven't seen you in a long time!" I alluded to the time when he and I had handled the previous penetration of Soviet airspace by a KAL aircraft in 1977 or 1978.

Now, who was the former "New York Times" correspondent who was later the assistant secretary for European Affairs? I'll remember his name later. Anyhow, he took over control of handling the public affairs aspect of the case from then on. [Addendum: It was Richard Burt.]

We had had real problems develop over this shoot down of the KAL aircraft, particularly with the South Koreans and the Japanese. I met with the South Korean Foreign Minister, whose name was Lee, I believe. He was a great, big guy who had been born in Pyongyang, North Korea. As a kid he had been involved in black market activity with Soviet occupation troops in North Korea. He would cross the border into South Korea and buy penicillin from American occupation troops. He would then return to North

Korea and sell it to the Soviets, so that they could take care of their gonorrhea and syphilis cases. Finally, he had moved permanently to South Korea and had risen up in the hierarchy and became the South Korean Foreign Minister. He had a very unique command of “GI English.” He could really rattle off the obscenities!

This incident was a terrible tragedy and, naturally, the South Korean and Japanese Governments each wanted to send search teams to the site. In fact, the site was in Soviet-controlled waters off Kamchatka, also known as the Sakhalin Peninsula. We were asked by the South Koreans and the Japanese to obtain permission from Moscow for them to go to the area where the aircraft went down, so that they could search for any remains floating in the area. The Soviets were also searching, and we were doing what we could. Moscow permitted the Japanese to send a ship to pass over the point where the aircraft was believed to have gone down. The Japanese were able to make these arrangements by virtue of their diplomatic relations with the Soviets. However, the South Koreans didn't have diplomatic relations with the Soviets at that time.

One day I had to inform the South Korean Foreign Minister who was visiting New York for the UN General Assembly session that the Japanese had sent a ship to the reported site in the waters off the Kamchatka Peninsula. There were no South Koreans on board. The Japanese just got permission to enter Soviet territorial waters and did so. When the South Korean Foreign Minister heard that, I won't quote him exactly, but the obscenities he used were remarkable. All of the anti-Japanese sentiment just burst out of him. This is an insight into the latent tensions that you sometimes encounter among countries which are normally close allies of the United States. One might assume that they understood each other because they came from somewhat similar backgrounds. Nonsense. They had real problems with each other, which came out in the context of this tragedy.

Q: When this was going on, what was the initial impression of the incident and how did it develop? Why did it happen?

BROWN: All that I could get, based on my background in Soviet affairs, was that there was a monumental Soviet foul-up. Our relations with the Soviet Union at that time were very difficult. You should recall the momentum of the Cold War. Remember, we're talking about the situation in 1983, when we still faced a very tough Soviet Union. I had served in the Soviet Union twice, first in the 1960s and later in the 1970s and recall Soviet attitudes at the time.

As of 1983 the Soviet military commands had very hard and harsh criteria for meeting what they regarded as a whole series of American probes of their air space. They were dealing with all of these alleged spy and reconnaissance flights along their borders by U.S. aircraft using all of our high altitude technology. They knew that these flights were taking place and, during much of the Cold War, there was nothing that the Soviets could do about it.

In this case Soviet radar picked up a large aircraft which went off course. It not only went

off the commercial aircraft course, but it flew over a large area of closed Soviet air space. It flew what a local Soviet air command concluded was a reconnaissance flight deep into Soviet air space for a great distance and for an extended period of time. The Soviet air defense command evidently ordered the aircraft to be shot down. Indeed, at the time the Soviet fighter pilot was given medals for having shot down the Korean airplane. So you need to consider Soviet military policy and the harshness of the Cold War.

Later on, the question arose: How could this South Korean aircraft have gone so far off course and maintained this course for so long? The answer given at the time is that the South Korean pilot punched in the wrong numbers into his navigation computer when he took off from Anchorage, Alaska, bound for Seoul, South Korea. But as usually happens in such tragedies, there was a school of thought which said that there was more to this than appeared to be the case. Eventually, we got a more refined transcription of the Soviet pilot's report than what we originally heard. NSA [National Security Agency] and other technical experts reviewed it. Some of them then heard more than we had heard. It wasn't that we were being denied information. It's just that a more careful, re-reading of the taped conversation gave us more information, which then raised more questions. It was an awful tragedy but, in a sense, not that surprising to me, given my background in Soviet affairs.

Another terrible incident took place later on, when about half of the South Korean cabinet was assassinated in Rangoon, Burma, in about November, 1983. The Burmese dictatorial regime now calls the country "Myanmar" instead of Burma. This horrible incident took place just after Michael Deaver's second visit to East Asia, on which I accompanied him. Having fixed up a very nice schedule for President Reagan's visit to South Korea, we said goodbye to the South Korean Foreign Minister and flew off to Hawaii. We woke up a day or two later to learn that the Foreign Minister and about half of the South Korean cabinet had been blown to bits in Rangoon.

Q: You might explain who did this terrible deed.

BROWN: A North Korean commando team had infiltrated Rangoon and arranged this assassination. [FYI: This incident is also discussed in some detail in the interview with Harry Dunlop in the Foreign Affairs Oral History Program. END FYI] They were trying to kill President Chen Doo Hwan, who was on a visit to Burma. His car was somehow delayed. The cars carrying the other members of the cabinet went on ahead to a memorial site, and there they were blown to bits by explosives set by this North Korean commando team. This was a horrible incident, and it caused great concern that South Korea might respond by launching a strike against the North Koreans. However, the South Koreans didn't do this.

Q: I assume that the Bureau of East Asian Affairs was telling everybody what had happened in Rangoon.

BROWN: Oh, yes. We received the South Korean ambassador in Washington and went

all out in that respect. This incident coincided with the first visit of a Chinese Foreign Minister, Wu Xueqian, to the United States. I was up in Boston, Massachusetts, when this happened. I met Minister Wu as he arrived from Canada and we chatted in the VIP [Very Important Person] suite at Logan International Airport in Boston.

Finally, the subject of the bombing attack on the South Korean cabinet came up. All Wu could say was: "This is a tragedy." He then added, "We've had South Korean sports teams and other groups come to China to visit for Olympic and sports-related events." That told me right away that this was his way of saying: "We understand and we sympathize. However, we can't go public about this." He said exactly the same thing at his meeting with Secretary Shultz on the next day. This matter was obviously embarrassing for the Chinese because the North Koreans were supposedly their very close allies.

Somewhat later a clearer view of this incident came out by somewhat peculiar means. There was a trial of the North Korean commando assassins in Rangoon, who had been captured. They were found guilty of murder by a Burmese court in Rangoon. One day People's Daily, the official Chinese Communist newspaper, ran two articles, side by side, on the front page. On one side of the page was an account of the findings by the Rangoon Court. On the other side, taking up exactly the same number of lines of type and the same amount of space was the North Korean denial of any complicity in the incident. There was no comment, but that was clearly their way of saying: "Reader, make up your own mind!" Everybody knew what that meant.

Then there was a visit of the President of China, Zhao Ziyang, to the United States in January 1984. I flew out to Honolulu to greet him. Our ambassador to China, Art Hummel, was either with him or joined the official party to greet him on his arrival in the United States. We gave him a nice program, which involved an aerial overview of Pearl Harbor from a helicopter. There was also a visit to the hulk of the USS ARIZONA and a visit out to the Cultural Center, which the Mormons operate on the other side of Oahu. I got a kick out of the Chinese watching these Pacific Island cultural dances, including the waving of spears and sticking out of tongues. I could just imagine the Chinese saying to themselves: "You know, we've got minority groups like that in China. It would be a good tourist thing to trot them out and do their sort of primitive thing for the tourists." They really seemed to enjoy this presentation.

All in all, Zhao Ziyang's visit to the U.S. went very well. Zhao seemed very pleased with his reception, the White House dinner, and all of that. Demonstrations by pro-Taiwan people were kept down at the Ellipse [South of the White House] at a proper distance. However, while the speeches were being made on the White House lawn, you could hear shouts by the Taiwanese protestors down there on the Ellipse.

One big event that was taking place behind the scenes was the negotiation of a nuclear cooperation agreement between the U.S. and the PRC [People's Republic of China]. Here, the key U.S. negotiator at the time was Ambassador Richard T. Kennedy. He was a unique personality who had been working in the field of arms control for a long time.

Q: I've interviewed him, by the way. He's dead now.

BROWN: He's dead? Well, since he has passed away, I would repeat that Ambassador Kennedy was a very unique personality. In that labyrinthine world of arms control and nuclear questions, one can, in a certain sense, sympathize with Kennedy's phobias and concerns that everybody was out to get him on the Congressional front. There was great concern in the Congress about nuclear cooperation with the Chinese. In some cases, I would say that there was a well founded concern that we might be giving away too much to the Chinese in this area.

While Zhao Ziyang was being given the red carpet tour through Colonial Williamsburg, U.S. and Chinese arms control negotiators were in one of the key conference rooms. In these negotiations Ambassador Kennedy was trying to get from the Chinese a commitment that they would not help any other country to develop a nuclear explosive device. The chief Chinese negotiator was Jao. The number two man on their delegation for this purpose was Zhu Qizhen. He was very quiet. He was head of the North American desk in the Chinese Foreign Ministry. He later became a Vice Foreign Minister. He spoke excellent English but seldom said anything. He was firm, polite, and very tough.

The dialogue in these negotiations ran something like this. Ambassador Kennedy explained his problems with Congress. To reach a treaty that would be endorsed by the United States Senate, he would have to get an ironclad commitment from the Chinese that they would not assist anybody in the production of any explosive nuclear device. The Chinese response to this was like a broken record: "China stands against nuclear proliferation. China has no intention of proliferating nuclear weapons. China won't help any country to develop a nuclear bomb. This is settled, Chinese policy." Ambassador Kennedy was saying: "Thank you very much for those remarks, but we need a specific commitment from you. When you refer to a 'nuclear bomb,' what we need from you is language which includes mention, specifically, any kind of nuclear device." The Chinese would repeat their formulation. Ambassador Kennedy, who was desperate to get something with which he could work and help to make this visit successful, wanted something which would make it possible to go to Congress and say that we've got a firm commitment. This was a very important, policy objective of ours at the time.

However, Kennedy couldn't persuade the Chinese to go any further. Then Kennedy resorted to something else. He said, "I need to be able to go to the Congress and say, 'It is my understanding, as a result of these talks with the Chinese, that China has a policy of not helping any country to explode a nuclear device.' I need to be able to say that in public, and I need it to stand, unrefuted by a Chinese Government statement. Can I do that?" The Chinese replied by playing the same old record.. We went around and around. Kennedy made a further effort. He said, "I need to be able to say this, unrefuted by your side." Finally, Zhu, who had said nothing during all of this, said, "Ke Yi" which, in Chinese, means: "Can do; it's okay."

Ambassador Kennedy said, "Fine." Well, this outcome may have been all right for the moment, but that obviously wasn't going to be enough to stand in Congress. I'll tell you, from my viewpoint, right then and there I said to myself, because we had sensitive information on Chinese cooperation with the Pakistanis: "If that is the extent of the Chinese commitment, it's an awfully thin thread on which to hang a nuclear agreement, especially given what we do know." We had evidence that there were Chinese experts going into sensitive, Pakistani nuclear facilities.

Zhao Ziyang's visit to the United States was deemed a success. This nuclear issue was set aside for further discussions during President Reagan's visit to China. Taking an issue like this and somehow inserting it into the agenda for a Presidential visit to China is something which is really a potentially divisive and even explosive matter. Sure enough, later on, when President Reagan's official party had gotten as far as Honolulu en route to China, in came a sensitive report of the latest visit to Kahuta by Chinese experts. Kahuta was a secret Pakistani nuclear weapons development facility. This report had come over from the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] with a note for President Reagan by William Casey, Director of Central Intelligence, to the effect: "Mr. President, you may want to look into this matter."

At this point I was Acting Assistant Secretary for East Affairs in the absence of Paul Wolfowitz, who was a member of the President's large party for the visit to China. I conferred with Howard Schaeffer of NEA. The best thing that we could do was to put together a message which called attention to this report on the latest visit by Chinese officials to Kahuta recommend that it be brought to the attention of the President, because it concerned a very delicate matter.

Well, there's a little insight and background to this whole business, which subsequently escalated into scandals and so forth. You have to be very careful in dealing with such matters. You also have to be prepared for unpleasant surprises. To load such an issue into a Presidential visit is a very tricky business. On the one hand, you want the President to have a successful visit, and it's a good thing to have all kinds of goodies to be signed and so forth. But when you throw this kind of an issue into the mixture, it's potentially very sensitive.

The issue of nuclear cooperation was again put off because of this background. And rightly so. In the end, as we know, the Chinese did help the Pakistanis to develop a nuclear device. In my view we had no business proceeding on the basis of such a slender thread as the Chinese assurance to us which I have just outlined.

Q: During this period of time were you getting information or were you concerned about what China was doing, particularly through Chinese students, Chinese nationals, and people of ethnic Chinese ancestry, using the vacuum cleaner approach, to suck out all of our secrets? I am speaking particularly of nuclear secrets but I am also referring to other kinds of secrets.

BROWN: We were still in the relatively earlier stages of our relations with China. What we were getting was a great surge of PRC students coming to the United States. These students were of two categories: there were officially sponsored students and private students, using their own resources or those of their families to put together the necessary means to study in the U.S.

I had seen some of these students at the University of New Hampshire. Typically, they were very good and very serious students. With my background, I did not go out to cultivate them. I did not want, in any way, inadvertently to taint them. I didn't know enough about their specific backgrounds.

Toward the end of Zhao Ziyang's visit to Washington the official party of the Chinese President gave a big reception, at which I was introduced to the sons and daughters of many of China's top leaders. They had been stashed all over the place in the United States. Now they came out of the woodwork, if you will, to see their visiting relatives. It was remarkable to see how many of these young people were introduced to me as the sons and daughters of this or that high-ranking Chinese official.

By this time, not only did the Chinese have an embassy, but they had a number of consulates around the United States. In the Chinese embassy and consulates, there were science officers and others assigned who were very clearly involved in this vacuum cleaning operation. Here we ran into that phenomenon of foreigners finding that so much is available from public sources. Now there were Chinese students who could, and did, enroll in Departments of Physics and Nuclear Physics and everything else, as did Iranians, Iraqis, and so forth. As far as control of sensitive information, I often said to myself: "I'd hate to be the FBI and others responsible for looking at this area, because it was like sand going through your hands." There were so many of these Chinese and nationals of other countries in the U.S. So much of what they were looking for was freely available. They were collecting much intelligence as graduate students, building up friendships. Then, as post-graduates, one could reckon that, over time, they would work themselves, one way or another, into those positions which gave them access to the crown jewels [highly classified information].

Q: There used to be a cartoon called, "Spy Versus Spy," which showed spies doing different things to each other. Did you have any feeling that there was a kind of war going on involving "Spy Versus Spy" in the United States between the Taiwanese and the PRC, with their agents dealing with people in the Chinese community?

BROWN: Oh, yes. They were both competing for access and information. Taiwan had a big lead, of course, in this regard, both in terms of time, cultivation of sources, long-term connections, the attitude of established Chinese-American businessmen, the Cold War, and Mao Tse-tung's horrible experiments in Mainland China, including the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. These were factors which weighed very heavily in this respect. However, PRC people were out there busily cultivating sources.

There was one rather grim and very dramatic episode in this connection, in which I was involved. This involved a naturalized American citizen of Chinese ancestry, named Henry Liu, a journalist in California. He lived in Daly City, in the district of Congressman Tom Lantos [Democrat, California]. Lantos is a Jewish Congressman and a Holocaust survivor. He is also a close friend of Israel and a strong critic of dictators, autocrats, and those who abuse human rights.

It happened that Henry Liu had been writing a series of articles critical of Chiang Ching-kuo [President of the Republic of China and the son of Chiang Kai-shek] on Taiwan. One day Liu was assassinated in his garage by a group of Asians. I recall that they drove up to Liu's house in a station wagon and blew him away. This incident rapidly escalated as the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] looked into the murder and established that it had been perpetrated by the Bamboo Gang, a Chinese triad mafia-type gangster group.

The leader of the murderers, Ch'en Ch'i-li had come from Taiwan, touched base with local contacts, and then arranged the deed. Obviously, Ch'en had some earlier misgivings. He left a cassette tape with someone as an insurance policy just in case anything went wrong later on. In a telephonic message he left word that this tape recording was available some place. As the case developed, it was obvious that Taiwan Military Intelligence [the IBMND] had engineered the assassination. Its head, Admiral Wang Hsi-ling, at one time had been Military Attache in the Republic of China embassy in Washington. He had now risen to be the head of Taiwan Military Intelligence [the IBMND], had reportedly hired Ch'en, and had given him a smattering of training. Off Ch'en had done the job through his support group, and returned to Taiwan.

Well, the more we dug into this, the dirtier it became. Congressman Steve Solarz [Democrat, California], Chairman of the Asian Sub-Committee of the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee and was in a high fury over this matter. There was talk of state-sponsored terrorism. This was a very complicated matter.

A hearing was scheduled before Congressman Solarz's sub-committee. I was to testify. As it turned out, I was essentially the main government witness. The hearing was held in one of the large House of Representatives hearing rooms, which was packed for the occasion, with standing room only. There were people of all stripes there, including journalists, photographers, the Taiwanese liberation people, conservative Taiwanese, PRC [People's Republic of China] supporters and people in between.

I recall that shortly before the hearing we did a confidential briefing for Congressman Steve Solarz. I had an agent from the FBI with me. This was clearly a nasty case. How shall I put it? It appeared that Henry Liu had been in contact with, shall we say, "different people of different, political persuasions" and from "different sides of the street," if I can use that expression. That kind of trade is dangerous enough as it is, but there is nothing so dangerous as working different sides of the street simultaneously. That is especially dangerous.

Throughout all of this, it was my responsibility to meet periodically with Fred Chien, former deputy foreign minister of the Republic of China, and now the head of the Taiwan Office in Washington, which was called “TECRO” [Taiwan Economic and Cultural Representative Office]. He was obviously in a very delicate position. I would meet him with Mark Pratt, a Foreign Service officer who was my key officer on such matters, at my side.

Q: Was Mark Pratt the person who was trying to help you with something? We were trying to remember his name.

BROWN: He and I had studied Chinese together. He was a China hand who had been Political Counselor when I was DCM in Taipei and when I opened the AIT Office there in 1979. Before he retired, he was consul general in Guangzhou, also known as Canton. He was a close friend of mine. Mark was head of the relevant office in the Department of State dealing with Taiwan. We would meet with Fred Chien offsite [outside the State Department]. We had very good contacts and a good working relationship with Chien.

I figured that Fred Chien was in a very delicate position in terms of reporting back to Taiwan on this issue. So the way I handled this was to give him pieces of paper [in effect, aide memoirs] so that he could, if he wanted to do this, report: “Brown gave me this text today and, obviously, we have to deal with it.” What we were asking for was access to the assassins and to Admiral Wang. We wanted to send Federal agents to Taiwan and get the story. This was a very painful exercise to put the Taiwanese through. I said to Fred Chien: “You have a cancer in your side. You had better operate very quickly, or it will consume you.”

So it was against that background that we provided Congressman Steve Solarz with a confidential briefing. Then I went alone to see Congressman Tom Lantos and give him a distilled briefing of the real facts behind the case. On the next day, we went into open hearings. Congressman Steve Solarz said to me on the record: “How would you characterize this incident?” I said something like, “I would say that it was a horrible crime.” He asked: “What are you doing about it?” I said, that we were pressing for a full, clear explanation of what happened to ensure that those responsible are dealt with appropriately.

Coming back to the issue of characterization of this matter, what Congressmen Solarz and Lantos were aiming at and what I wanted to avoid were characterizations which could lead to calling this incident a case of state-sponsored terrorism. That would be a very delicate business, given our relationship with Taiwan. In our exchanges when I characterized this event as a horrible murder,” Congressman asked, “Would you call this an every day, garden variety of murder?” [Laughter] Years later, Congressman Lantos, whom I very much admire, and I were to meet, and we joked about this exchange. He knew the real story and he was doing his duty as the elected representative of his constituency.

Ultimately, Admiral Wang was tried and sentenced to prison for authorizing this horrible event. We were assured at the highest official level in Taiwan that the responsibility went no further than the Admiral. We were told, as they say in such cases, that this was a rogue operation carried out by this Admiral without higher authority, who was reportedly acting way beyond his brief as the Director of Taiwan Military Intelligence.

Q: What was your analysis of this matter? Did you feel that it probably was a rogue operation because Chiang Ching-kuo...

BROWN: Chiang was the President of Taiwan. For many years virtually his entire career had been in the security field. One could speculate that Chiang Ching-kuo knew about it. On the other hand, we knew that we were never, ever going to get further than that. After all, there are such things as rogue operations.

Q: There is also the historical example of King Henry II of England saying of Thomas of Canterbury: "Will no one rid me of this man?"

BROWN: Let's face it. In our own history we've had some disasters which one could characterize as rogue operations. We wanted to see those responsible punished, but at the same time we did not see the incident as part of an overall campaign of Taiwan-supported terror in the U.S. and we did not want to see the incident exploited to the benefit of Beijing.

Q: Speaking of this, during this time, did you feel that you were pretty well protected and covered, with Gaston Sigur on the staff of the National Security Council, from Oliver North-type of operations which caused so much trouble, to some extent in connection with the S ACHILLEA LAIR situation, but particularly in Central America? Were you concerned about cowboys getting involved?

BROWN: Yes, but I didn't know much about that situation at the time. I believe that Gaston Sigur had had a word with somebody, so that someone else went to the Sultan of Brunei to try and get some money for Central American operations in support of the Contras. However, I didn't know this at the time. I know that Gaston Sigur swore that that was the extent of it. Somebody in the Central American operation wanted to get some money from the Government of the Sultan of Brunei. Gaston's role was simply limited to saying to someone that, "Someone would like to come and see you."

Q: So you didn't have any feeling that Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, or someone in the NSC staff, was playing around in your area?

BROWN: No, I don't specifically recall anything there. I would have been sensitive about it if I had heard anything, because we did have the cowboy phenomenon to be concerned about at the time. I was certainly unaware of it at the time. Maybe it happened later on. [Addendum: Sometime after this interview I met with Jay Taylor, a retired FSO who authored an outstanding biography of Chiang Ching-kuo titled The Generalissimo's Son:

Chiang Ching-kuo and the Revolutions in China and Taiwan which covers the Henry Liu case. (At the time we met, Jay's book had not yet appeared in print.) Jay told me that Gaston Sigur had called Fred Chien and asked him to receive Oliver North who then visited Fred along with the Nicaraguan Contra leader Alfredo Caldero. Caldero asked for a million dollar donation from Taiwan for the Contras. The donation was made. Jay speculated that part of the understanding was that Washington would contain and limit the damage of the Liu murder case. Whether or not that was true, I cite this as an example of how complex international relations, including those involving White House operatives, can get behind the scenes and without the knowledge of a Foreign Service Officer handling an explosive issue.]

Q: I'm not familiar with the matter. I'm just asking because of the timing of it. On the NSC staff you had some elements...

BROWN: There were elements on the NSC staff...

Q: Who were doing certain things.

BROWN: Now, coming back to China, there was yet another visit which I made during this period. That was the visit of Treasury Secretary Donald Regan, who had previously been on the White House staff but now had moved to the Treasury Department. Again, at the risk of repetition, out of the blue I was told that Regan wanted me to accompany him. As a result, I went out to East Asia with Regan, who had around him a group of "Assistant Secretaries-Designate" They were not yet confirmed by the Senate and they were nervous. Regan had a fiery temper.

Q: Yes, he had that reputation.

BROWN: So there was some delicacy required there. My attitude was that, by God, I was here for a purpose, and that purpose was to give him the best advice that I could. He had never been to China. He was a highly successful man with a Wall Street background who had a very important job in the White House. So I just spoke with Secretary Regan very frankly at certain points.

Among the points he made were the need to standardize Chinese tariffs on imported goods which affected American businessmen living in China there, the issue of transparency, and Chinese protectionism. I said to him: "You know, the thing that the Chinese probably very much respect in your background, if they have a book" on you, and they must have one, is that you have been a highly successful, Wall Street businessman for 35 years. So just put it in those terms. Tell them as Secretary of the Treasury and one who was on Wall Street for 35 years, that if they want to move ahead and have a constructive Sino-American relationship, they need to open up their market, get some transparency, and get rid of their protectionism. Just lay it out that way." And that is what he did.

For instance, after hearing complaints at breakfast with the American Chamber of Commerce in Beijing. He said to the Chinese: "I've heard from American businessmen that they go to one clearance point and get one tariff quote, but when they go to another point they get another tariff on the same goods."

Well, the Chinese didn't like to hear this. They said, "Obviously, there has been some misunderstanding." However, he had a litany of American business concerns, which he laid out. On the question of the Sino-American trade balance, the relevant person he met with was a Chinese lady. She was Minister of Trade and Commerce. She had the official line all ready, which has been used by the Chinese ever since. She said, "Your statistics vary from our statistics. You are obviously counting a lot of merchandise which really comes out of Hong Kong."

Our side said, "Wait a minute. This merchandise was made in China. It comes through Hong Kong and may have a little done to it, but these are Chinese products. The Chinese say, "Oh, no, those are really Hong Kong products, and, therefore, you have a distorted perception of the balance of trade." This was all malarkey, but that's what the Chinese resorted to, both then, in 1983, and ever after.

Now I'll give you another incident. This is somewhat on a tangent. Remember that Regan's visit came before the visit to China by President Reagan. It was important to me to see how the Chinese would handle a visit by an American cabinet minister, which was to be followed later on by a visit by President Reagan. They offered and Regan readily accepted a side trip to Xian.

Q: This is where the terra cotta soldiers are buried in the ground.

BROWN: Yes, outside the city of Xian, one of China's ancient capitals.

We received red carpet treatment during our visit there. However, as Secretary of the Treasury Regan was inside the railway station VIP [Very Important Person] room with the provincial governor, I went on board the buses that we were to take and looked at the schedule in Chinese, as well as in English. I raced out to Regan's entourage said, "There's something I don't like on this itinerary." They said, "What do you mean?" I said, "They're going to take us to the 'Warm Springs' for lunch. We shouldn't go to the Warm Springs for lunch. We should take our lunches to the Terra Cotta Army site."

This caused quite a bit of consternation on the Chinese side. They said, "We can't do that. It's all been prepared." I said, "We're not stopping there." They said, "But the lunches are on the trucks, and the trucks are ready to depart." I said, "Well, take the lunches off the trucks, put them on the buses, we'll take them with us, and we'll eat those lunches at the terra cotta army site." My reason for doing this was as follows. I knew that the "Warm Springs" were the site of the abduction of Chiang Kai-shek in December, 1936, when the Communists, including Zhou En-lai and company, were hooked up with a Chinese warlord, Chang Hsueh-liang.

Q: Was this the so-called “young marshal?”

BROWN: Yes, the Communist idea was to try and force Chiang Kai-shek into the embarrassing position of agreeing to concentrate on fighting the Japanese rather than fighting them. So they engineered with the warlord the abduction of Chiang Kai-shek. As Chiang Kai-shek woke up in the middle of the night, hearing strange sounds, the story is that he leapt, naked, out of bed and jumped out the window to escape. He was subsequently apprehended. Chiang Kai-shek left his false teeth in a glass of water on a night stand next to his bed. I had heard that millions of Chinese internal tourists were treated to this site and told: “Here's the bed, the way it was. There are Chiang Kai-shek's teeth in the glass of water.” I didn't know if it was their intention to let Secretary of the Treasury Regan be treated to this kind of presentation and set a precedent for other, senior U.S. official visitors to China, with millions of Chinese giggling in the background, at the expense of our friends on Taiwan, including the son of Chiang Kai-shek, President Chiang Ching-kuo.

That was just a spot decision on my part. I'll never know the truth, but I saw a danger of something like that happening, and that's the way I handled the matter. At times you just have to do that, be it the Bittenberg Cemetery issue [in Germany where President Reagan visited a cemetery in which some SS troops were buried] or something else. You just have to use your own judgment and head things off on the basis of your judgment, before they really begin to jell, become set in cement, and turn out to be a cause celebre. As a preview for the Presidential visit, I could bring things like this back to Washington and say to people like Gaston Sigur, Paul Wolfowitz, and Armitage: “Beware, watch out and don't let this happen.”

Speaking of senior visits, that I've described briefly my involvement in the visit of Zhao Ziyang. Remember that he was subsequently disgraced and dismissed from office. He remains under house arrest. He was, and still is, relatively speaking, a moderate and a reformer. He was caught up in the Tiananmen Square business [in 1989]. He was pictured as a softie and was dismissed from office. Ever since then he has been under the equivalent of house arrest. It's kind of sad when you look back on this incident.

Another notable visit that I would mention was the first visit to the United States by a Chinese Minister of Defense, Zhang Aiping. He was an elderly figure, a veteran of the Long March and was running China's nuclear weapons program. This visit was a high priority in the view of Secretary of Defense Weinberger and the U.S. Department of Defense. He was well received.

I attended his briefing in the Pentagon's tank [classified conference room], the inner sanctum, with Secretary Weinberger. It was attended by a very small group. Weinberger described our latest missile tests, which splashed down in Kwajalein. That's why there always was a Soviet intelligence ship to watch our activities there. Weinberger described our capabilities vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, in the atmosphere which prevailed. The

Chinese were involved in this up to their necks with us, because, as of 1983, they remained very fearful of the Soviet colossus to their North. That's what was driving so much of the Sino-American relationship, the strategic posture regarding the Great Bear.

Obviously, there were elements in the Pentagon who wanted to go further and to develop more professional relationships with the uniformed, Chinese military. That's understandable, but this relationship had to be modulated and kept under control. We had problems within the Pentagon including the staff of Secretary of the Navy John Lehman.

When the head of the Chinese Navy made the first, high-level visit over here, Secretary Lehman's group fenced it off. They didn't want representatives of the Department of State and other U.S. Government agencies attending. They wanted this meeting to be limited to themselves, but sent to the State Department requests to approve this torpedo, that patrol boat, and that piece of machinery to be shown to the Chinese. This all had to be handled very carefully. Interdepartmental rivalries broke out.

Returning to Zhang Aiping's visit, there was another part of the visit which was, in a sense, almost arcane. That is, his call on Secretary of State George Shultz. By now we were getting even more information on Chinese defense cooperation with Pakistan on the nuclear front. Somehow, this question had to be addressed. Shultz had a special problem in this connection. With his background as a former executive of the Bechtel Corporation, he was given legal advice that he could not discuss any nuclear matters with the Chinese. Discussions of that kind of thing would have to be handled by somebody else, namely, his deputy, Kenneth Damm.

The way it worked out, as we were coming up the elevator to have Zhang Aiping meet with Secretary Shultz, I mentioned to Chinese Ambassador Zhang Wenjing, an elderly, experienced and sophisticated diplomat: "We'll have to discuss nuclear matters. When that happens, Secretary Shultz will have to recuse [i.e., excuse] himself." Ambassador Jiang just looked at me, as if he had never heard that term before. I said, "Since Secretary Shultz previously worked for the Bechtel Corporation, under our guidelines he can't talk about nuclear matters, so there will come a time when he leaves the room where we will be meeting." Ambassador Zhang's eyes widened, as the prospect of Secretary Shultz leaving the room where he was meeting with the Chinese Minister of Defense didn't strike him as particularly attractive. However, we were already on our way up to the meeting, and there was nothing further he could do about it.

Secretary Shultz and the Chinese Defense Minister had a nice talk about the Soviet threat, as well as general matters of defense cooperation. Then Shultz said, "Mr. Minister, there's another matter which we have to raise with you. Unfortunately, I won't be able to participate in the discussion. I'll have to recuse myself." A rapid exchange went through the interpreters. Zhang Aiping looked rather puzzled. Secretary Shultz left the room, and Kenneth Dam Deputy Secretary of State, then took up the subject.

As I said, Zhang Aiping was a rough, tough, old veteran. I could sense that he was

becoming very unhappy with this conversation after Secretary Shultz left the room. Finally, he said, "What is it that bothers you?" Dam said that there have been reports of visits by Chinese experts to the Pakistani nuclear facility at Kahuta, a secret facility closed to outsiders. Such visits were a matter of great concern, because that facility was not covered under the nuclear proliferation agreement. (End of tape)

Zhang Aiping said something like: "We don't have any people there. If you think we have any people there, go there and try to find them."

After that, Zhang Aiping flicked Ken Dam's lapel with his fingertips. To me this was a remarkable gesture. If you talk about body language, his lightly flicking his fingertips across Ken Dam's lapel seemed insulting. Dam looked very uncomfortable. Zhang Aiping left the room, and that was the end of the discussion. I don't know whether the other people in the room sensed what I did, but Zhang Aiping, in effect, was thumbing his nose at Kenneth Dam.

Q: A gesture of dismissal...

BROWN: Yes. Then Zhang Aiping then went off to the National War College and had dinner with Secretary of Defense Weinberger. To me this episode showed the hard face of the Chinese Government when it came down to a very important matter. That is, they were helping the Pakistanis in nuclear matters. They were right on the edge or over the line, and they weren't backing off from doing that.

Q: What was our analysis of what the Chinese wanted from this kind of help to the Pakistanis?

BROWN: The answer is to counter India. The Chinese had a great rivalry with India, which had already exploded a nuclear device. India was, at the time, a country of 800 million people and expanding rapidly. It was a country which had a very significant, industrial defense complex. It was a country which, from the viewpoint of the Chinese had long hungered to take over Tibet. In Chinese minds this went way back to British Indian colonial aspirations. The Chinese had fought a war with India on the Himalayan border in 1962. The Chinese had defeated the Indians, but there were and are outstanding problems of territory along the frontier between the two countries. The Indians still claim that the Chinese are occupying Indian territory, but the Chinese refuse to accept that.

Therefore, with the Cold War overlay, that is, with the Soviets backing the Indians, what would be more natural than that the Chinese would back the Pakistanis against the Indians?

Q: Well, I think, Bill, that this is a pretty good place to stop. However, I would like to ask if there is anything else that we should discuss regarding China at this time?

BROWN: I think that we've probably gone far enough. I just want to emphasize, through

it all, that our East Asian team held together. We were able to “liberalize” the export licensing procedure for China, but, in relative terms, it was cautious and designed to enable the PRC to cope better with the Soviet threat, while minimizing the effect on Taiwan. We went ahead and approved a deal whereby Taiwan spent an enormous amount of money on building a defensive fighter airplane, the IDF (I'm the one who came up with the idea of three letters: IDF, that is, “Independent, Defensive Fighter.”) We let General Dynamics do the wind tunneling and other monitoring for producing this fighter and we licensed a certain engine for export to Taiwan, although we knew that this aircraft would be very expensive and very difficult for Taiwan to develop. Taiwan eventually built this aircraft. This is long before the real breakthrough when George Bush, running for reelection down in Texas in 1992, he said, “Okay, F-16 fighters (which were built by General Dynamics in Texas) will be sold to Taiwan.” This was a huge leap forward qualitatively for those days.

So we did these things and were fairly satisfied. However, remember the team we had and the strategic environment in which all of this was being done.

Q: All right. The next time, something I would like to ask you, although this was not your direct responsibility, concerns your position as principal deputy assistant secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Can we talk more about the Philippines and how things developed there? You've already talked about how the presidential visit went.

BROWN: Yes. I will be happy to talk about it. However, you really should be getting John Monjo, who managed this as the relevant deputy assistant secretary of State. I certainly was involved as the principal deputy assistant secretary, but...

Q: I want to get your perspective on that matter during the time that you were in EAP.

If you want to raise Philippine issues, you may want to consider other aspects of ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations]. Secretary of State Shultz was an almost religiously dedicated supporter of the idea that the Secretary should appear at ASEAN conferences and do his thing. He was great, in this respect. I might mention that later on.

Q: Today is June 21, 1999. This is a continuation of the interview with Bill Brown. Bill, do you want to discuss our relations with Australia?

BROWN: Yes. At the risk of repetition, I thought that I would touch on the U.S.-Australian relationship during my time in EAP and also the Pacific Islands since I dealt with those as well.

I mentioned Australia in my discussion of handling the New Zealand crisis in 1984 which arose from the New Zealand Labour Party's stance on visits to New Zealand by nuclear ships, i.e., nuclear powered or potentially nuclear armed ships. At the end of an ASEAN

conference in July 1984 Secretary of State Shultz made a beeline for Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke in Canberra and worked out with him our common approach to this issue before flying to Wellington for the annual ANZUS meeting. The Australian Foreign Minister, Bill Hayden, was a rival of Hawke within the Australian Labor Party. Although he was nominally subordinate to Hawke, Hayden had been bumped from the party nomination to be Prime Minister, which had gone to Hawke. Hayden was resentful as a result, and there was very apparent tension between the two of them. I mention that aspect, but let me broaden the discussion a little bit.

We had had a long, close relationship with Australia, particularly in the wake of World War II. So Australians of our age group at the time, as well as older Australians, had a good, warm feeling for our joint efforts against the Japanese, as well as against the Germans and Italians, if you will, in the Middle East, during World War II. The Aussies and the New Zealanders came to us after World War II and really pushed the concept of what became the ANZUS alliance, involving Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. The treaty embodying this alliance meant that we would cooperate in strategic, military, intelligence, and political matters. There were annual meetings of the ANZUS countries at the level of Secretary of State and their Foreign Ministers. These meetings often involved even more senior figures, including, at times, Prime Ministers.

Until I assumed this job, as I may have mentioned before, I had a very warm feeling, as a diplomat, for my Australian counterparts. I would often level with them, as I would not level with any other, foreign diplomats. I thought we shared a broad image of two, large countries, with a frontier mentality and a common outlook on most issues. However, when I got into handling the bilateral relationship, I soon learned that it would not always be quite that easy. The Australians had mixed emotions about the United States. Perhaps it's too much to say that they had a love-hate relationship with the United States, but there was this ongoing and understandable uneasiness with Uncle Sam, whom they tended to think of as an 800 pound gorilla.

We were rivals in certain ways and increasingly so in the field of trade. For example, there was the issue of relations with Japan and the beef market. The Australians were distressed to see the Americans capture, maintain, and even expand our market share of the Japanese beef market, in competition with Australian beef from "range fed" cattle. They were always suspicious that we were manipulating the trade with Japan at Australian expense. Australian trade with Japan was extremely important to them in terms of their shipments of beef, grain, iron ore, coal, and some precious metals to Japan.

To a significant degree, the Australians shared with us a common outlook on China and the Chinese problem, including the problem posed by Chinese communism. The Australians had fought by our side, not only during World War I and II, but also during the Korean and Vietnam Wars. During the Korean War there was an Australian detachment in the Commonwealth Brigade on our right flank, when I served as a Marine in Korea. They and the New Zealanders had also sent troops to Vietnam which we appreciated but which in political terms was now a negative cloud in our relationship of

the 1980s.

Australia had a common outlook, to a significant degree, on the Soviet threat. However, we found that at the political or popular level, the Australian Labor Party [ALP] had within it progressive leftists who clearly doubted the need for Australian cooperation with the U.S., to the degree that they had with us, vis-a-vis the Soviets. This most especially concerned what they called the Joint Defense Facilities. We had defense facilities which were jointly operated and jointly manned but which the average Australian, including the Prime Minister, often referred to as the American bases. These facilities jointly monitored the Soviet missile launches, including their ignition and track. Reports on these launches were transmitted by a U.S. military satellite and then sent back down to Australia for some special, technical reason. Then these signals were sent into the Pentagon and other agencies of the U.S. Government. At the time these facilities were very important to us.

These defense facilities caused considerable unease at the common, grass roots, political level, and particularly among the Left Progressives, the environmentalists, and so forth. There was a significant resonance among members of the Australia Left who sympathized with the New Zealand Labour Party's opposition to the visits to Australia by U.S. nuclear-powered ships and ships potentially carrying nuclear weapons. So, as we dealt with New Zealand on that issue, we always had to bear in mind the possible consequences in Australia, which was much more important to us in every way.

As I said, I found that Australian diplomats had a certain ambivalence on this issue. Prime Minister Hawke firmly supported us. However, we always had to be conscious of the rivalry between Foreign Minister Bill Hayden and Prime Minister Hawke. Australian diplomats were working directly for Bill Hayden. Their attitudes toward our presence elsewhere in the Pacific Ocean area were also ambivalent.

Both the Australian and New Zealand diplomats were obsessed by French nuclear testing in the Mururoa area of French Polynesia. They had an anti-colonial bent, so that they looked one too kindly toward the French in places like New Caledonia, which was an overseas French department. We valued the French effort in NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] and in the anti-Soviet, nuclear context. The French deterrent force meant a lot to us. So there was another point of tension as not only the New Zealanders but also the Australians sought to condemn French nuclear testing, which were conducted beneath the ground surface on coral islands in French Polynesia.

Q: Had the Rainbow Warrior incident happened at this time?

BROWN: I've forgotten exactly when it came up. That was another shock in our relationship.

Q: Did this happen on your watch in EAP?

BROWN: I think this happened after my time in EAP.

Q: Okay. Somebody can look up when the Rainbow Warrior incident occurred.

BROWN: Yes. The Australians as well as the New Zealanders also had a very special, paternalistic attitude toward the Pacific Islands, particularly those located close to them, such as Papua New Guinea. The Australians had taken over the former German territory of Northeastern New Guinea, which was turned over to Great Britain after World War I under a League of Nations mandate. Britain turned over control of this territory to Australia after World War II. Papua New Guinea, as it is now called, became fully independent from Australia in 1975. From an Australian viewpoint there is an additional sensitive element; the relations of both Australia and Papua New Guinea with Indonesia, which controls the other part of New Guinea, Irian Jaya.

Papua New Guinea [PNG] received major subsidies from Australia, which was paying a major part of the budget. Australia trained the local officials who emerged to take over the administration. The Australian presence in Port Moresby, the national capital, was the key external influence on the PNG government. Australia also had a somewhat protective attitude vis-a-vis the Solomon Islands and other island groups, compared to the other great colossus, Uncle Sam. We always experienced a certain tenderness as Australian diplomats posted in the region dealt with the Pacific Island people.

So relations with both Canberra and Wellington required considerable care in management. There were some surprises. I'll give you an example, which I may already have covered. Australian Prime Minister Hawke traveled to Washington in 1984 or 1985, I believe. This was to be a grand and glorious visit prior to Hawke's running for reelection. When Hawke reached Europe en route to the United States, a story leaked that the United States was testing a dummy nuclear missile shot from somewhere around Kwajalein Island in the Pacific Ocean into the Tasman Straits between Australia and New Zealand, in international waters.

Because of their sensitivities, we did not ask the Australians to participate directly in monitoring this test. We had a quiet agreement with the Australians that we could use their air and naval facilities so that we could monitor the test. Well, that story broke just as Prime Minister Hawke was about to arrive in the United States, and it caused a big hullabaloo in the sensationalist, Australian press. I met Hawke shortly after he arrived in the U.S.

Q: Bill, preparations to conduct this test were being made, did anyone ask the Department of State whether it was a good idea to do this?

BROWN: I knew about this test in advance. We felt that it was in our national interest to conduct this test but we knew that it had to be carried out with care. We thought that we had a good arrangement with the Australians, bearing in mind Australian sensitivities in this respect. Well, when the story broke, the sensationalist, Australian press just ran away with it. When I first met Hawke in his hotel suite in Washington shortly after he arrived,

he was very emotional. He said to me: “You've got to help me. This is a disaster!” Of course, Foreign Minister Bill Hayden, who never traveled with Hawke, was back in Australia putting his own negative spin on this story. We felt that the exploitation of this story was working to our detriment and to that of Bob Hawke.

So while Hawke and Secretary of State Shultz were going through the motions of enjoying a wonderful, formal luncheon up on the eighth floor of the State Department, with hundreds of high ranking guests present, Wolfowitz, Armitage, and I were closeted in a small office with Hawke's inner entourage, including some Australians whom I had never met before. We hammered out a press statement which meant that the U.S. wouldn't use Joint U.S.-Australian defense facilities or Australian bases to monitor this test but would do it with our own resources, which would cost a lot more.

When the luncheon was over, we briefed Prime Minister Hawke and Secretary of State Shultz. Hawke was very pleased with what we had drafted. He made some remark to the effect that now he would have to cope with that so-and-so Bill Hayden telephonically. Sure enough, a phone call was arranged. Then he went downstairs in the State Department to meet with the Australian press and stunned them by saying that it had all been worked out and that it wouldn't be necessary to use Australian facilities. The Australian press just couldn't believe it, but we had gotten past that problem.

Q: How did you find your dealings with the Australian press? Was there special caution used, taking note of the fact that these journalists were very sharp people and that extra care would have to be used?

BROWN: Yes. You know, there are different elements of the press. There were conservative Australian papers, if you will, but there were also sensationalist papers which were out to manufacture any kind of a story. They would just run wild with a New Zealand story or anything to do with the joint Australian-American defense facilities which, as I said, they used to call, “the American bases in Australia.” They would jump on anything that might show a weakness on the part of Bob Hawke or trouble between Hawke and Bill Hayden. All of that was grist for their mills. So we had to be very careful in dealing with the Australian press. Similarly, as we worked the university and intellectual circuits, we had to be aware of these latent suspicions, tenderness, and sensitivities.

Now, against that background, let me now move back to the Pacific Islands. Remember that my portfolio included China, Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands. The Pacific Islands became quite an interesting part of my portfolio. I think that I mentioned before that just before assuming my role as Paul Wolfowitz's principal deputy I had gone on an orientation trip beginning with American Samoa. The chief executive of American Samoa, an Unincorporated American Territory, was Governor Coleman. He was a long-established and elected Governor of American Samoa. We were spending a remarkable amount of money on a relatively tiny population of about 46,000 [Census of 1990]. There were all kinds of federal projects under way, including radio stations.

Then I had gone next door to Western Samoa, which had a special, New Zealand connection. It had been under New Zealand tutelage. The New Zealand High Commissioner was the big man there.

From Western Samoa I went over to Fiji, a former British Crown Colony, now independent. Its Prime Minister was this, tall, regal figure, Ratu Mara. Ratu Mara was about 6' 4" or 6' 5," and came from a noble family. The importance of Fiji to the U.S. at the time was significant. Fiji had not only fought during World War II, but the Fijians continued to preserve their historic, martial background. They also had a battalion of troops in Lebanon under UNIFIL [United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon]. We were hard put to organize the multinational force of observers for the Sinai, a non-UN but international group to be the buffer and to persuade Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel to withdraw from every square inch of the Sinai Desert area. We therefore made a beeline for the Fijians, as well as others, and Ratu Mara's answer was simple. If we wanted another battalion of Fijian troops, we could have it if we would pay for it. So we paid for the recruitment, arming, and training of another battalion of troops from Fiji. I visited them later on when I was in a different capacity, as U.S. ambassador to Israel. They did a first class job. They were well trained and disciplined.

Fiji had a real, internal problem, which was to explode later on. That is, during the 19th century the British had imported Indian labor to work the sugar plantations in Fiji. That original group of Indian workers had now grown to the point that it was at least 50% of the population, and maybe amounted to 51%. In terms of parliamentary democracy, therefore, there was an understandable, Indian quest not only for parity in parliamentary representation, but for something more than parity commensurate with their numbers. The Fijians, the indigenous residents of the islands, were bound and determined that they would not countenance an Indian takeover of the islands, merely because the Indians had multiplied in numbers faster than the Fijians had. So there were all of these, how shall I call them, constitutional and parliamentary gimmicks to which the Fijians resorted to keep themselves in power. However, these were breaking down.

I was really amazed to receive a briefing by a Fijian military officer at a beautifully polished, officers' club, in the presence of the Chief of Staff of the Fijian Army, who was later to take over the country by coup d'etat. As the briefing began, the very first point made was that the primary objective of the Fijian Army was to maintain domestic tranquility. It was clear to me that the idea was to make very sure that the Indian population of Fiji would not take over power. The officer corps and the troops were composed almost entirely of indigenous Fijians. So we were paying for and contributing, on an international basis, for some battalions of Fijian troops which performed very well in our national interest in such places as Lebanon and in Sinai. However, we had to remember that those same troops had as their primary object domestic tranquility, under the circumstances which I've just described.

I visited Papua New Guinea [PNG]. This visit was useful because I found that Papua New

Guinea was gigantic, as compared with such places as Tonga, Fiji, and other island territories. All of these territories were classified under the rubric of the Pacific Islands. However, the Papua New Guineans looked upon the other islanders as little guys. As time went on and the locals became more nearly independent and the Australians began to reduce their contribution to the PNG budget, there was a sort of regressive throwback to tribalism. There were about 700 languages spoken in this country. When you got out into the bush, you found the men wearing what the Australians called “ass grass,” that is, just leaves to cover their genitals. Cannibalism had been formally abolished, but the men carried small, steel axes which were war weapons and I heard reports of isolated cannibalism.

There was a very apparent throwback to tribalism. This had an impact in Port Moresby because you found that the police were hamstrung by threats that, “if you arrest me, my clan will take retaliation against your clan back in the hinterland.” There was a distinct rise in unemployment, alcoholism, drug abuse, and a societal breakdown in Port Moresby. Our lady ambassador there was mugged on the golf course twice in broad daylight.

In the Solomon Islands there was not yet an American embassy. Our embassy in Port Moresby, PNG, covered it. Again, recollections of the great battle of Guadalcanal during World War II, where the Marines and the U.S. Army had fought, and the idea of hands across the sea with the U.S., were wearing very thin after so many years.

The major concern of the Solomon Islanders, as was the case with the residents of other island communities, was tuna fish. The people of the Solomon Islands imagined that the waters surrounding them were teeming with tuna, and over the horizons they saw large American and other country tuna factory ships coming and, from their viewpoint, vacuuming up the tuna and taking this rich resource away. They saw this practice as enriching the Yankees and others to their detriment.

The people of the Solomon Islands had been plied with Australian and New Zealand propaganda to such an extent that they all had a phobia on nuclear issues, which affected visits by nuclear-powered ships and nuclear-armed ships. All aspects of nuclear developments were very sensitive throughout the South Pacific.

Over in New Caledonia, a French dependency, there were strong stirrings for independence. There were also considerable mineral deposits, particularly of nickel ore. The French had, and continue to have, a paternalistic attitude that New Caledonia was an overseas department of France, whose budget was funded by the French taxpayer. The French considered that there was no need, at this stage in the development of New Caledonia, to give the territory independence.

In French Polynesia there was a conflict between the French determination to explode nuclear devices to help to develop their nuclear deterrent [“force de frappe,” or nuclear striking force] for potential use against the Soviets on the one hand, and the stirrings in the local population for independence. Against this, there was also the phobia felt by the

Australians, the New Zealanders, and the rest of the Pacific Islanders against the explosion of nuclear devices by France in French Polynesia.

Now, great battles had been fought in the Pacific Ocean area. On occasion we would indulge in rhetoric about World War II. However, a lot of water had flowed under that bridge, and that kind of history was wearing pretty thin as a political tactic. However, from our viewpoint this area remained very important in the Cold War rivalry with the Soviets. There was the practice of neither confirming nor denying that any American vessel of the size of a destroyer and larger might, MIGHT have a nuclear weapon on board. The same consideration applied to an F-16 or any larger aircraft. Wherever it was around the globe, it might be carrying a nuclear weapon. That stance ran counter to the New Zealand position and that of the Australian Left. It left other countries very uneasy.

with this background, on occasion we'd have an eruption in the area. Let me give you an example. An American tuna factory ship was seized off the Solomon Islands by fast patrol craft which was on loan from Australia to the Solomon Islands and manned by Australians, I believe. Locally, this was a big story. The American ship was accused of illegally vacuuming the fishing resources of the poor Solomon Islanders, and the chartered Australian patrol vessel which had apprehended the Yankee intruder was portrayed as playing the role of a rescuer.

The patrol vessel arrested this ship and towed it into port. There was a great hullabaloo in Honiara, the capital of the Solomon Islands, as well as elsewhere on this subject.

Well, it was then that I learned the workings of the Magnuson Fishing Act passed by the United States Congress. American fishing companies and their lobbies had promoted the passage of a bill which provided that, when an American fishing vessel was seized abroad, an immediate reaction was required by law. The United States would suspend the import of fish products from that country, and the U.S. Treasury would start to pay the owners of the tuna vessel for all damages that they may have suffered from the seizure and incarceration of crew and ship, as well as the deterioration of the fish on board.

A tuna factory boat is a multi-million dollar investment, with all kinds of freezer compartments and so forth. So as you tried to negotiate for release of such a vessel, whether this involved the Mexicans or a country in the South Pacific, underneath it all the implementation of the provisions of U.S. law under the Magnuson Act didn't give you much room to maneuver. The owners of the tuna boat filed immediately for damages and were screaming for the release of their vessel. In the meantime, they were being paid significant compensation for all of their losses by the Treasury Department. The other side, which seized the vessel, looked upon the whole incident as rigged, an example of U.S. imperialism lined up against them. Indeed, I was in an awkward position as I tried to negotiate its release.

Then Senator Pete Wilson [Republican, California] asked me to come to his office. He was a very nice man from San Diego, California, who had a Marine Corps DI [Drill

Instructor] hat and walking stick mounted on the wall behind his desk. Thank goodness that I had briefed him and done him a favor a couple of weeks before in connection with a speech that he was going to give on the Soviet threat in the Pacific Ocean area.

On this occasion Senator Wilson had invited two Congressmen from the San Diego area. They were in their early 30s. Their attitude was: "Send in the Seventh Fleet and tell these people that they either release that tuna vessel belonging to our constituents or we'll 'blow them out of the water!'" I reminded them of the Battle of Guadalcanal and other great battles which took place on and around the Solomon Islands during World War II and the fact that the Solomon Islands is a very poor nation, which cut no ice with them whatsoever.

So since we had no embassy in Guadalcanal, our embassy in Port Moresby in PNG covered this area. During my own visit to Guadalcanal I had met the new, incumbent Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands, who was then in the Opposition. I think that his name was Kanalorea. For weeks I had my carry-on, garment bag next to my desk in the Department of State, ready to fly out there and try to negotiate the release of the tuna boat. Kanalorea would tell me over the phone: "Well, I don't think that would be the answer. However, Mr. Brown, if I could get an invitation to come and see President Ronald Reagan, then we might be able to work something out."

Well, I had good friends at the White House, including David Laux and Gaston Sigur. However, fitting Prime Minister Kanalorea into President Reagan's schedule for a regular state visit was just impossible. So guess what they did, bless them. The National Prayer Breakfast was coming up about this time. This takes place in one of Washington's prominent hotels. Thousands of people come, both local people and from around the world to profess their dedication to the idea of national and international prayer. President Reagan regularly appeared at this event, as did the Vice President and members of the cabinet.

Well, since Prime Minister Kanalorea was an ordained, Protestant minister, we worked it out that he attended the National Prayer Breakfast. He gave the benediction at lunch, if not at breakfast, because it turned out that there was a lunch following the breakfast. We slipped Kanalorea into the White House during this event and had a photograph of him taken with President Reagan. I gave Kanalorea a farewell dinner, and he was able to go back to the Solomon Islands with a portrait of himself with President Reagan. We worked out this problem in that way.

These are matters which are very important, because many Pacific islanders feel terribly forgotten. In my days in EAP we still had some money available for AID [Agency for International Development] programs, Peace Corps volunteers, and so forth. Nowadays we have far less money available. After I retired from the Foreign Service, I gave a presentation on South Pacific problems, as seen through U.S. eyes, at a meeting of South Pacific leaders in Kauai [Hawaii] in 1995 or 1996. Before doing so, I received a State Department briefing. It was apparent that our budget outlays for the Pacific islands had

plummeted drastically. The South Pacific leaders were very resentful about this. By the 1990s, the Pacific islands had little, if any, strategic interest in current U.S. thinking. This produced a very bitter attitude on the part of many of these leaders. They had been forgotten in the U.S. budgetary process.

Now, in all of this, looking back to the period of my service in EAP, there was another phenomenon going on at the same time. That was the negotiations for what was known as the “Compact of Free Association.” This has to do with those islands previously in the “Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands,” which had been assigned to U.S. tutelage by the United Nations during the period following World War II. They included the Marshall, Caroline, and Palau Islands. These had all been taken by the Japanese from the Germans during World War I and were then heavily fortified by the Japanese. Terrific land and naval battles were fought in some of these island groups during World War II, in which we lost an awful lot of people. We took over these islands after World War II under a UN Strategic Trusteeship arrangement. Now they were looking at the goodies which Guam, an Unincorporated U.S. Territory ceded to the U.S. by Spain in 1898, had obtained from us. In short, they were looking for an even better deal.

Negotiations toward a new arrangement of their status with the U.S. had been going on for some years and various referenda had been held. They didn't want full independence from the U.S., because then they would be responsible for their own budget and they were poorly endowed with resources. However, they didn't want to remain as they had been. Now they saw the opportunity to get a good, hefty increase in U.S. federal funding.

Jurisdictionally within the United States Government, it was a fascinating picture, because they came under the Department of the Interior. That meant that they came under the Committees on the Interior of both the Senate and the House of Representatives. So, they were the special wards of these two committees, members of which would make periodic visits and receive magnificent receptions, day and night, whenever they visited the islands.

There were always requests for larger handouts. Scandals would erupt, mismanagement would be discovered, and often there was no more money. There would be a Congressional investigation, a line that one often heard from the locals was: “Oh, we're so sorry. You see, we are not sufficiently trained and educated in these complicated, budgetary procedures. However, if you'll give us another handout, the situation will be put back in order,” and so it went.

Well, already before my time status negotiations had started and were dragging on. The price of a new status was rising all the time. Under the Reagan administration, a gentleman who had served in President Bush's air unit during World War II was assigned as the negotiator. This gentleman was based in Hawaii. He had a commercial background, including some interests in the Pacific islands.

Q: Who was the negotiator?

BROWN: You can look it up. I've forgotten his last name. I think it was Fred Zeder. People from the State Department were assigned to help him negotiate or renegotiate. The price of the new arrangement was rising all the time.

As I visited these islands, I found that great changes had taken place in their societies. They had been so exposed to U.S. federal funding and the dole that they had lost much of their old culture. They were now eating tuna fish out of cans, as well as Spam and other American foods. The old, venturesome fishing mentality had long since disappeared. There was a little, private fishing, but not much.

There was another issue that came up in this connection. That is, our use of such places for nuclear weapons testing during the post World War II era. These places included Kwajalein, Bikini, and other island groups. They had claims for the destruction of these areas and were now playing that issue for all that it was worth. In some cases the people of some of these island groups, such as Bikini, had already been resettled elsewhere and were claiming increased compensation as part of the overall settlement. This was very important because, with our anti-Soviet missile programs, we were now launching test missiles over great distances from California, including such places as Point Mugu, North of Los Angeles, with the splashdown in Kwajalein. Of course, that involved further payoffs to the various island groups to deal with the anxieties of the local residents.

Soviet spy ships were in the area, monitoring the splashdowns of our missiles. Initially, when we were dealing with these various island groups, we tended to think of them as being the same. However, they were very different among themselves. They would band together up to a certain point, then try to work side deals with us. (End of tape)

The Marshall Islands and the Caroline Islands were further along in these negotiations. However, at a critical point the Palau Islands chose to stay out of the negotiations. It seemed to me that every time we were approaching a real conclusion of the negotiations, there would be another election, another poll, and another referendum. Against the background of the negotiations which I have given you, Palau in particular would throw in a anti-nuclear clause. They wanted assurances that we would not use these islands for visits by nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed vessels.

As it turned out, this was a magnificent tactic against us, because we wanted to be able to go there with nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed vessels. There were some people in the U.S. nuclear establishment who also looked at Palau as a possible fallback if we ever lost our bases in the Philippines, which seemed very important to us at that time, from the strategic point of view.

The indigenous leadership in Palau, through all of its political changes, knew how to play this issue to a fare-thee-well.

Q: You might also explain that there was another element to this whole situation. That is,

the lawyer establishment in Washington, DC.

BROWN: Oh, yes. This made for healthy fees and consultation charges, as these islanders hired American lawyers to represent their interests. Again, speaking in jurisdictional terms, we had a big problem with the Department of the Interior at the deputy assistant secretary or assistant secretary level in the Department of the Interior. They kept in mind the sensitivities of the respective Congressional committees dealing with the Department of the Interior.

We would often find that these officials would talk to us in the Department of State one way, signifying their approval. Then we would find that arrangements would go off the tracks because there was a bureaucracy in the Department of the Interior which wanted to hang on to these islands by one means or another, in jurisdictional terms. They hated the idea of these territories developing to the point where they were no longer within the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior and those two committees of the Senate and House of Representatives.

So the net result of all of this was that when we achieved negotiated settlements, it required tremendous amounts of money. In my view never was so much money expended for so few people for such questionable causes. This negotiating effort was to extend over many years. These island groups were to get their own flags and their own constitutions. Their leaders were already traveling abroad and representing themselves to be independent countries. These new arrangements had to be negotiated through the Trusteeship Council of the UN, where the Soviets were always prone to give us a hard time. The island territories insisted that we fulfill our trusteeship responsibilities, and that we satisfy the aspirations of these individual island groups, bearing in mind that they had their own differences among them.

Then there was another aspect. There were a couple of South Pacific organizations which had initially been set up and funded by ourselves, the British, the French, the Australians, and the New Zealanders in the good old days after World War II. Over time these organizations had acquired a more independent status. However, the budgetary inputs of the French and the British, in particular, were declining dramatically, as were the budgetary contributions of the Australians and New Zealanders, to some degree. So the Pacific Island countries tended to look to us more and more, even as our own budgetary contributions were going down.

One of these organizations, the South Pacific Commission [SPC], had its headquarters in Noumea, New Caledonia. This was an organization with an international secretariat and its own well-paid, elected Secretary General. A significant amount of U.S. funds was being channeled into this organization. All of the island groups which I have already mentioned attended meetings of the SPC, plus Tonga, Western Samoa, Fiji, Vanuatu [formerly the Anglo-French Condominium of the New Hebrides], the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, and Nauru.

Nauru is an island with a circumference of maybe nine or 10 miles. The soil of Nauru is composed of “guano,” or bird droppings which are used as fertilizer. Nauru was independent, had two jet passenger aircraft, and its own airline [Air Nauru], as well as a population of 142,630 [as of 1989]. These people were so well-fed on beer and carbohydrates that the average life expectancy of males was about 45 years, given the prevailing obesity and the sedentary life style they enjoyed. I visited Nauru on a trip to the South Pacific.

These independent territories, plus the indigenous representative of French Polynesia, the indigenous representative of New Caledonia, which was a French overseas territory, made a strange combination. There was another group of members within the SPC, which consisted of representatives of the Marshall Islands, American Samoa, the Caroline Islands, and the Palau Islands.

This group of islands and territories would gather annually. I led the U.S. Delegation in 1984 or 1985. It was really quite a show. I watched them negotiate among themselves, as to who would be the new Secretary General, because this was a well-paid tax-free plum. Governor Coleman was sort of the elder statesman of the American territories, as they negotiated among themselves. We, who were footing the bill, or a very significant portion of the bill, were working to try to keep the Australians and New Zealanders in line. Of course, we were meeting in a French overseas territory.

The billboards on the 20-mile drive in from the international airport to the center of Noumea had graffiti on them such as I had never seen before. In great letters were the words, “Yankee, Come Back!” This was harking back to World War II when we had forces in New Caledonia. Those who put up these graffiti hoped that we would, somehow, come back and manage to kick the French out. The representative of the indigenous people of New Caledonia, a well-educated man, who addressed us, was a moderate but he was later assassinated in the course of the inner conflicts there. I would add that, whether they were present or not, the Vanuatans [from the ex-New Hebrides] were a mixed batch. They had been co-administered by the French and the British, with the result that there was a bicultural, mutually antagonistic stream of Anglophones [English speakers] and Francophones [French speakers], which still has an impact on their internal, societal makeup and politics. This was quite a display.

From New Caledonia I flew back via Nauru, where I was exposed to something like “Les Enfants du Paradis.” It was really amazing to see very large cranes digging up the guano and dumping it into huge dump trucks. These trucks then took the guano down to the port and filled large ships transporting this material to international markets. The movement of the guano was such that it was estimated that by the year 2000, or very soon, in any case, there would be nothing commercial left of the island of Nauru as we knew it. With the income the Nauruans were earning from the exports of guano, they were buying property in Australia and elsewhere. What they would do with the rest of the money they had made and with their society was a fascinating subject.

Q: Bill, we are now talking about the situation in 1984 or 1985. When you attended meetings of this kind, and the Soviet Union was still a real menace...

BROWN: That is, we perceived it as a menace.

Q: What were American goals in Nauru?

BROWN: They were mainly to avoid commitments and stay the hell out of there. Of course, American goals and objectives were to maintain peace, tranquillity, and security. A great portion of this had to do with the United States Navy and Air Force deployment in the Pacific Ocean, bearing in mind that military technology had advanced and our “reach” was greater. Still, there was the question of keeping the network open to our forward bases in Japan, South Korea, Okinawa, and the Philippines. What if we lost access to these territories? It didn't seem very likely at the time, but what if we lost access to the Philippines? What would this mean, in strategic terms? Or what if we lost our base arrangements on Okinawa, to say nothing of our facilities in the Japanese Home Islands, South Korea, and so forth?

So these places were still important from the viewpoint of a very important player in this situation, CINCPAC [Commander in Chief, Pacific, in Hawaii], and, behind him, the security establishment of the United States. We strove to maintain peace and tranquility in the area, and to manage the relationship in such a way that we kept the Australians and, if we could, the New Zealanders on board, even as there were these anti-nuclear stirrings to which I have alluded. At the same time, we maintained the strategic rationale for our presence in the area.

Well, during my watch as deputy assistant secretary of State we still had money. We still had the perception that the Soviet Union was a serious threat to our security. However, to an increasing extent several countries in the Pacific Ocean area no longer saw the Soviet Union in this way. They could play on our fears and on our concerns but they themselves felt that there was no longer a real threat from the Soviet Union. What did these Pacific islanders and, indeed, New Zealand, perceive in terms of a Soviet threat? What did they care about an occasional visit to the area of a Soviet tanker, or a fishing vessel on its way down to the Antarctic? Meanwhile, the Soviets had their own propaganda apparatus, which was steadily at work.

Then there was the so-called Chinese threat. To the locals it seemed like a fairly distant possibility. By the way, Taiwan was putting money and influence into all of these Pacific islands, in the course of its own struggle to recapture its international “presence,” in the wake of our break with Taiwan and its expulsion from the United Nations in 1978.

This situation was to change even more drastically after I left EAP. As I said, the Soviet threat perception disappeared. What, then, became the basis of our relationship with all of these islands, particularly the smaller ones? They had a gnawing concern about “global warming.” Some of them entertained a “doomsday scenario” that a couple of degrees of

higher, average temperatures would cause the icecaps to melt, and that they would then be inundated by the Pacific Ocean, whose level, it would appear, is slowly rising. They were obsessed with these considerations. We have an East-West Center in Honolulu, to which many of them have repaired, and where many of them have studied. Despite the East-West Center and attention from CINCPAC, some of these islands feel forgotten. So this was a challenge.

Q: You didn't mention Saipan. Where did it fit in with all of that?

BROWN: Well, Saipan is located in the Northern Marianas Islands. Guam already had a very special relationship with the U.S. Remember that we had Anderson Air Force Base on Guam which, in my day, housed B-52 bombers. Now they have left Guam.

From Guam, by the way, the U.S. Air Force did a magnificent job of flying C-130 aircraft out into the typhoons of the area. Then we would send typhoon warnings all the way over to the southern Chinese coast, as well as to Hong Kong, Vietnam, and Manila in the Philippines. This was very important. A lot of that weather support service is now gone.

Guam was not part of the "Compact of Free Association." It had an even better deal as an "Unincorporated Territory of the United States," but it was always complaining and asking for more federal funds. The Marianas Islands, apart from Guam, is a special case as the "Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands." It was very interesting.

Q: Did you have any "Mr. or Mrs. Pacific Islands" in Congress who were particularly important to you? We've had some Senators and Congressmen who love to travel and become really "major players," because they become quite an irritant unless they are "kept happy."

BROWN: Well, without going into names, I alluded earlier to the fact that, jurisdictionally speaking, the American Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands was under the Department of the Interior. So we always had to bear in mind the stance of powerful members of the Interior Affairs Committees of both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Q: And also the staffs of these committees.

BROWN: Oh, yes. This was a goody which gave them a sense of responsibility, a commitment, and so forth.

The aircraft situation was such that, even for the President of the United States, to get out to such places as Indonesia, Hong Kong, and so forth, you had to land some place, because until the 1980s travel was usually accomplished on Boeing 707 aircraft. So you would normally travel, let us say, from San Francisco or Los Angeles, land in Honolulu, overnight there, then go to Guam and spend the night there, in some cases, with the Governor and his entourage. They would land at Anderson Air Force Base, re-load with

fuel and perhaps spend the night. Then fly from there to East Asian airfields.

Coming back from East Asia, with my portfolio, I was always urging people: "Why don't you land, not just in American Samoa, but some place else?" However, it was very difficult to persuade them to land elsewhere. At Pago-Pago in American Samoa, they were guaranteed a welcome, day or night with dancers, and torchlights. However, it was much more difficult to persuade people to land, say, in Fiji, let alone at Honiara, the Solomon Islands, or places like that.

Among "old timers" I found later on that, when Casper Weinberger was Secretary of Defense and visited Thailand, I could focus his attention then to Papua New Guinea, because he had been a soldier and served in that malaria and other tropical disease infested area during World War II. He could relate to that area. For the younger group of congressmen and senators, it was very difficult.

Now, with travel by Boeing 747 aircraft, bigshots can fly all the way out to East Asia non-stop, completely bypassing so many of these places. This probably lowered even further their very low profile on the American radar scope.

Q: How about the fish? Was there justification in the claims that these American planes were evacuating of emptying out the area?

BROWN: Well, what you were dealing with was a migratory fish phenomenon. Tuna fish migrate over enormous distances in the Pacific. On a worldwide basis, various fishing fleets have come into service, including Russian, Japanese, and others. They have increased their ability to fish, or to "vacuum" seafood, if I can use that expression. The other great fisheries of the world have largely been fished out. Look at our own crisis with the Canadians off Georges Bank [South of Newfoundland]. Periodically the fishing scene deteriorates even further under the influence of the El Nino effect in the Pacific.

The Pacific Ocean area was one of the last, major fisheries which was still rich in fish, particularly the migratory tuna. From the fishing lobby's viewpoint, tuna, as a migratory fish, should not be treated as a fish that is native to this or that territory. In other words, our fishing lobby argued: "We can go and fish for tuna anywhere, from three miles off the coast, or wherever the international border is."

With the Australian, New Zealand, and, to a degree, our own fishing industry, we were working toward a new system to regulate fisheries, which would require revision of the Magnuson Act. We needed to work out a system which would protect this great fishery in the South Pacific. Such a system would have to include monitoring, so that the area wouldn't be over fished, as well as a system of payment. This raised the question how we could arrange to pay out the use of this fishing grounds. For example, what would be the share of Papua New Guinea, versus that of a tiny entity like Nauru Island, or Tonga, which was so much more dependent on fishing, in the absence of any other resources? Such a system would need to include monitoring to make sure that the area wasn't over

fished.

The monitoring system would have to have teeth, because into the picture were coming new fishing fleets. These would include not only the Japanese but Taiwan and now, even the People's Republic of China. They were coming in with that typical Asian approach, which is based on dynamiting fish, that is, an approach involving a low level of technology. You get within range of the fish, you drop explosives, you put your anchor down on coral, and to hell with whatever other kind of damage you do. You fish the area out as best you can, using whatever means you can, including explosives, and then move on. This is absolutely devastating for the fishery.

How can you organize such a disparate group of fishermen? How can you come up with a new fishing system, with monitoring, penalties, and payoffs for the individual islands and island groups, as they struggle with each other for access to the fish. This was quite a challenge I was involved in, and the situation has continued to deteriorate since then. Then we also got into the whole question of cheating, and newcomers in this fishing area.

Now, even the Thai are into it, coming all the way from Thailand to the South Pacific fisheries. The Thai have completely fished out the Gulf of Siam. They have acquired the range to get all the way into the South Pacific. Everyone smiles and promises to be good, but real life practice is something else. For example, take Korean, Japanese, or Taiwanese fishermen. They would far rather deal bilaterally, which means payoffs for this or that island entity, as opposed to investing money in a regional fishery system and wondering whether you're really getting your money's worth. Altogether, a fascinating subject.

Q: Who handles fisheries within the Department of State? Was that separate, or was it...

BROWN: That was handled in OES [Bureau of Oceanographic and Environmental Affairs].

Q: Did you find yourself dealing with OES very often?

BROWN: Oh, yes, and extensively. OES was very important, both on a bilateral as well as a regional basis. They were important as we looked at our "Compact of Free Association" with the islands formerly included in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. They were important, and remain important, on a global basis. I alluded to this great, fisheries challenge in the Pacific Ocean area. However, OES has to think of what's going on in the Caribbean, the Atlantic and elsewhere, and off both coasts of South America, the Antarctic, and so forth. It's a fascinating subject with very interesting ramifications, both economically and politically.

Q: Bill, I know that you were at some remove from it, but you were right in EAP and were the principal deputy assistant secretary of State. Could you tell us about what was happening in the Philippines in your time, that is, up to 1985, and how this situation impacted on your bureau?

BROWN: First of all, remember that we're talking about a time when the overarching question, the "big one," was the Cold War with Soviet Union. That is, the U.S.-Soviet rivalry. A significant, but lesser issue was our relationship with the PRC [People's Republic of China].

In connection with the Soviet Union, throughout my time in EAP, this was a major, strategic issue. That is, we were determined to maintain our global posture vis-a-vis the Soviets. Our ability to project power in and through such places as the Philippines, Okinawa, the Japanese Home Islands, and Korea was deemed to be absolutely vital to our interests. Everybody in the Department of State was reading the same notes on that score. So our installations at Subic Bay [Navy] and Clark Air Force Base were seen as tremendously important at that time in terms of access, repair facilities, intelligence collection, and for power projection elsewhere to deal with unforeseen contingencies.

On the China side, we had undergone a significant change in our relationship. However, our presence in the Philippines vis-a-vis China and the Taiwan question, Korea, and Southeast Asia remained very important. We were now past the Vietnam War, but the Vietnamese communists were in Cambodia. The Soviets were developing a "tight" relationship with the Vietnamese communists and were using the facilities which we had built in Cam Ranh Bay. So the Soviet strategic relationship and, to a lesser but still significant degree, the relationship with China kept the Philippines in a very important position in our overall, strategic posture.

Therefore, what happened internally in the Philippines became a matter of increasing significance during my service in EAP. We had on our side Ferdinand Marcos, a long-time friend and alleged "hero" of World War II. Whether he manufactured his wartime reputation or not, he progressively built up his image as having fought the great struggle against the Japanese. He appeared to be a sparkling and, at times, a very dynamic personality. His wife, Imelda Marcos, contributed to his reputation. Over time Marcos became, shall we say, more and more "autocratic, arrogant" and corrupt. As his power increased, so did that of his wife and family.

Marcos had a personal relationship with the President of the United States, Ronald Reagan. They periodically communicated directly with each other. They sent each other hand-written communications. As Governor of California, Reagan had visited the Philippines and had been well-received. He felt that the U.S.-Philippine connection was a great story. Reagan, as President of the United States, had a very warm spot for the Philippines and for Marcos personally. This was apparent as we went through the Aquino assassination crisis which I have described previously. When the communication announcing the cancellation of President Reagan's visit to the Philippines and Thailand, was delivered, it was in the form of a hand-written letter from "Ron" to "Ferdinand" which was conveyed by Michael Deaver. I have already noted that we canceled the visit, nominally on the basis of the press of Congressional business, which was a very thin veil indeed. Then came the rise of vehement resistance to Marcos in the Philippines and,

eventually, his overthrow.

Q: Did Marcos' overthrow happen during your time in EAP?

BROWN: The resistance to Marcos was rising in the Philippines and, with it, the human rights, civil rights, and democratic constituencies in the United States were beginning a campaign against Marcos in the wake of the Aquino assassination. However, the overthrow of Marcos didn't actually take place until after I had left EAP. I was ambassador to Thailand when Corry Aquino took over as President of the Philippines.

This has to do with another subject which we agreed to discuss. That is, ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations], because the Philippines was a major player in ASEAN. Now, ASEAN was created in the 1960s while I was in the embassy in Moscow. I'll never forget reporting the instant, Soviet reaction, which was a blast against "yet another imperialist, pro-colonialist bloc," allegedly put together by the imperialist powers, led by the United States.

Later on, the Soviets were to see more possibilities in ASEAN, as it became, in their view, something that might be of value vis-a-vis the Chinese. Remember that when ASEAN was created, it was publically described by its founding members in terms which emphasized that they were not against anybody. They were trying to form a 'constructive' grouping the better to raise their standard of living, both individually and collectively. They claimed to have no animus against anyone. It served the interests of the U.S. to go along with that formulation.

It was fascinating to see how someone like Secretary of State George Shultz exhibited remarkable dedication in preparing for and meeting with the ASEAN leaders. The original idea was that the ASEAN countries would meet annually in rotation among their various capitals. The ASEAN countries would have their in-house session, and then they would have group meetings with some of the major powers, including the United States. Meanwhile, on the margins of these meetings there would be a whole series of bilateral meetings with the U.S. The ASEAN countries also did the same thing with the Japanese and with others on the playing field. With time these "other" meetings gained significant importance. However, during my time in EAP the big meeting was with the U.S.

First, the U.S. would meet with ASEAN as a group. Secretary Shultz would go into a room with the ASEAN Foreign Ministers. The press would be invited and speeches would be given. Then the press would be "invited to leave," and we would get down to the real "nitty gritty." The real "nitty gritty," from our viewpoint, was a mixed discussion of security, trade, and economic matters, as well as human rights, civil society, and the progress of democracy in the ASEAN countries. Hopefully, the benevolent influence of ASEAN as a group vis-a-vis the question of democracy, and civil society would increase. However, one had to bear in mind that, while these nations were dedicated to the principles of democracy, the "stages of democracy," put it mildly, varied significantly among them.

Let's face it. Marcos was increasingly autocratic and corrupt. In Indonesia, General Suharto long exercised control of the country through the military and other means. Singapore was very much under the thumb of Lee Kuan Yew, but with the trappings of democracy. Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir was also autocratic and exploited the bicultural split between the Chinese and the Malays. Thailand was a democratic monarchy, but with a strong military establishment whose leaders were corrupt.

When the doors of the ASEAN meeting shut and they got into real discussions, you would find that Secretary Shultz had really prepared for this meeting. Before departing from Washington for an ASEAN meeting, Shultz would often send back the briefing books, for revision. He would constantly ask the economic people within the Department of State, both within the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and the Bureau of Economic Affairs, to "recalculate the numbers and reexamine the assumptions." He was always pushing for clarification of issues, as he had as a former Professor of Economics and a negotiator. He was constantly asking for more ammunition which would enable him to get the various nations of the world, in this case the members of ASEAN, to open up their markets, introduce transparency, liberalize, reduce internal and intra-zonal protectionism, and, of course, give us greater access to their markets. These discussions went on, even while the ASEAN countries were constantly asking for more help, more money, and particularly for more U.S. concessions on trade with the great American market.

These were very important sessions, and George Shultz, bless him, took them very seriously. As a man under great pressure, he would nevertheless stick religiously to making his appearance before ASEAN and not just treating it as a pro forma matter. He would really get into it.

Now, on the side, were bilateral meetings, covering more of the same issues, including economic matters. Then he would get into the political aspect, on a nation by nation basis. This provided me with a real insight into his mental processes. I was with him in the capacity of principal deputy assistant secretary under Paul Wolfowitz. Later, I attended these meetings as ambassador to Thailand in Shultz's entourage. I had a chance to observe Secretary Shultz through two different lenses that way. In a word, he was "terrific." With other Secretaries of State whom I observed there was, perhaps, the same, "nominal" dedication, but I often saw that due to this or that kind of pressure, they didn't meet their responsibilities the way Shultz had. Sometimes they would send a deputy to represent them.

Let's go on to my time as ambassador to Thailand.

Q: One second. Did China or India play any role in ASEAN? You mentioned Japan.

BROWN: As time went on, yes. China acquired a more benevolent image in the eyes of the ASEAN countries. In earlier days China had been very skeptical and suspicious about

ASEAN. However, over time China grew to see it as a very good “target,” if I can use that expression. When some ASEAN members and China got into conflict over claims to the Spratley Islands [in the South China Sea]. ASEAN became a convenient forum to dampen the bilateral tensions and to reach some accommodation. Over time, the Chinese became significant players in ASEAN.

When I attended my last ASEAN meeting, I guess that it was in 1996, when I went out as Special Envoy on Burma. I visited Indonesia in advance of Secretary of State Warren Christopher to do some legwork in the corridors outside the ASEAN meeting. I sat in the back row during Christopher's bilateral meeting with the Chinese. The Chinese were now ensconced as full-fledged players and participants at ASEAN meetings, within the context I previously mentioned. In 1996 India was finally admitted as a major dialogue partner with ASEAN, though not as a member of ASEAN itself, of course. The US, Japan and other countries from outside the ASEAN area were also major dialogue partners with ASEAN, though they were not members of ASEAN.

Remember that there had been latent, shall we say, tensions between certain ASEAN members and the Indians. The Indians in the past had a sense of Indian manifest destiny. This derived from the fact that there is a significant Indian diaspora in the ASEAN countries, and particularly in Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand in the ASEAN area. The Indians were initially seen by some of the ASEAN countries as less than fully welcome intruders. However, by 1996 India was welcome at ASEAN meetings. I handled some diplomatic business on the side with the Indian Foreign Secretary on the subject of Burma. It was fascinating, because Burma is a significant, Indian concern.

Q: We can discuss this further on. Now we're talking about the situation up to 1985. How did we view Vietnam and what was going to happen with it?

BROWN: Well, as of this period, you will remember that Vietnamese forces occupied most of Cambodia. There were about 100,000 Vietnamese soldiers in Cambodia. Vietnam had some 50,000 troops in Laos. They were running Cambodia through a puppet regime. There were occasional firefights on the border of Cambodia and Thailand. Not too far behind the scenes the Vietnamese were running Laos. Vietnam already had a Soviet partner which was using the former U.S. defense facilities in Vietnam. Also, Vietnam had trouble with China. The Vietnamese were seen by the Chinese as too big for their britches, and the Chinese and Vietnamese actually got into armed conflict on the Sino-Vietnamese border following Deng Xiaoping's decision to teach Vietnam a lesson. So how to handle the Vietnam issue in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam itself was a major concern at ASEAN meetings. Vietnam was seen by several ASEAN countries as occupiers and the aggressors. They were considered a tough bunch to deal with.

Among the ASEAN members the Thai, in particular, considered Vietnam a major question in our discussions with them. Both on a bilateral as well as a collective basis, Thailand wanted to keep the rest of ASEAN lined up with them, vis-a-vis the Vietnamese. They wanted to keep the pressure on the Vietnamese, in the hope that the

Vietnamese would finally leave Cambodia and Laos and, thereby, the Thai border areas.

Q: Was there some thought that if the Vietnamese became civilized, they would be welcomed into ASEAN?

BROWN: It was too early for that. This was ultimately to become the great bait or carrot.

Q: However, this wasn't...

BROWN: At this time, no. The Vietnamese were regarded as the aggressors, as the occupiers of much of Cambodia and, in effect, they were running a large portion of Laos, as well as Cambodia.

Q: What about the British presence in Hong Kong? Were they beginning to pull in their horns? By this time, had the British agreed to give up Hong Kong?

BROWN: During my watch in EAP what became known as the Thatcher Agreement was negotiated between Britain and the Chinese. You will find in Shultz's book that he was an active player in these negotiations. Speaking very personally, I thought that Shultz was too accommodating to the Chinese on this score. I retained a great suspicion of how the Chinese would ultimately handle Hong Kong. However, Shultz invited the Chinese Foreign Minister to a private barbecue and worked the Hong Kong issue very much in coordination with the British. The British deeply appreciated what Shultz had done. (End of tape)

At this time the die was cast, and the deal was done in Hong Kong. The British, under the Thatcher Government, negotiated with the Chinese what they thought was the best deal they could get.

On the side of these negotiations there was an ASEAN aspect, that is, a Vietnamese aspect of it. As you know, the Vietnamese were coming into Hong Kong as refugees from North Vietnam. The phenomenon was that these Vietnamese were most unwelcome in Hong Kong, notwithstanding the fact that the Chinese population of Hong Kong itself was very heavily composed of refugees in its make-up. This didn't engender any sympathy whatsoever for these thousands of Vietnamese who were coming up to Hong Kong by boat from North Vietnam. To the contrary, as far as Hong Kong Chinese attitudes were concerned, they were pushing the British to fend these Vietnamese off and send them away. In human rights terms what to do with Vietnamese refugees remained a very delicate issue.

Initially, most Vietnamese refugees had come from South Vietnam. However, now they began to come significantly from North Vietnam. They were voting with their feet and with their boats to get out of Vietnam.

Do you want to go on to Thailand?

Q: I thought that we might stop at this point. One further question. During this time you were in EAP from when until 1985?

BROWN: I arrived in Thailand on June 15, 1985.

Q: And when did you start work in EAP?

BROWN: In June or July, 1983. A two-year, intensive stretch.

Q: Did you feel at that time the beginnings of an Oriental Lobby? You know, we had the Irish Lobby, and you've probably even heard that there is a Jewish Lobby. [Laughter] You know, there's an Armenian Lobby, a Greek Lobby, and so forth. Was there beginning to be anything like an Asian Lobby as far as anything that we were doing was concerned, from the point of view of the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs?

BROWN: I would put it this way. There were Chinese Lobbies in the plural sense. You had a pro-Taiwan crowd, and a PRC [People's Republic of China] crowd, which was composed significantly, though not exclusively, of American businessmen. American business was beginning to do big business with the PRC.

Q: Now you're talking of this time period?

BROWN: I'm talking of this time period [1983-1985]. It had not yet reached the proportions that it has now, in 1999, but it was already significant and growing. For all of the difficulties they have encountered, American businessmen saw China as: 1) a great market in the future and 2) as a great source of garments, textiles, and plastics for sale in the U.S. market, on which American middlemen are making large amounts of money.

There was a human rights constituency which remains, and very properly so, concerned about Chinese violations of civil and human rights, including the minorities in Tibet. However, Chinese human rights violations were drawing less attention than later because during my watch in EAP you had Zhao Ziyang who was, relatively speaking, a reformer as the head of the Chinese Government. There was still a lot to be done, but this was still in the period before the Tiananmen incident [in 1989].

There were other, and I would say, lesser Asian lobbies. The South Koreans were very active in Washington, and so were the Japanese. There were ethnic lobbies, that is, Asian-American lobbies which come to Washington annually and visited us in the State Department. Usually, this was on a bilateral basis, although there was an umbrella group of Asia-Pacific lobbyists. However, they are essentially Japanese-American, Korean-American...

Q: Philippine-American?

BROWN: Philippine-American, yes. They had a somewhat loose, umbrella-like arrangement, and then they came at us more on an individual or, if you will, on an ethnic basis. They called on us at the Department of State. We met them and talked to them.

Q: I'm trying to capture the mood of the time as we go, since things were going to be changing. These lobbyists weren't able to say that they had captured five Members of Congress. Maybe they weren't in Congress themselves but they could ensure the election of certain Members of Congress or make them jump to their will.

BROWN: Let's put it this way. In Hawaiian politics, by this time the Japanese vote, that is the Nissei [people born in the U.S. of Japanese ancestry] vote, was very important. The Chinese vote was also important, but less so. That's not to say that a Hawaiian Senator or Congressman from Hawaii, apart from some particular connections, is totally the captive of the Japanese or Chinese vote. This was by no means the case. However, this existed and was one aspect of the situation.

Beyond that, in California politics this or that Congressman or Congresswoman may have a significant, ethnic constituency. However, this is not that big a consideration. Now when you came up to an issue even in my time, such as the Jackson-Vanik amendment [limiting credit arrangements for the Soviet Union until Soviet Jews were permitted to emigrate to Israel], there was a question as to whether we should give the Chinese most favored nation treatment because the PRC is an authoritarian, communist regime. In this case I would go up to Congress and make the argument that while there are various deficiencies in the Chinese system, the Chinese were nevertheless making progress to such an extent that, all things considered, we should give them most favored nation treatment. That was the position that I would present in testimony before Congress. All of that pertained to the period before the Tiananmen incidents. The situation in China left a lot to be desired but, generally, the Chinese were seen as moving in the right direction. By no means were we giving up on China. We were still proactive in this connection. That was the general posture.

Now, already with regard to Taiwan, we saw significant progress being made toward democracy. This was already apparent there. That situation was to flourish and bloom as the years went by.

Q: Did you consider that Taiwan was becoming more and more democratic, from a professional, diplomatic point of view? Instead of saying: "Oh, God," this was going to make the case involving the PRC more difficult for us, because the more Taiwan becomes democratic and the more the PRC fails to become democratic, this means that we are going to have more of a problem in dealing with this issue.

BROWN: I would say that at the time my reaction was mixed. Certainly, I could see the possibility that a truly democratic, elected Legislature and President of Taiwan, a Taiwan that was progressively and significantly becoming "Taiwanized," would make things more challenging for us. The electorate was more than 90 percent composed of

Taiwanese. Therefore, this was being reflected in democratic elections to the Legislature and the posturings of politicians in public. Even the military was becoming Taiwanized, as far as its leadership was concerned. Over time, this situation could become more of a challenge for us, particularly if Beijing failed to accommodate. However, it remained an open question whether this situation would lead to further conflict. One hoped and worked to the end that, with prosperity and reforms on the Mainland of China, over time they would become more accommodating. So the situation was not, perhaps, as black and white as you've presented it. We saw the dangers, but still there was hope.

Remember that we were already seeing very significant, Taiwan investment in Mainland China. With it, the de facto trade, across the Taiwan Strait, which had been under the table and was not publicized, was already beginning to have a major effect.

Q: Okay, Bill, we'll stop at this point. The next time we pick this up, we'll be in 1985, and you will be off to Thailand as ambassador. We'll talk about that and how you got that appointment. We'll take off from there.

BROWN: Yes.

Q: Today is August 9, 1999. Bill, we had been talking about the situation in 1985, when you went to Thailand. How did you get that appointment?

BROWN: Well, I was principal deputy assistant secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, under Assistant Secretary Paul Wolfowitz 1983 to 1985. I had hoped for an ambassadorial appointment, of course, but I had never really considered Thailand, let alone maneuver to arrange this assignment. To the best of my recollection, the word came to us that John Gunther Dean's tour as ambassador to Thailand was winding up and that he was up for reassignment. The slot became open. Paul Wolfowitz offered it to me, and I grabbed it.

This assignment to Thailand followed a couple of really intensive years with Paul, covering the whole gamut of U.S.-Asian relations. It was nice to contemplate finally the prospect of getting my own Mission. I didn't have too much specific preparation for this position. There wasn't a lot of really useful literature that one could read. I read the post reports and general literature on Thailand. Beside that, I was very busy with my previous position in EAP right up to the very end.

The pattern for career Foreign Service officers about to be nominated as ambassadors was to slip into some tiny office and become a sort of recluse to avoid any pretense of maneuvering or playing around for this position, pending the nomination. I did that but I kept right on working. Sure enough, as word got out that I was going to be appointed ambassador to Thailand, various people began to come and see me. One of them was the wife of Governor Michael Dukakis of Massachusetts.

Q: Kitty Dukakis.

BROWN: Kitty Dukakis. She was a fervent, passionate advocate on the whole question of refugee affairs. She let me know in no uncertain terms that she expected great things of me during my tenure as ambassador to Thailand, in the wake of so much that had happened. I think that she came in to see me with Lionel Rosenblatt or some such figure, who was well known in refugee affairs. Mort Abramowitz was cited as a great example during his term as ambassador to Thailand, starting in 1978. A real, refugee crisis had developed, and tens of thousands of refugees had been moved from Thailand.

Q: Where did these refugees come from?

BROWN: They were primarily Cambodians. With the Khmer Rouges [Red Cambodians] takeover of Cambodia in the first instance came a great wave of refugees to Thailand. Then, when the Vietnamese communists swept in and invaded Cambodia with their anti-Khmer Rouges allies, thousands more refugees entered Thailand. There were very large numbers of Cambodian refugees on the Thai-Cambodian border. Then there were significant numbers of Lao refugees, both lowland Lao and the generally more difficult, highland Lao, the Hmong. Tens of thousands of them came into Thailand. They were either in camps or in a border zone, moving back and forth into and out of Thailand. When the heat was on from the Lao military they would move into Thailand. Then, when the heat was off, they would move back into Laos, either attacking Lao government forces or returning to their homes in the highlands of Laos.

There was also a significant pocket of Vietnamese refugees, who were still coming out of Ho Chi Minh City [formerly Saigon] and southern Vietnam. This movement of Vietnamese out of Vietnam and into Thailand had turned into an organized system of conveyance by truck, bus, and then, through various payoffs, via the water route into Thailand, either directly across the Gulf of Siam to the Kra Isthmus or around the corner into the southeast corner of Thailand, and then on up to Bangkok and other areas.

Q: While you were in Washington, were you getting any instruction or guidance from within the Department of State about what to do concerning these refugees?

BROWN: Oh, I made calls on various working level officers and Assistant Secretaries and their deputies. The movement of these refugees involved a major program. So, yes, I was briefed at some length. I was encouraged to lean on the Thai to be even more flexible and more forthcoming as far as accepting Indochinese refugees in Thailand was concerned. There were already cases of alleged turnbacks of Cambodian refugees [”refoulements,” to use the term employed by the UN]. There were complaints about conditions in the refugee camps. From their viewpoint the Thai were complaining that the influx of Cambodian refugees was outnumbering the outward flow. Given past U.S. promises and commitments, the Thai wanted us to take more refugees. There was an international community effort involving ourselves, the British, the Australians, the

French, and the Scandinavians to resettle more refugees. However, we were the big source of relief in that respect.

So we had before, during, and, after my tour, this constant play between Washington and Thailand. Washington was urging the Thai to take more refugees in the sense of first refuge [immediately after leaving Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos]. The Thai reminded us of our past commitments, which they had taken as ironclad, to take more refugees. They also sought more money to take care of the refugees in the camps in Thailand.

There were also exchanges over the conditions in the refugee camps. In addition, there was a growing base of people, of course, who had come over to the U.S. as refugees and who had now settled down and acquired U.S. citizenship. Through their Congressmen and Senators, they were now pushing for relief in particular cases involving their relatives.

At that time, Cambodia had been virtually completely taken over by the Vietnamese communists. There were about 100,000 Vietnamese troops in Cambodia, a good many of whom were stationed near the Thai-Cambodian border. So there were occasional border incidents and firefights. When I refer to the border, remember that the Thai have a border with Cambodia and with Laos as well.

Q: The borders were very long.

BROWN: They were very long and the terrain varied greatly. That portion of Cambodia along the Thai border is largely flat, though not entirely so. It's always been a strategic concern for the Thai. The Thai were concerned that there were well-armed, disciplined, and seasoned Vietnamese troops facing Thailand. This army could in the right kind of weather, launch a mechanized, armored attack into Thailand, which might penetrate for a considerable distance. This underscored the importance of the refugee situation to the Thai.

There were about 700-800,000 refugees in Thailand or just across the Thai borders, including a certain number of floaters. The problem of the refugees along the Laotian frontier was exacerbated by geography and by the propensity of the Hmong, nomadic, hill tribesmen to float back and forth across the Thai-Laotian border, depending on their own particular situation.

There was a group of American refugee advocacy organizations represented in Thailand which were well-entrenched and funded and which were tied in with Joint Voluntary Agency program (JVA then headed by Dennis Grace) under contract with the United States Government. These voluntary agencies used U.S. Government funds specifically designated for the care and movement of refugees, including those already in Thailand, those just across the Thai border, and Vietnamese who were arriving by boat having first come through Cambodia.

There were strong advocates of these agencies in Congress. Some of them were quite critical of what the U.S. Government was doing with the refugees. For example, Senator John Glenn [Democrat, Ohio] had a daughter who was deeply involved in refugee concerns. Senator Glenn let me know, in no uncertain terms, of his desire for more action on this matter by the U.S. Government. This was even before I left EAP, and when I later came back to Washington on consultation, Senator Glenn and certain others, including Senator Hatfield [Republican, Oregon], would voice their concerns to me. They would urge me “to get on with it” and do more for the refugees. Here they were referring to tensions between our Embassy refugee section and the JVA, which it supervised, over the refugee criteria and processing.

Then there was a special Orderly Departure Program (ODP) for processing those still in Vietnam who had suffered because they had worked for the USG or were the Amerasian offspring of U.S. troops in Vietnam. This was a contentious problem between ourselves and Hanoi, with which we still had no formal diplomatic relations and which was exploiting the issue (along with the POW/MIA issue) in an effort to gain U.S. formal recognition and aid. Under the ODP we would occasionally send consular officers to Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) to interview applicants. Here, too, members of Congress were pushing for more action on our part, whereas Hanoi was trying to extract concessions from us.

Q: Was there any feeling in Congress that Ambassador Dean had not been doing enough to deal with the refugee problem?

BROWN: Let's describe the background this way. Ambassador Mort Abramowitz had a sterling reputation in dealing with the refugees which was a huge issue during his tour. Indeed, he was given praise for his unflagging efforts for the refugees in this respect, as well as those of Sheppie Abramowitz, his wife. They were true believers and they did an outstanding job. During my consultations with him at a Chiefs of Mission conference just before I went to Thailand, my predecessor, Ambassador Gunther Dean briefed me on the matter from his point of view.

During that conversation which was fascinating, he said to me: “You know, I was determined, when I arrived in Bangkok, to be known as more than just an ambassador with regard to the refugee problem.” He said, “This is an important issue, but there are other, major U.S. interests in Thailand, and I wanted to make sure that I addressed them as well.” He reviewed the overall picture of the U.S. embassy and its involvement in pursuing our interests at that time. I arrived in Bangkok on June 15, 1985.

Q: By the way, when did you leave Bangkok? I like to get your arrival and departure dates.

BROWN: I left Bangkok in July or August, 1988.

Q: But you arrived in June, 1985.

BROWN: Yes. Now, just a little bit of detail. We had a very large embassy in Bangkok. Some people said that it was the largest American embassy at the time. I don't know whether this is true. The embassy had many components in it. The reason that it was so large related to the history of our relationship with Thailand after World War II plus the fact that Bangkok had become very attractive as a regional base for various U.S. agencies.

I certainly don't present myself as a specialist on U.S. and Thai history or U.S.-Thai relations. However, let me just list a couple of things. With the outbreak of World War II in the Pacific, the Japanese rapidly landed in Thailand, with an eye on moving on to Malaya and Singapore. They issued an ultimatum which a weak Thai Government headed by Prime Minister Phibun, who was also acting as Regent, felt impelled to accept. After a coup d'etat in 1932 the Thai monarch had been exiled, and a regency was in effect. Prime Minister Phibun was visited by the Japanese ambassador at 5:00 AM on the morning of December 8, 1941. The Japanese ambassador asked Prime Minister Phibun for immediate, free passage for Japanese troops through Thailand. As a matter of fact, Japanese troops had already landed in Thailand as part of the campaign to establish the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere and in the struggle to rid Asia of its colonialist and imperialist oppressors.

In effect, the Japanese forced a puppet government situation on Thailand. Nominally, the Thai Government was headed by Prime Minister Phibun, but the Japanese had their way. The Japanese instructed the Thai Government to declare war on Britain, the Netherlands, and the U.S. The Thai ambassador in London, on instructions, went to the Foreign Office and announced that Thailand was in a state of war with Britain.

The young Thai Minister in Washington, Seni Pramot, was in his late 30s and came from a distinguished family. He was still alive when I arrived in Thailand and died in the last few years as a very old man. The story is that Minister Seni Pramot went to see Secretary of State Cordell Hull. He said that he had instructions in his pocket to declare war on the United States, but he really didn't see the need for that. After discussing the matter, Secretary Hull said that he didn't see any need for a declaration of war. Whereupon, Seni went out and announced the formation of a Free Thai Front. He called on Thai students in the United States to rise up and join it.

I don't think that there were too many Thai students in the United States at the time. [Actually, there were about 100 of them in the U.S., attending various colleges and universities.] Among those who were in the U.S., some signed up with the Free Thai Front and were given simple training in what became known as the OSS [Office of Strategic Services]. Some of these Thai were trained to infiltrate back into Thailand with the goal of providing intelligence and eventually overthrowing the Japanese-supported Thai government.

Among the students in the U.S. was a young man at MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] named Sitthi Sawetsila who had a distinguished career subsequently in Thai

Military Intelligence. He rose to the rank of Air Chief Marshal of the Royal Thai Air Force. When I arrived in Bangkok, he was, and had been for some time, the Foreign Minister. So there was a group of older Thai in Bangkok who had distinguished themselves in this respect. Of course, the Thai didn't let us forget it, nor should they have done so. This was another example of "hands across the sea" in the great struggle against the Japanese and later Chinese communist subversion.

When World War II ended, the U.S. Government found that the British, motivated by a certain amount of vengeance, treated the Thai as a defeated enemy and demanded that the Thai deliver rice and other goods. The British also made other demands on the Thai. The British were determined to take back territory from northern Malaya which the Japanese had encouraged the puppet Thai Government to take over. (The same was true of a slice of Burma.) The British put troops into Thailand and were prepared to act as an occupying power.

Seni Pramot, the Thai Minister in Washington, was ordered by the Thai Government to return to Bangkok, traveling via Europe and then India and Ceylon, where he was treated rudely by Admiral Lord Mountbatten, commander of the Allied Southeast Asia Command. Seni pleaded Thailand's case with a small entourage of American war correspondents in Ceylon, which had been the headquarters of the Allied effort to infiltrate agents into Malaya and other countries of Southeast Asia.

Seni got the attention of the U.S. authorities, who leaned on the British to loosen up in their attitude toward Thailand and treat the Thai more generously. Very senior Thai figures never forgot this. So the U.S. had a very warm relationship with the Thai right after World War II. American aid flowed into Thailand, which was still in a rather primitive state, as far as infrastructure was concerned. "Primitive" may be too sharp a term to describe it, but let's just say that there was an awful lot to be done, and a lot was done with U.S. aid.

Then came the perception of a great, communist threat. Thailand had a very significant, Chinese population. With Beijing's encouragement, many young Chinese went to the jungle to join the communists there, as did other Chinese in Malaya.

In Malaya the communist led insurgency, or the "Emergency," as the British called it, lasted from 1948 right on through 1959. In Thailand there were armed clashes with the domestic communists, and the U.S.-Thai relationship, in no small measure, was very heavily influenced by the overall communist threat of the time and a communist-backed series of uprisings in Thailand. There was very deep concern regarding Chinese communism and the threat of Mao Tse-tung's ideology which impacted intellectually, particularly among young Chinese.

This played into the hands of a whole series of Thai military dictators. I won't go into all of this history, but there was a very serious security threat in Thailand. The seriousness of this situation was exacerbated by the untimely and somewhat mysterious death of the

new, young King.

I mentioned that, as a result of a military coup d'etat in 1932, a regency was established. When World War II ended in 1945, Seni Pramot came back and was briefly installed in office as the Prime Minister of Thailand. A revolving door of Thai political figures succeeded each other. The U.S. hope was that democracy and a civil government would flourish. Two young, royal brothers were brought back to Thailand from Europe. The elder of the brothers was installed in office as King of Thailand. A tragedy ensued. In the darkness of one night a gunshot was heard, and the King was found dead, in bed, with a pistol nearby. There was a great scandal, and the Prime Minister of the time, [Pridi Panomyong], took responsibility and fled to Chiang Kai-shek's faltering China, under a cloud of charges that, somehow, he and the government had been involved in all of this.

The late King's younger brother was then installed as the new King, and he is still the reigning King of Thailand. He was so young at the time that he went back to finish his schooling in Switzerland and returned to Thailand for full investiture as King a few years later. The communist threat continued and the Korean War followed. We prevailed upon the Thai to send forces to South Korea under the UN Command. Thailand sent at least a battalion of troops. Thai troops were on Pork Chop Hill when the Chinese communists launched their furious assault against UN forces, which were predominantly composed of U.S. troops. I believe that General Kriangsak was the commander of Thai forces in Korea. He later became Prime Minister in one of these coups d'etat. He would remind us of the Thai contribution to the UN forces in Korea.

Then, skipping on down, there was a series of conflicts in Vietnam, the Geneva Accords [of 1954], and an insurgency crisis which spread into Laos and, eventually, Cambodia. You will recall that the Thai were strategically located for the conduct of our great operations in Vietnam, on the ground, in the air, and at sea. In that respect Thailand was a great, launching pad for the bombing of North Vietnam and for the secret, or not so secret war that we were conducting in Laos. Laos was nominally neutral. However, the neutral government of Laos was under assault by Pathet Lao, communist forces. The government of Laos went through the motions of remaining neutral, but it was desperately dependent on U.S. aid. Bill Sullivan, our ambassador in Vientiane.

Well, if we couldn't run the support effort against the Pathet Lao openly, we ran it otherwise, and so a great, covert CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] operation developed. Tens of thousands of Hmong tribesmen were recruited to fight against the Pathet Lao, and a great deal of the support operation was run from Thailand. Tens of thousands of U.S. military personnel poured into Thailand. Of course, Thailand was also a great R&R [Rest and Recuperation] destination for American forces from Vietnam, which enhanced Bangkok's reputation of being the great sex center of Southeast Asia.

U.S. aid to Thailand increased dramatically. We built air bases for our bombers and fighters engaged in operations against North Vietnam and for our escort and supply aircraft. We built roads, which doubled as military and civilian highways. We built ports

and a very significant infrastructure as far as rail, air, water, highway, and other facilities were concerned. Over time billions of dollars went into this effort. With it went a tremendous U.S. military presence, which at its peak amounted to about 50,000 troops in Thailand. Transportation of equipment by air and sea involved a tremendous, logistical effort to move supplies and people into and out of Thailand, in support of all of our Indochina operations.

During the Vietnam War the situation in Cambodia deteriorated, leading to the overthrow of Prince Sihanouk and a brief period of U.S. primacy under the Lon Nol Government of Cambodia where John Dean was ambassador. With the takeover by the Khmer Rouge, our effort there collapsed, and Dean had to leave Phnom Penh and encamp briefly at the guest house at the American embassy residence in Thailand. However, we remained militarily involved under President Nixon and Secretary of State Kissinger, including incursions into Cambodia to cope with developments along the Ho Chi Minh Trail which connected North and South Vietnam. All kinds of military security operations were launched directly from Thailand in support of all of this.

The military and civilian sectors of the Thai governments flourished, with the influx into Thailand of tremendous amounts of money and American personnel, both military and civilian. Of course, after the U.S. pullout from Vietnam there was a great drawdown of our combat military forces in Thailand. After the *Mayaguez* incident during the Ford Administration (when to recapture a merchant ship in Cambodian waters we used Thai military bases without the permission of the Thai Cabinet) all U.S. combat forces left Thailand. However, by the time I arrived in Thailand, the American military and civilian aid programs in the country, while declining, still remained very significant.

Apart from our embassy in Bangkok, we had a consulate general in Chiang Mai, a small consulate down in Songkhla [just North of the Thai-Malaysian border], the home town of the Thai Prime Minister during my time in Thailand, General Prem. We had a small consulate in northeastern Thailand at Udorn Thani. We also had a very significant, JUSMAAG program [Joint United States Military Assistance Group] which constituted the Military Advisory Group, at one time known as "MAGTHAI" [Military Assistance Group, Thailand]. Hundreds of millions of dollars worth of equipment flowed into Thailand, from the U.S., and there were all kinds of U.S. military personnel in the country trying to help the Thai to better manage these military assistance funds.

A U.S.-Thai "COBRA Gold" joint military exercise operation took place annually in Thailand. Elements of a U.S. infantry division from Honolulu to Bangkok, plus Marines from the domain of CINCPAC [Commander in Chief, Pacific], aircraft and naval elements would come to Thailand, and exercise with the Thai Armed Forces. These involved joint operations against hypothetical enemies under different types of scenarios in Thailand. Night operations were conducted, there were parachute drops, and combined land, air and sea exercises were undertaken. We exercised on our own behalf and tried to impart our latest military tactics, technology and logistical advances to the Thai military. The Thai military leaders were happy with those arrangements which were very profitable

as well.

Obviously, the Thai military were an important part of the political scene. In political terms the Thai military machine goes way back into the late, 19th century. A French military observer had already described the Thai Army as a “political machine under arms.” Since the coup d'etat of 1932, the Thai have had 15, successive coups d'etat. Some of them have been short-lived and relatively bloodless. Still others were “pretty mean” and bloody. These coups were generally undertaken in the name of the supporting Thai monarchy. Often they were done in the name of democracy, but they usually ended up under the control of a clique headed by a particularly powerful Army general. They were not always led by the Army, but the Army was the strongest of the various Thai military services. (End of tape)

By the time I arrived in Bangkok there was a transitional movement in Thai politics. The Prime Minister of Thailand was a clean former commander of the Royal Thai Army, General Prem, who had retired after a distinguished military career. The Supreme Commander of the Royal Thai Armed Forces was General Athit. General Athit had already reached mandatory retirement age but had managed to get one of those rare waivers to stay on in the Army for one more year, and now wanted to stay on even longer. So the tensions were apparent between General Athit and the Prem Government.

Q: I have a question, Bill. I take it that being a senior military officer was not just a matter of power but was also a matter of money. Was this true or not? What was the reason for people wanting to stay on in the Army?

BROWN: It was a matter of power and all of the “perks” that go with it. Remember that the political scene had been significantly militarized. As we analyzed this militarized, political establishment, we had the impression that by the time an officer reached the rank of Colonel, he would be spending perhaps three days a week with his unit, going through the motions of being its commander, and the rest of the week he would be attending to his business, or his wife's business, because these officers were almost all engaged in business, either directly or through relatives.

There was a significant degree of what I would call “state-ism” in the Thai economy That is, some major economic entities such as the telephone and communications system, and the tobacco industry were state monopolies. On their Boards of Directors were Thai generals and admirals, and maybe some colonels as well.

The Thai Parliament was divided into upper and lower houses, called the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Senate was appointive. A significant number of the seats in the Thai Senate was occupied by active duty Thai generals and admirals. They were receiving their regular pay and were paid an extra salary as Senators. In addition to these sources of income, they had accumulated such wealth and power that on a local or regional basis they had acquired a great deal of political influence for elections to the Lower House. A Thai general engaged in business could do very well on the local,

political scene. So the military aspect of the Thai political scene was very strong.

At the same time, under Prime Minister Prem, there was a distinct movement toward a coalition government. I don't know whether the other persons you have interviewed have talked about dealing with coalition governments. For an American this situation was quite unique and very important in terms of the shifting sands of coalition politics in Thailand. In all of this activity the Thai military played a very significant role.

Many Thai officers were corrupt, which was a source of real concern to us. Many of the very senior Thai military officers had attended U.S. military schools, had picked up the U.S. jargon, and had learned that American military officers were supposed to be apolitical. However, notwithstanding long associations with U.S. military officers and the fact that they had graduated from distinguished military training schools all over the United States, these Thai officers rapidly re-adapted to the Thai system when they got back home.

In other words, you would often talk to a Thai military officer who spoke the American jargon, who had many American military contacts, and who knew how to address us, how to go along and get along, and how to extract from us the most for his personal and private benefit as well.

I dwell on this at some length because the challenge for us, as we saw it, was how to foster enhanced Thai democracy. Here, for example, was a government led by Prem, which had come into office some years earlier and had now gone through a coalition cycle in office. Prime Minister Prem was unmarried and had a reputation for being clean, which was a remarkable phenomenon. While some who dealt with the Thai Government might criticize other members of the cabinet, Prem was considered clean.

Q: When you say "clean," could you define that for us?

BROWN: Briefly, he wasn't on the take. He had no wife and wife's family to satisfy. He cultivated an image of cleanliness, as far as the integrity of the Prime Minister was concerned. He was very proud of this, and justifiably so, in my view. Under Prem, at senior levels, there were real questions about corruption. However, Prem was clean, which was very important for me, as I'll get into later on. There were times when I had to see him on very delicate matters which touched on corruption within his government. I was confident that, on these occasions, I would get a hearing, that he would pay attention to what I was saying, and that, hopefully, my approach to him would somehow result in clearing up a particular matter.

Now in security matters we had a very extensive intelligence relationship with the Thai. In addition, the whole refugee portfolio on the Thai side was run by the Thai National Security Council. Therefore, in many matters of major interest to the U.S. we were dealing with the Thai security establishment. So the relationship was very heavily tilted to the military and other security fronts, if I can use that expression.

Q: When you say “security,” do you really mean battalions of military personnel or are you talking about the intelligence side of things?

BROWN: I'm talking about the whole show. Remember that Prime Minister Prem faced challenges from within the uniformed, military establishment of which he was an old veteran. There were times when Prime Minister Prem, feeling that he faced a particular threat, would suddenly go up to Korat, which had long been his army command post, when he was still on active military duty. When Prem suddenly went up to Korat and hunkered down for several days, you knew that trouble was afoot. This was his way of telling whoever might threaten him that he was in his old bunker and ready to deal with the threat.

Before I go into specifics, let's go back to the U.S. Embassy. We had for this reason a very significant group of U.S. military in the JUSMAAG component that I just mentioned. We also had a separate Defense Attache section. I don't want to go into details, but we had a very significant, intelligence presence in Thailand which had been there for a long time and was substantial. Our JUSMAAG [Joint United States Military Assistance Advisory Group] and Defense Attache components were staffed by senior and expected officers who had very good contacts in the Thai Armed Forces.

There was a sizable AID [Agency for International Development] Mission. When I arrived in Thailand in 1985, we were still at a stage where several hundred million dollars in military and civilian aid were coming into Thailand annually. The larger proportion of this aid was military, but there was significant, civilian aid coming in as well. In its heyday AID had very strong influence on the selection, training, and subsequent assignments of Thai officials. Thousands of Thai civilian officials had gone to the United States under AID auspices for training.. They had returned to Thailand and, with AID backing and follow-up, had handled substantial and very worthwhile projects all over the country.

In more specific terms, AID had supported the modernization of Thai education facilities. AID had helped on specific projects, dealing with both the private as well as the governmental sectors. In more recent years funding had been cut because of worldwide pressures and competition. However, it remained very significant. AID Directors in Thailand were top notch people. Already, AID had environmental specialists in Bangkok, which represented an important breakthrough. The Thai economic growth rate came to reach about seven or eight percent, annually. Unfortunately, with this rapid growth rate came environmental degradation, with the wholesale destruction of the forests, wildfire urban development, and all of the environmental costs that went with it. With my environmental background and with the encouragement of AID, I became, in no small measure, an environmentally oriented Ambassador, using AID funds and promoting AID programmatic approaches.

We had between 100 and 200 Peace Corps Volunteers in Thailand. This was a very

successful program. I remember traveling around Thailand, and more than one Thai Provincial Governor laid out the red carpet for me. However, he would notify me, politely but clearly, that, as far as he was concerned, these Peace Corps Volunteers were for him the real American Ambassadors. They were out in the countryside, doing excellent work in the schools, implementing projects, and were very highly thought of by Thai Government officials and by the populace there.

Some of the Peace Corps Volunteers faced no small risk, from the point of view of health. When you get over to the eastern side of Thailand, you get into an area where malaria and dengue fever are endemic, particularly malaria. A form of malaria is found there, called *falsa parum* [tertiary malaria], which is often deadly. Indeed, although a great deal of research had been done, there is no safe, preventative medicine for this disease, except to stay away from mosquitoes, particularly at night. I remember visiting front line positions of the Thai military and seeing some Thai soldiers who had been wounded in firefights with the Vietnamese. However, the great bulk of the patients in the wards of the military field hospitals were men who were flat on their backs, suffering from malaria. Some 30 percent of the units stationed in that area suffered from malaria and, obviously, the same thing was true of the Vietnamese Army units on the other side.

That reminds me that while I was in Thailand we celebrated the 25th anniversary of AFRIMS, the Armed Forces Research Institute of Medical Science, an arm of Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, DC. Technically, the AFRIMS program was a joint project with the Thai Military Medical Service. In fact, it was funded by the U.S. military. It has been forgotten by many people, but it is a very important component of Walter Reed Hospital's outreach program. If you look at World War II and the casualties in the South Pacific area, you will find that, apart from the bloody cost of amphibious operations against the Japanese, a large proportion of the casualties were caused by malaria. AFRIMS had been deeply involved in research into malaria, elephantiasis, dengue fever, and other tropical diseases, which caused such a tremendous, human cost during World War II and, indeed, during the Vietnam War. Afrims employed Thai technicians who spent many man-hours completing research tasks which would have been very expensive to perform in the U.S.

We also had a large USIS [United States Information Service] operation in Thailand, including libraries, public relations efforts, and support for Thai educational programs. USIS was very well regarded. We had very sophisticated people in the AID and USIS programs, with branch offices in the provinces. We had an American presence in the top think tanks in Thailand. Ambassador John Dean, who preceded me, and I myself sat on the boards of the Asian Institute of Technology, the Thai Development Research Institute, or this or that other think tank which had initially gained its funding and its seed money from U.S. Government funds and which was producing a new brand of Thai economic, progressive planning. This had great influence on the Thai Government of the day, as far as new programs were concerned, including family planning, construction activity, and environmental activity.

Q: Bill, did you have any problem with family planning programs? This was early on during the Reagan administration.

BROWN: Thailand was in the forefront of family planning programs. There was a Thai development in this field which was remarkable. It was organized and developed by Doctor Meechai [a Ph.D., not a medical doctor]. He was and is a colorful Thai figure. He is a Eurasian and is married to a close relative of the Thai Royal Family. At one time, when I was there, he was Deputy Minister of Industry. Meechai's approach to family planning involved a partnership program among non-governmental organizations, with governmental backing. The population of Thailand was about 52 or 53 million. Volunteers from family planning organizations went out and emphasized the lighter side of family planning. Dr. Meechai had great zest, ingenuity, and creativity. He launched campaigns publicizing the use of condoms, using young people and children. On July 4 he would mount a great banner at the Imperial Hotel, diagonally opposite my residence, and declare it "National Vasectomy Day," offering free vasectomies to personnel of the American Embassy. His program was a great success. I would say that it was a model, as compared with the sort of standard more solemn, government-directed kind of programs elsewhere, which had less success when implemented in other countries.

Q: So you didn't have a problem with abortions...

BROWN: No, the Thai program was something to hold up as a model for the voluntary approach. It was a non-governmental program, but we could fund it.

One place that this program didn't work and didn't apply, because the local leaders didn't want it, concerned the camps for many thousands of Cambodian refugees. The Cambodian refugee leaders didn't want this family planning program. They looked upon these camps as their "breeding ground," if I can use that expression, for the new resistance organizations to return to Cambodia and kick out the Vietnamese. So Dr. Meechai didn't operate in the refugee camps. The refugees really increased in numbers, because there was nothing else to do but reproduce. The Thai wouldn't let them work. In short, the Thai wouldn't foster anything that would make the refugees comfortable. So the refugees lived cheek by jowl, I might say, with nothing to do. They produced many babies in those camps!

Returning to the American Embassy, it was large and important. There had been distinguished American Ambassadors to Thailand. Some of them you could even call imperial in their manner. They were powerful, they were a source or funnel for funding various programs, they were courted by various elements in Thai society, and they were symbols of a very strong, American presence in the country. The Embassy was declining in size, but it was still large and very important.

I found that I had a good Embassy staff. Thailand was still an attractive place, as far as encouraging good Foreign Service Officers, military personnel, and so forth to serve there. Keeping this large group together was a challenge, given the fact that physically

their offices and homes were all over Bangkok. In addition, those Americans stationed in Bangkok were of different official groups and had a history of being pretty independent, with their own funding, as it were. So there was all kinds of competition. The Country Team approach really had to be improved as a managerial tool.

Let me pause here, before we go any further, and say that we had another, very important component in the American Mission. That was DEA.

Q: The Drug Enforcement Agency.

BROWN: Yes. Thailand itself had been a major source of narcotics, much of which came from what was known as the “Golden Triangle” of narcotics. The Golden Triangle area consisted of northeastern Burma, especially the so-called “Shan state;” the far northern part of Thailand; and part of Laos. These areas were populated by hill tribespeople and by Chinese who had supported Chiang Kai-shek and who had come down from Yunnan with military and paramilitary groups, had taken over control of neighboring areas in Burma and been given temporary asylum in Thailand. They settled among the hill tribespeople. They were energetic, productive, and rapidly became involved in the production and sale of narcotics. Opium had been grown in ever increasing quantities in northern Thailand. Therefore, it was understandably a major source of concern and focus for U.S. anti-narcotics efforts.

The Thai moved in their own way, with our constant funding and probing, to assert control over the production of opium and its refined byproducts, morphine and heroin. Over the years the production side of this activity shifted over to Burma. At the time the Thai-Burma border area was chaotic. The amount of control by Rangoon, or Yangon, as it is called now, was pretty limited. Burma was in a more or less permanent state of civil war. The ethnic minorities resident in the Shan State of Burma were hostile to the Burmese central government to begin with. To fund themselves and their revolutionary or rebel activities, they produced, refined, and sold narcotics. Over time they became narcotics traffickers. Some of these groups started off by claiming that they were against the narcotics traffic and were just using narcotics production as a temporary means of supporting themselves. After all, they said, what else do we have? Over time the insidious effect of the narcotics traffic came to dominate them, and they became producers of narcotics products and addicts themselves.

The Thai-Burma frontier, all the way up to the tri-border area where Burma, Thailand, and Laos meet, increasingly became narcotics territory. Fairly large amounts of opium were grown there. In my day, some opium was still being harvested in Thailand, although far less than before due to the Thai government's suppression programs. The opium was produced and refined into morphine or heroin, and then transported to market. All of this activity was heavily dominated by the Chinese. The refined product came down by various routes through Thailand, then out to the international market through exit routes from Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore. This was a major U.S. concern.

A great deal of official U.S. attention was paid to this traffic. We trained all kinds of Thai military and police, as well as narcotics specialists who learned all of our modern techniques. However, there remained a great deal of corruption in the narcotics field. The price differential between the raw opium and the products refined from it was so tempting that people who were in cahoots with local producers made a lot of money. There was a big payoff from transporting narcotics products to market. There was even corruption in the very groups of Thai officials with whom we were working to break up the narcotics traffic.

Understandably, DEA had a particular outlook, which held that, "Thailand was corrupt from top to bottom." DEA concluded that it needed its own intelligence, which tended to confirm that the Thai system was corrupt. The agency felt that it needed a frontline presence because it would never be able to root out the narcotics traffic unless its people got right down in the trenches in the front lines of the narcotics business. There was already in effect the Mansfield Restriction, which goes back to ex-Senator Mike Mansfield. This restriction provided that DEA agents were not allowed themselves to mount and conduct armed raids abroad, but they could be, shall we say, a pace behind the Thai police and armed in a defensive mode with automatic shotguns. Local Thai narcotics personnel were nominally out in front, and the DEA agents were a pace behind. In fact, the DEA agents were running these operations.

The attitude of the DEA agents was basically: "Let us get on with the work in our own manner. We have our stakeouts and our own intelligence sources. Just leave us alone." The DEA had people elsewhere in both northern and southern Thailand. The great bulk of them were up in northern Thailand. DEA has a very action-oriented, can do, aggressive, gregarious bunch of people. They had the money and the wherewithal to recruit significant Thai sources of information. They were not alone in all of this. CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] was quietly but effectively involved. In addition to the Thai Police we had to work with others in the Thai establishment including variegated conglomerates of Thai military personnel throughout the country. There was internal competition among the Thai Police, Thai regular military outfits, militia, paramilitary, local and central government personnel, and intelligence units and organizations. The Thai had a great, patchwork structure in this area.

As time went on, it turned out that as you put your finger in the dike here, the narcotics traffickers would bore a hole elsewhere in the dike. Indeed, what we witnessed was that, with the pressures on opium in northern Thailand, marijuana began to be grown in eastern Thailand where it soon flourished. There were American drug dealers who would bring into Thailand the latest Mexican and American seeds and show the farmers how to grow it on a massive scale. Marijuana flourishes with very little care in that kind of climate.

Moreover, we saw the progressive growth of Lao traffickers along the Thai border. This caused great concern among our narcotics specialists in our Consulate General in Chiang Mai. As time went on, and the intelligence developed, we found the Lao communist military progressively becoming involved in this activity, through what they called the

Mountain Development Military Corporation. As time went on the Vietnamese also became corrupted, so this kind of activity moved across the neck of Laos and into Vietnam and, progressively, into foreign markets as new export routes were developed.

Of course, that made things all that much worse for our Charge d'Affaires in Vientiane, Laos. We had some very capable people in our small Embassy in Vientiane who were diligently trying to persuade the Lao communist government to clean up the whole POW/MIA [Prisoner of War/Missing in Action] situation. Our Embassy in Vientiane was trying to encourage a very conservative, very suspicious Lao communist government to become involved in programs aimed at development and to loosen up in an effort to try and satisfy POW/MIA constituencies in the United States. These groups in the U.S. were pressing for more and more activity on the part of the Thai Government, the Lao Government, and, of course, Hanoi.

Well, just as we were proposing these fledgling, very small programs which offered some hope of inducing the Lao communist government to do something on the POW/MIA front, our U.S. intelligence group in Thailand showed that the Lao military was engaging in the narcotics traffic. This put a significant crimp into the efforts of our distinguished Charge d'Affaires in the Embassy in Vientiane. There were difficult, policy questions involved.

There ensued a visit by the U. S. Attorney General, Edwin Meese, and the head of the DEA. I accompanied them up to northern Thailand and showed them the trenches and bunkers of the armed, Burmese military organization. I briefed them and gave them first-hand contact with their DEA constituent troops. They also looked very seriously at the growing spread of the narcotics traffic into Laos and Vietnam. The general feeling was: "We thank the Thai for what they have done, but can't they do more?"

So when I arrived in this great country of Thailand, the "Land of Smiles and hospitality," I found myself a very busy man, as my distinguished predecessors Mort Abramowitz and John Gunther Dean had been. We had money, we had influence. Our presence was diminishing, but we were still "Number One." Looking ahead, we were trying to adjust to what was to be a lesser presence, with fewer resources over time, and adjusting our priorities. The long term trends had to be kept in mind.

In all of this we hoped to promote democracy in Thailand. We were looking at the veneer of a parliamentary democracy, whose various levels were significantly corrupt, permeated by a very powerful, military bureaucracy. Many of the members of the Thai Parliament were elected by corrupt means, such as the very heavy expenditures of money to buy votes in the countryside. Moreover that many of them, having been elected, were engaged back home in the narcotics traffic and other, questionable activities.

We looked to the growing, middle class in Thailand as a source of hope and inspiration. A great deal of that middle class, in fact, was Chinese. In Bangkok the street signs were in Thai, but Bangkok was, and is, very significantly Chinese.

Q: I'm told that many of the Chinese married into Thai families, more or less to get their foot into local society.

BROWN: Yes. In fact, I would say that, on a comparative basis, this whole process worked much more easily and successfully than elsewhere. I think that the divisions between racial groups in Malaysia, the Philippines, or Indonesia are much deeper than they are in Thailand. Thailand had gone through an anti-Chinese scare and a Chinese-led insurgency in the early period after World War II. At the same time, overall the Chinese in Thailand had shown their loyalty, had intermarried with the Thai, and had become very significantly Thai in terms of cultural orientation.

For example, I have a Thai son-in-law. In fact, he is Sino-Thai, like so many others. He speaks Thai. He cannot read or write Chinese. I communicate with his father in Mandarin, because his father, as a little boy, went to a Chinese school in Bangkok. His family communicates in Thai and in a sub-dialect of Chinese. They are virtually 100 percent Thai in outlook. This phenomenon is really amazing. I don't want to get personal, but it's very interesting.

Q: The personal aspect is important.

BROWN: I had a full agenda in advancing U.S. interests. I traveled around Thailand all the time. We were able to use Defense Attache and JUSMAAG aircraft, these little, eight or 10 seat airplanes. We could distribute AID or other funds and visit various projects this way. We had a very heavy flow of very senior, U.S. official visitors across the board, both military and civilian.

I was very much blessed to have back in Washington the support of my former boss, Paul Wolfowitz, Gaston Sigur on the NSC [National Security Council] at the White House; and Rich Armitage, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, who had tremendous rapport with Casper Weinberger, Secretary of Defense. Subsequently, Paul Wolfowitz went to Indonesia as Ambassador. Gaston Sigur moved over to replace Wolfowitz at the Department of State. Through the various crises that I faced I had very good backing in Washington. I could telephone these men, if necessary, using a secure telephone.

At this point in 1985 I was now 55 years old and still full of vim and vigor. I had an outstanding DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission], Chas Freeman, who had been DCM in Beijing. He was a great polyglot and had learned Thai on the job. Later on, Freeman was to move up to be Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, and Ambassador to Saudi Arabia. He was a keen analyst and an innovative organizer.

Our JUSMAAG chief was a Colonel with a Special Forces background. Early in the game in Thailand he came to me and said, "Have you ever parachuted? Would you be interested in parachuting?" I said, "I've never parachuted. I would love to parachute." He said,

“Well, I'll tell you, as far as bonding with the Thai military is concerned at this point, there is nothing in the world that you could ever do as effectively as just taking a parachute jump.” So, I said, “Let's do it, but I don't want any publicity. I don't want any hot dog stuff. You quietly arrange it, and I'll do it.”

Shortly thereafter a U.S. Air Force Major came to my house, took me out on my lawn, got me up on a bench 12 inches high, and showed me how to fall and to roll-on impact, forward and backward, to simulate landing on the ground by parachute. Later, a Thai jump master appeared at my office and gave me further instructions. Finally, a flight was arranged.

I told my PAO [Public Affairs Officer] from the United States Information Service that I didn't want any publicity on this, but on the night before the scheduled jump, he phoned me and said that he was getting calls from news agencies. I said, “I'm not making any statement. I just want to make a parachute jump.” Early one morning I was flown up to a Thai Air Force base at Lopburi [about 70 miles North of Bangkok] and given quick instruction course with some American reservists who were interested in qualifying or requalifying as parachutists.

Up I went into a stationary balloon 900 or 1,000 feet up, with the commander of Thai Special Forces, General Sunthorn, a four-star general. I stepped out of a cage that they had arranged and parachuted down to the ground. It was all over very quickly. Well, when I landed, there was a large group of journalists waiting there on the ground with cameras.

I had used a Thai parachute, packed by Thais. In a word, it was a Thai show. It was great. As soon as I landed, I had barely touched down and started to roll, when I was grabbed by Thai Air Force personnel who served me orange juice from a silver tray! (End of tape)

General Sunthorn, who had parachuted just before me, roared over in his combat jeep. He was in modern parachutist uniform, with the plastic helmet and all of that. I was wearing the old, U.S. Army type parachute uniform. He said, “I've got to send a 'FLASH' cable right away.” I said, “What do you mean?” He said, “I think that General Athit, our Supreme Commander, is in Australia. He'll want to know that you made it all right!” [Laughter] So on the next day the story of my parachute jump was on the front page of the papers. Among the Thai military this made quite a splash. I never asked the Department of State for permission because I knew that there would be a great, gnashing of teeth and so forth. However, it was a real bonding experience among the Thai military. There was a big ceremony where I was awarded Thai Parachutist's Wings.

Q: By the way, what about golf? I ask this because I've been told by people who have served in Asia, and my experience in South Korea reinforced this, that golf can be very important with the military people. Did this play any role at all?

BROWN: It sure helps if you're in the military. The standard schedule in Thailand for senior American commanders, including CINCPAC [Commander in Chief, Pacific]

would be to land in Bangkok at about 4:00 to 5:00 PM, have a short rest, then cocktails and dinner. Then, early the next morning, they would be out on the golf course with their Thai counterparts. I played a little bit of golf, but frankly, in my view, it just took up too much time. Even with the kind of red carpet treatment you get as an ambassador, a game of golf involves about half a day on the golf course.

Q: Sure it does.

BROWN: I just couldn't do that. However, I took some golf lessons and at night I would go out on a driving range. I did play a couple of rounds of golf on magnificent, manicured Thai golf courses. Any golf enthusiast would drool at the selection of golf courses available in and around Bangkok. So for the U.S. military and, in fact, anybody else visiting Thailand, this was a highly enjoyable thing to do. There were also golf courses up-country in Chiang Mai and elsewhere. A lot of business was done at the golf courses, but not my business.

As I mentioned, I parachuted about a month after I arrived in Thailand. This experience had an important bonding effect with certain senior Thai military officers. Together with other things, this was important only a few, short months later when, at 3:00 AM in September, 1985, the tanks began to rumble and roar in certain areas of Bangkok. An attempted coup d'etat was under way. A couple of Thai Colonels who were brothers, one from the Thai Army and the other one from the Thai Air Force, engineered the attempted coup. They had some tanks, and some firefights took place. The coup leaders seized a few television and radio stations, but broadcasts supporting the coup soon began to disappear and by noon the coup attempt had fizzled.

It was a remarkable education for me on what it's like to be in the middle of that kind of a situation, where suddenly all of your civilian sources of information totally disappear. I couldn't reach anybody. No one was available! Now the coup took place under circumstances where Prime Minister Prem, Foreign Minister Sitthi Sawetsila, and their staffs were in Jakarta. General Athit, the Supreme Commander of the Thai Armed Forces, was on a trip to Norway or Sweden. At the time of the attempted coup he was with a lady of the night in some bordello!

Q: General Athit was...

BROWN: Supreme Commander of the Thai Armed Forces. I couldn't reach anybody in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or any civilian official of any consequence, anywhere. The whole atmosphere was suddenly military. The Thai Army Commander, who is the real strength in the Thai system, was General Chaowalit. As of about 5:00 or 6:00 PM of a very tense day, I got through to General Chaowalit and learned that Prime Minister Prem was rushing back to Thailand from Jakarta and would arrive in Bangkok late that evening at the military airport side of Bangkok Airport. Bangkok Airport is civilian, but across the runway is a large Thai Air Force facility.

I was all on my own. You have to make spot decisions under circumstances like that. I reached General Chaowalit by telephone and said: "I want to show my support for the Prime Minister on this very important occasion and I'm sure that you'll agree. I'll be arriving in my Cadillac, but I'll need help in getting through the road blocks that are all over Bangkok." He said, "It will be done."

I arrived at the airport that evening, having been cleared through all of the military roadblocks. The military side of the airport was an armed camp, with soldiers armed with rifles and bayonets, and with machineguns, tanks, and so forth on display. I arrived at the VIP [Very Important Person] Room of the military side of the airport and found that there were only three civilians there: Prasong, the Director of the National Security Council, Piya, the Director of the Thai Intelligence Service (and my Harvard '52 classmate), and myself. The rest of the people there were senior military officers. General Chaowalit, a four-star general and commander of the Thai Army, was there with General Sunthorn, the commander of the Thai Special Forces with whom I had parachuted. There was a great deal of hustle and bustle. The Air Force commander was across the room, obviously isolated from the others. During the evening he deliberately came over and engaged me in conversation to assure me that he had had nothing to do with this coup. I listened to him without comment. Then he retired to his corner.

Finally, Prime Minister Prem's plane landed. General Chaowalit went aboard the plane first to confer with his boss, General Prem, the Prime Minister. About 10 or 15 minutes later the Prime Minister descended from the airplane under floodlights. It was an entirely military scene. Prem, looking very angry and very grim, came down. I shook his hand and was photographed doing so. Of course, Prem was very angry. He felt humiliated that this had happened while he was in Jakarta, where he learned, through President Suharto, his host, and probably through the CIA Station in Jakarta that there had been a coup in Bangkok.

Prem had flown first to the King of Thailand's summer resort in Hua Hin, on the Gulf of Thailand. He conferred with the King and got his support. Then he flew to the military airport in Bangkok, and the great sorting out began. Some senior military officers, including generals and admirals, were charged with participation in the coup. The two colonels who had plotted this coup had fled the country.

A day later I was finally contacted by a very senior official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Perhaps it would be best not to mention his name here. I was told that one of the colonels who had plotted the coup was then on a small aircraft, bound for Singapore, and would arrive the next morning. I was asked to arrange that he be issued a visa so that he could go to the United States. I said, "What!" It was put to me, and the man who spoke to me was very tense, that "This request comes from the highest authority in the Kingdom of Thailand." I asked: "From His Majesty, the King?" He said, "Yes," so I passed this on to our Embassy in Singapore.

Well, this bizarre effort to get an American visa for one of the coup plotters didn't work

for a variety of reasons. The colonel obtained a German visa and left on the next flight out of Singapore to Germany, where he became a restaurant owner in Duesseldorf, or some place like that. For several years after that he wrote me letters, asking me please to arrange for him to be issued a visa for the United States. He said that I should understand all of this.

I mention this episode to show you the arcane, Byzantine, opaque nature of political life in Thailand in a crisis. Imagine a very senior, civilian member of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (not Sitthi Sawetsila, the Foreign Minister) asking me, the American Ambassador, to give a visa to a military officer who had just carried out a coup attempt which had failed and in which people had been killed, including an American photographer and an Australian journalist.

The Australian Ambassador and I had to go to a funeral service at the English Anglican Church in Bangkok to which senior Thai military officers had sent bouquets and wreaths of condolence. Some members of the press corps made remarks in which they railed against military dictatorships. The Australian Ambassador and I had to sit there, grim-faced, with two coffins in front of us and suffer the slings and arrows of the press.

Q: Why was the press after you?

BROWN: Well, this had happened on our watch. An American and an Australian had been killed, and they wanted to know what we were doing about it.

Q: What had you done about the visa application for the colonel who was involved in the coup? You just didn't do anything?

BROWN: He did not get an American visa. I can tell you that I went through quite a sweat on being told by a senior member of the Thai Government that the highest authority in the land wanted me to issue the visa. Well, on the next opportunity I went to the Personal Private Secretary of His Majesty, the King and raised with him with this alleged request from the King that we issue the colonel a visa. He looked at me in utter astonishment. He later informed me that the King had requested no such thing.

Q: What did that do with your relationship with the Foreign Ministry official?

BROWN: Like so many other things, it became just so much water over the dam. However, I mention this matter because I previously described the Byzantine, arcane, and opaque outlook of senior officials at times like that. There had been many previous cases of this kind, and I learned of subsequent cases as well. When a coup d'etat occurs, people do things in the name of the King and the name of democracy. What you find out afterwards is that there are cliques, some members of which are playing double or triple games at the same time. You just never know for sure what in the heck is going on in these power struggles.

Q: Going back to your decision to go out to the airport to show your support for Prime Minister Prem, with so many coups taking place in Thailand, is there almost an Ambassadorial SOP [Standard Operating Procedure] for doing this? Did you think that Prem was as clean and as good as they come, and that we should show support for him? I'm talking about the decision process.

BROWN: The decision was really my own. I mean, I informed Washington, but there was no time to consult on that. I just had to use my own judgment. This meant a lot to me. I think that, at the time, it meant quite a bit to Prem. There it was, reported in the media, that I had gone out to the airport to meet the Prime Minister on his return from Jakarta. The Prime Minister was back, the coup was over, and the representative of the United States Government stood with him. So that was that.

The failed coup greatly elevated General Chaowalit, who was the Commander of the Thai Army. He had taken over in Prem's absence, and put the coup down. General Athit, the "Supreme Commander of the Thai Armed Forces," was out of the picture in Scandinavia. The Thai Air Force was under a cloud because one of the battalions involved in the coup consisted of Air Force personnel. Some admirals and other senior officers were also under a cloud. Trials started but, in true Thai fashion, privates, corporals, and sergeants were dismissed from the service, whereas the senior officers under arrest were progressively treated better. Pretty soon refrigerators and TVs were moved into the places where they were being held. Then they were moved into even better special facilities, and those trials, over time, just went nowhere.

Some 10 years later, in 1998, when I revisited Thailand and heard some of the inside stories about this coup, it was really remarkable. I would prefer, at this stage, not to get into personalities, but it was difficult to believe some of the explanations advanced. The key army colonel who had engineered the coup attempt returned years later to Thailand from Duesseldorf. He eventually became a Lieutenant General and Deputy Minister of the Interior by a process of progressive rehabilitation. That takes you into the mentality towards coups. That is, the Thai are excitable, like most people, but there is a certain caution when it comes to dealing with the aftermath of coups and counter-coups.

This takes me back to some fundamental aspects of society in Thailand. That is, you had better be careful about vengeance, because somewhere down the line, your family and others close to you might wind up taking it in the neck. In Thailand people know each other's business and vulnerabilities. There are very intricate webs and counter-balances which prevail. People know that they should be mindful of this.

Behind all of the smiles the Thai can be vicious and brutal in their reactions. I don't know how it is now, but during my tour in Thailand one could easily hire a gangster. It was often said that the cost of having someone killed would be about \$100. A hit man might ride up on a motorcycle with a shotgun and blast you away. Well, I think that we might break at this point.

Q: Let me raise a couple of things. You've talked about the attempted coup d'etat, the Byzantine way that the Thai have learned to apply when dealing with coups, and your parachute jump. We'll talk about other events during your time in Thailand, since we've just gotten started. However, there are a couple of issues I'd like you to discuss.

One issue is the Soviet naval presence at Cam Ranh Bay in South Vietnam and how we viewed that. Another one is the role of the Thai Royal Family. I've written down "sex," since Bangkok is often spoken of as the sex capital of the world. Bangkok is a remarkable place. More Europeans than Americans go there for sex, but Americans also go there for this purpose. There are the problems with high school children and the whole problem of AIDS. So sex is not an inconsiderable subject. Then I would like you to discuss how you dealt with the refugee problem. One other subject I would like you to discuss is how much the refugee agencies made on the refugees. I've interviewed Dick Gibson, who was a consular officer in Thailand. I don't know if you knew him. He was saying that he felt that there was an established scale of refugee activity. There were refugees, but they couldn't just be economic refugees. I'm sure that there are many other subjects which you would like to raise. We'll really work this issue through.

BROWN: Okay.

Today is August 10, 1999. Let's talk first about the situation affecting the Thai Navy, particularly during this period from 1985 to 1988, as it was affected by both the Indians and the Soviets.

BROWN: On a worldwide basis, remember that the Soviet Union was still a world power at that time. Its naval establishment was still being described as "expanding" in the Pacific Ocean area, although it was still small compared with ours. There was considerable publicity about Admiral Gorchkov, the commander of the Soviet Fleet; the Soviet naval base at Vladivostok; and the increasing reach of the Soviet Navy, coupled with the potential of their BEAR and BISON bombers. There were stories about Soviet construction of an aircraft carrier or aircraft carrier called the "KIEV."

Another aspect of the potential of the Soviet Navy was the status of Cam Ranh Bay, in South Vietnam, the great facility which the U.S. had built before we pulled out of South Vietnam. Through a leasing arrangement the Soviets obtained access to that facility. In the minds of naval strategists, this greatly extended the potential reach of the Soviet Navy. From Cam Ranh Bay they could technically cover our great bases at Subic Bay and Clark Field in the Philippines and even reach on down to Singapore and maybe beyond. So there was considerable concern about the implications of Soviet use of Cam Ranh Bay.

Then, in the background, was the question of our own facilities in the Philippines. In the mid-1980s these facilities were still pretty safe, but our bases were coming up for

renegotiation. There were fiery nationalists in the Philippine Congress who said that the time had come to cut the traditional link with the U.S. They argued that the Philippines could do a variety of things which might net them even more income.” They argued that these facilities are located on “good land,” with functioning air strips and other core infrastructure, and they could be turned into commercial facilities, giving the Philippines greater prospects for exports.

Then there were those in the Philippines who were just playing this issue for whatever it was worth in terms of Philippine domestic politics. In other words, get the Yankees out and demonstrate that the Philippines are not pussy cats or pushovers.

You may remember that we previously discussed the Compact of Free Association with the Marshalls, the Carolines, and the Marianas. One of the considerations involved the possible use as a fallback of Palau. If we ever lost the Philippines, as we did in 1942, where else would we go? It's an enormous distance all the way to Honolulu or Guam. Some people said that Palau had some benefit as a possible fallback position in place of the facilities in the Philippines. During my 1983-1985 tour in Washington we, were very concerned about this situation, as was CINCPAC [Commander in Chief, Pacific] and the whole naval and military establishment. This was especially because of the linkage between forward deployment and various positions as a strategic posture. That is, the linkage between our bases in the Philippines and those in Okinawa, Japan, and South Korea. If we lost one of these positions, might we not lose others in the process or at least have to pay much more to use them? So these were areas of considerable concern in Washington.

Taking all of these concerns together, then, we might look again at Cam Ranh Bay and Thailand. You could argue that Thailand is off the beaten naval track from Cam Ranh Bay. On the other hand, it's not too far away. If you look at the commercial choke points in the Straits of Malacca, Singapore, and elsewhere throughout the Indonesian archipelago, it is nice to have access to harbor facilities elsewhere, as well as R&R [Rest and Relaxation] access. It's nice to maintain the practice of ship visits and keep things as tuned up there as best you can, for safe, and secure access to ship repair facilities.

Now, the Thai had been watching a variety of things in the Pacific, and they, like other countries, had a certain amount of touchiness, as did others, about nuclear-propelled and nuclear-armed vessels. We had great friends in the Thai Government, who were well-disposed to the United States. I had good access to retired Air Chief Marshal Sitthi Sawetsila, who was now the Thai Foreign Minister. By making a call on him, I could get an okay to bring a nuclear-powered submarine right into Sattahip or off Pattaya [both places Southeast of Bangkok], or transit or R&R facilities for an aircraft carrier or other element of the fleet. Of course, we were also running these annual, “Cobra Gold” exercises, which involved air, land, and sea operations. The Thai didn't have much of a Navy. However, the Thai naval establishment was mighty interested in keeping this relationship going with the U.S., in view of the benefits it entailed in terms of training, contacts, and possible procurement of equipment.

We had a significant flow of U.S. Navy vessels visiting Thailand. There was no major problem about this. If the ship visit involved a nuclear-powered submarine, we had to request permission, but in my time getting such permission was a sure thing. This was not necessarily true elsewhere in the area. I've already mentioned the New Zealand affair and the sensitivities to nuclear ship visits even in Australia.

The Thai were themselves interested in what was then considered a possibility that, in view of the Soviet hookup with North Vietnam and Soviet access and presence at Cam Ranh Bay, some future contingency might bring tension vis-a-vis the Soviet Union.

Q: Were the Soviets mucking around there at all?

BROWN: Not really. There was a Soviet Embassy in Bangkok.

Q: I'm thinking of Cam Ranh Bay and the Soviet Navy.

BROWN: They were staging flights and making naval visits, but it's a long haul down to Cam Ranh Bay from the nearest Russian territory. It's an expensive business, in any event. Let's put it this way. They had their hand in. I'm sure that they were happy to see speculative pieces in professional journals about the potential of this development, both in terms of existing circumstances and possible, future events.

There were such questions as the possible linkage between the future of Cambodia and the Vietnamese presence there. What did Soviet involvement with the Vietnamese in Cam Ranh Bay mean in terms of the Thai objective of ousting the Vietnamese from Cambodia? The Vietnamese had a very considerable, fighting force of some 100,000 troops in Cambodia and another 50,000 troops in Laos. These were combat troops, and the Thai worried about them, with good reason.

If I may just go off on a little tangent on that score, Laos and Thailand have long had border disputes about ownership of this or that mountain on their common border. One of these disputes erupted, I guess, in about 1987. In this case Lao troops occupied a disputed hill or mountain, and the Thai decided to dislodge them from it and mounted all kinds of attacks. Notwithstanding the Cobra Gold exercises we had conducted with the Thai, the alleged expertise the Thai had picked up in American military training schools, the military hardware we had given or sold to them, and the lessons learned in joint maneuvers and operations, the operation was a failure, from the Thai viewpoint. The Thai launched a series of piecemeal attacks against this mountain and got their noses really bloodied. Some Thai aircraft were shot down, and Thai troops were killed.

Suddenly, an emergency note went up within the Thai military establishment that they were running out of all kinds of equipment which they had expended in trying to take this position on the Thai-Lao border. We were approached by the Thai military, who stated that there was a real crisis of supply, logistics, and backup.

There were those in the State Department who were worried about which country, Laos or Thailand, really owned this hill on their common border. I was told that the cartographers were studying this problem in detail. Realizing that I wasn't going to get anywhere and that top level Thai were looking to us for help, I called Rich Armitage [Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs] on the secure phone. After I outlined the situation, he came through with the support I needed. On his own network he had already had some indications of this situation developing. He said, "Tell the Thai that we'll get the supplies that they need." I said, "Could you be more specific?" Later on, he got back to me on the secure phone and said that a large transport aircraft had taken off and would deliver to Thailand so many thousand fuses, so many thousand shells and other items. He also said that a couple of U.S. Air Force pilots who were skilled in bombing and in evasion of anti-aircraft fire which the Lao had used to shoot down some Thai aircraft were on their way and would arrive in Bangkok shortly.

So I went to Prime Minister Prem with this information and reported to him personally what had happened. The Thai military had initially had great difficulty in prioritizing what they really needed but we had finally sorted this out and the military hardware and U.S. pilots would arrive shortly. In a quiet but impressive manner, said, "You know, Bill, you're the only people on whom we can count. If I were to go to the Chinese, all I would get would be a smile. But you really have come through when it counted, and I will never forget it."

At this juncture it had a good relationship with Prem and also with General Chaowalit who had replaced General Athit. There was no doubt in my mind that General Chaowalit would eventually, on retirement, be an active candidate himself for political office. At this time he was still in his 50s but had a very unique background, in terms not only of military commands, but also of political maneuvering. He had been successful in suppressing the communists in southern Thailand through a combination of force and persuasion. He had the ability to articulate a populist image. This gave him great potential as far as his future, political career was concerned. Eventually, he did become Prime Minister of Thailand, but that was after my time as Ambassador.

So all of these things, as I said, were intertwined. The Thai military had a distinct, political role. At this time Prem was now a civilian Prime Minister, but with a very strong security background and with support within the military establishment. He was taking the country toward political liberalization and democratization. There were members of his cabinet who were corrupt. There was no question of that. He had all kinds of problems on that account. However, it was very useful to me to have this kind of one on one relationship with Prem, backed up by supporters in Washington and CINCPAC in Honolulu.

Once we were visited by a Navy task force, consisting of a carrier, cruisers, and so forth. We offered Prime Minister Prem a VIP tour of this task force. He gladly accepted the offer, and I flew with him on a U.S. Navy jet plane and landed on the carrier. The Navy

put on a tremendous display of firepower and gave him a 21-gun salute as he stood on the deck of this carrier.

Q: I think that it would be a 19-gun salute for a foreign Prime Minister.

BROWN: All right, make it a 19-gun salute. Prem stood on the deck of the carrier, and all of the cruisers and destroyers accompanying it put on a live fire display, shooting down targets, and so forth. It was a very impressive kind of operation.

I think that you wanted to talk about refugees.

Q: Yes. While you were there, could you talk about how this refugee situation developed and what it was. How did you handle this on the ground and also the politics of it? [Laughter] I see that you're laughing about it. We both know what we're talking about. Would you talk about how this appeared to you, at that time, and maybe some of the personalities involved?

BROWN: Remember that I came into an inherited situation. The Vietnam War had already taken place. Already there was a pocket of some 50,000 Vietnamese in Thailand, left over from uprisings against the French in the 1930s and from the French Indo-China War [1945-1954].

Q: From 1954?

BROWN: From 1954. They had fled from Indo-China and gone to Thailand. They were looked upon as aliens. There is a distinct Thai, Cambodian, and Lao angst [concern] about the Vietnamese. The Vietnamese are variously feared, disliked, and hated. So there was a Vietnamese community which had already been in Thailand for three decades, but they were not Thai citizens. You could be born in Thailand, of Vietnamese parents, and still not be a Thai citizen. The same thing was true of the former Chinese KMT [Kuomintang] soldiers left over from the Chinese Civil War of the 1940s who had crossed the border into Thailand and lived up in the hills and mountains of northern Thailand. Their children and grandchildren, though born in Thailand, were not automatically Thai citizens. They had to apply to obtain Thai citizenship and they had to have sponsors, recommendations, and a clean record to become Thai citizens.

Then came the Vietnam War [1959-1975], as distinguished from the French Indo-China War [1945-1954]. With the outbreak of civil war in Cambodia in 1965, Cambodians began to come into Thailand, followed by other people fleeing the 1975 Khmer Rouge takeover of Cambodia, then the Vietnamese invasion and occupation. These events produced a torrent of Cambodian refugees who fled into Thailand. Moreover, with the breakdown in Laos of the neutral government and the takeover by the communists, tens of thousands of Lao refugees came over into Thailand from Laos. These refugees included both lowland Lao and the Hmong, the rather primitive, hill tribesmen from North Central Laos.

More Vietnamese came into Thailand, either by land or, in some combinations, by land and sea. Some of these Vietnamese came all the way across the Gulf of Siam, as we call it. They became, in many cases, the victims of Thai and Malaysian pirates while crossing the Gulf of Siam. These pirates were mostly fishermen, out fishing in the Gulf of Siam in boats which were often packed with young males. When they saw a boat, overloaded with Vietnamese, with its engine often broken down and often at the mercy of the sea, it was indeed a tempting target. So there were all kinds of terrible incidents which took place when Thai pirates boarded these vessels, took all of the refugees' property, and frequently raped the women. Upon the approach of a Thai Government vessel, these pirates pulled the plug or threw the refugees overboard.

Other Vietnamese came into Thailand, as I mentioned previously, on the Eastern shore of Thailand, adjacent to Cambodia. These refugees either came directly by land or partly by sea, bribing Thai officials, port authorities, and fishermen to take them around the corner and into southeastern Thailand.

When the Vietnamese forces overthrew the Khmer Rouge and the Vietnamese Army moved right up to the Thai-Cambodian border, numerous firefights ensued. This really led to a cascade of dramatic events. By the time Mort Abramowitz was in Thailand as American Ambassador, hundreds of thousands of Indochinese refugees were coming into Thailand. At times this created desperate situations. The U.S. Government led an international movement to help the refugees. Hundreds of millions of dollars and, in the aggregate, perhaps even billions of dollars, were spent on this effort. We sought to persuade Thailand, as the country of first refuge, to allow these refugees to come into Thailand. We buttressed this by giving the Thai assurances that we would do everything that we could do to take these people off Thai hands, either ourselves directly or through a coalition of international partners, including the British, French, Australians and others. We said that we would mount an international campaign to move these people. Meanwhile, we told the Thai that we expected that they would let them stay in Thailand until they were resettled elsewhere.

The camps for these refugees were in Thailand but close to the Thai-Cambodian border. This was a subject of front page concern in the U.S. media. By the time I got to Thailand, the problems had somewhat diminished, but this remained a subject of very high concern on my agenda.

We had a very significant, Refugee Affairs Section in the Embassy. Among its leaders at the time was Lacey Wright, who had an extensive background in this field.

Q: I've interviewed him.

BROWN: We had an arrangement whereby the initial processing of these refugees was done by Voluntary Agencies [Volags], including the JVA and the ODP.

Q: JVA stands for what?

BROWN: Joint Voluntary Agencies, which was a group contracting out of the United States and Geneva, Switzerland. Using U.S. Government funds, the JVA contracted to process these refugees. ODP [Orderly Departures Program] was a program which was involved in processing Amerasian children in Vietnam. [Amerasian children were the children of American soldiers who had served in Vietnam; their mothers were Vietnamese or other Indochinese.] The ODP also processed people in Vietnam who had worked for the U.S. Government, directly or indirectly, the Catholic Church, or U.S. organizations and businesses. They were obviously an oppressed group, many of whom had been sent to communist re-education camps.

Now this program involved very sensitive political and constituency questions, including the basic question: what is a refugee? There were various descriptions but, to simplify it, the standard definition of a refugee is someone who has suffered persecution by reason of race, creed, ethnicity, or other cause, or someone who fears that if he or she is returned to his or her homeland, he or she will then suffer one or another form of persecution.

This raised all kinds of related problems of definition, and there were many borderline cases. Remember that behind all of this there was the gradual buildup of what I would call a refugee base in the United States. The people making up this base consisted of those who had gone through Philippine or Thai refugee camps, had been processed, and were finally resettled in the United States. They acquired green cards [i.e., were considered permanent residents of the United States], became United States citizens, and then applied to bring their relatives from Southeast Asia to the United States. So the process became more and more complicated.

There was also the phenomenon of refugee or compassion fatigue. Our partners in resettling Indochinese refugees, including the British, the French, and the Australians, were also faced with other immigrant problems. For example, Europeans had to cope with Algerians, Yugoslavs, Turks, Kurds, and other refugees. They became somewhat weary of the costs in energy and money in dealing with Thai refugees. Even in the United States there were some people who said, "Wait a minute. We have the expensive problem of illegal immigration involving the Mexicans and all sorts of other people. It's been a long time since the Vietnam War. It's time to scale down or end this program."

In processing these refugees INS...

Q: The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service.

BROWN: Yes. When all is said and done, it is ultimately the INS which admits or denies entry to the United States to a person seeking admission. The INS has its own, institutional problems, its own priorities, and its own attitudinal outlook. We would periodically run into friction between working level INS officers stationed in Thailand and State Department refugee officials and refugee advocacy groups. From time to time

we would have to have it out with the INS at a senior level. We would find that shortly after the arrival of a new working level INS team the refugee rejection rate would rise dramatically. We would have to go into conferences on the ground and up the ladder. Eventually, in Washington, these attitudes would have to be adjusted to get back to a norm, as it were.

The refugee constituencies back in the United States, consisting of church and other groups, were powerful and had great access to political circles and Congress. I mentioned that before I left Washington to go to Thailand, Kitty Dukakis, the wife of Governor Dukakis of Massachusetts, who eventually ran for President in 1988, sought me out and let me know, in no uncertain terms, that I should do even more for the Indochinese refugees when I arrived in Thailand. The same was true of Senators John Glenn [Democrat, Ohio], Mark Hatfield [Republican, Oregon], and others, including Congressman Steve Solarz [Democrat, New York]. These attitudes crossed party lines.

These refugee advocates had their publications, their special access, and their own, independent sources in Thailand and channels to the United States. They were, at times, quite critical of the refugee programs we were administering. They focused on the Thai administration of the camps, alleged cases of brutality, slowness in the bureaucratic process, and allegations of stalling in handling some cases. Occasionally, senior U.S. visitors, both from the Congressional and Executive Branches of our government, would come out to Thailand and demand to visit the refugee camps.

There would be firefights on the Thai-Cambodian border near the refugee camps, shellings near the camps, threats to the refugees, cases of panic among the refugees, and clashes within the Thai bureaucracy on how to handle those who escaped from these camps and were then hunted down by Thai police or military personnel. Delivery of water and food to the camps was a source of concern.

The Thai were determined that the word should get back to potential refugees in Vietnam and Cambodia: "You shouldn't come to Thailand. You will not find life pleasant in a refugee camp." The Thai were clearly concerned that if these camps ever came to be regarded as places of easy access, some comfort, and the gateway to a new life, the flow of refugees would continue and even increase.

In all of this Prasong, the Director of the Thai National Security Council was our key point of contact. He was well and favorably known to U.S. security agencies. However, he was a proud Thai nationalist, a hard bargainer, and a straight talker. Various American Ambassadors, certainly including Mort Abramowitz, John Gunther Dean, and myself, had many head to head conversations with him, as did some of our senior visitors from the United States.

Speaking of senior visitors, I will never forget a visit we had from George Shultz, then our Secretary of State. Shultz came through Thailand en route to an ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, if I remember correctly.

As a humanitarian, Shultz was very interested in refugees. Encouraged by his Bureau of Refugee Affairs and the refugee organizations in Washington, he wanted to visit the camps. I accompanied Secretary Shultz on helicopter visits to several of the larger camps, as well as Thai military positions near the Thai-Cambodian border. We had a similar visit from Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger. This was handled as a very important matter.

During this visit to Thailand Secretary Shultz made his final, helicopter stop at Phanat Nikhom. This was the major, final processing center for refugees in Thailand. From this camp those refugees approved for entry into the United States would then be sent to the Philippines for English language training and eventual transportation to the United States. The camp authorities at Phanat Nikhom brought out a variety of refugees, including Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Lao who stood outside a shack built to demonstrate how to use electricity, a toilet, a faucet and a sink with running water.

Lined up outside this model structure, in their native dress were lowland Lao, Hmong tribesmen, Cambodians and a few Vietnamese. Secretary Shultz and I went down the line, with interpreters, to ask how they were doing. There were some grunts from the Hmong tribesmen and a word or two from the Cambodians. When we got down to the Vietnamese, we met a young and very attractive young lady, perhaps 16 years old, wearing one of those long...

Q: Cao dai costumes.

BROWN: She said in English: "Good afternoon, Mr. Secretary. You are very welcome to Phanat Nikhom. How delighted we are to see you." And I said to myself: "There's a winner!" [Laughter]

Senator Rudy Boschwitz [Republican, Minnesota] and other Senators and Congressmen came to visit the refugee camps. Life works in funny ways. Boschwitz wanted to visit the Hmong tribesmen, of all people. Why? Because the Lutheran Conference in Minnesota had resettled some Hmong in St. Paul-Minneapolis, of all places. This was somewhat difficult. The Hmong were a distinctly difficult cultural group. For instance, certain young Hmong tribal males who had already gone through puberty were expected to go out and, in essence, capture a young female, grab her by the hair, and haul her to his household. This process did not go over so well in certain American communities.

Q: Imagine this happening in Minneapolis!

BROWN: Rudy Boschwitz had been reelected and was gearing up for another term in the Senate. He came precisely at a time when there was great trouble with the Hmong in Laos. The Lao authorities were hunting down Hmong on the Lao-Thai border. These Hmong were fighting and retreating, back and forth, crossing and recrossing the Lao-Thai border. There were already tens of thousands of Hmong refugees in Thailand and the Thai were determined not to have more, so the Thai sealed off the Lao-Thai border.

Our Refugee Section in the Embassy was concerned and the refugee constituency groups in the U.S. were asking whether Thai forces were suppressing the Hmong and forcing them back into Laos.

I arranged for a helicopter so that Boschwitz could visit Hmong camps. I had to go to the Thai military to gain access to the Hmong area, which was now closed, and to get a guarantee that Boschwitz would get to meet some Hmong tribesmen, both new as well as old Hmong. We were choppered into an area which had just been designated as the site of a new refugee camp. Foundations were being built and fences were being erected.

A group of Hmong tribesmen, who are small in stature, was lined up near the gate of the camp. Senator Boschwitz's American entourage reached into their baggage and pulled out T-shirts with the logo, "I Love Rudy" which had been prepared for his reelection campaign. They put these T-shirts on the Hmong, including the women, and sometimes the shirts stretched down to their knees, because they were such small people. Then they took photographs of these Hmong and we moved on to the next site.

Senator Boschwitz was a very senior, Republican Senator. He was a refugee himself, a survivor of the Holocaust. He had come out of Europe as a little boy.

Q: Did you have any dealings with him when you were in Israel?

BROWN: Yes, when I later became Ambassador there. During this trip we met with a group of male Hmong tribesmen. They wore ragged clothing. At our request, they had been gathered from the front at the border and brought in to meet us. They were mostly in their 30s. They would reach into their tattered, leather jackets which had been supplied to them by the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] or some other U.S. agency and bring out tattered documents which had served as identity cards. I must say that they were kind of impressive. The thought that these people might be pushed back over the border into Laos was rather grim.

In my enthusiasm at the time, using an interpreter, I said to them: "I know that you've had a very difficult life. I want you to know that Senator Rudy Boschwitz, here, was just like you. He was a refugee from totalitarian oppression. He came to the United States as a young person like you. He didn't know a word of English. He went to school, struggled, got an education, and established a business. Look at him! He's a United States Senator. You, too, can go to the United States, notwithstanding all of the difficulties you have gone through. If you apply yourselves and get an education, you too can prosper. We wish you well."

The Thai interpreters looked at me in a curious manner and were probably asking themselves: "What in the world is going on here?"

Let me give you another vignette of what handling refugees could be like. We received

many Congressional letters and letters from constituents, protests, and so forth. As I said, the refugee groups had their own representatives on the spot in Thailand and their own access, sources, and lines of communications. They kept us under close scrutiny and devoted considerable attention to us and considerable criticism, if necessary from their viewpoint. Sometimes they would have access to communications involving interoffice disputes in Washington.

Q: You were dealing with people, both within the Embassy and working for the voluntary agencies. They were dedicated people and were also committed to the refugees. Their allegiance was almost totally to the refugees. So you're talking about passion here.

BROWN: Yes, they were really serious about what they were doing. They had very strongly held views. A lot of leakage of information was going on. The leakage increased as the e-mail system began to spread. That was just beginning in my time as Ambassador to Thailand, but there was enough leakage anyway. You couldn't keep refugee matters secret for very long, if the matter involved a contentious issue.

A very unfortunate situation developed with the flow of Vietnamese refugees through Cambodia, down to southwest Cambodia and into Trat Province in southeast Thailand. This involved payoffs, starting in Ho Chi Minh City, formerly known as Saigon, or wherever the point of departure was. The refugees traveled by bus or by truck, making arrangements through intermediaries. They bribed people in Cambodia and finally arrived at a Cambodian seaside "launch pad." They bribed people there and went "around the corner" into Thailand where they bribed Thai fishermen and officials. This traffic began to reach serious proportions.

The Thai Minister of the Interior was an ex-general close to Prime Minister Prem. The Ministry of the Interior in Thailand is very powerful. It appoints the provincial governors and all of the officials under the governors. It has great resources and "clout." The Minister of the Interior was very much concerned about this refugee traffic. Normally a quiet-spoken man, he demanded that this traffic end. The Governor of Trat Province was "sacked." The minister's command to stop this traffic resulted in stories that Thai officials, now fearful for their jobs, were not only pushing back Vietnamese boat people coming into Thailand but, if necessary in certain instances, clubbing them in the water.

Reports of incidents like these reached the refugee organizations in Washington, and there was an "uproar." The refugee organizations demanded action on our part. The response of the Ministry of the Interior to all of this was to declare the area where refugees had been arriving in Thailand "closed" until further notice. The ministry didn't want U.S. Embassy officers and officials of refugee organizations to visit this area at all. Then the pressures mounted in Congress. Congressman Steve Solarz [Democrat, New York] and his supporters were putting the heat on at the State Department. Everybody was asking: "What are the American Embassy and the American Ambassador doing about this situation?"

I began to get phone calls from people in the refugee organizations who said, “We've got to break through this limitation on our access to the area.” I was told that Congressman Solarz was calling for hearings on this matter and that I would be “summoned” back to Washington to testify in this connection. In these circumstances, I went to General Chaowalit, the commander of the Thai Army. Given my rapport with him, I said, “I've got a problem. I need to go to that area to see what the situation is and report on it. I want you to give me a helicopter. I'll make a quick flight into the area and I want the helicopter pilot to take me to the islands off the shore there. I understand that some of these people have been temporarily held there. I also understand that some plastic sheeting has been dropped to them and that this has provided some shelter for the refugees. I need to be able to see this and to report it to Washington, in order to cope with a very angry situation back there.”

General Chaowalit said, “Okay. I'll give you my helicopter and my helicopter pilot.” So I arranged this through the Thai Army network, even though on the Police and Ministry of the Interior network had blocked access to the area. With Bruce Beardsley, the head of our Office of Refugee Affairs Section, and with two other, U.S. refugee officials who spoke Vietnamese, I flew from Bangkok over the Gulf of Siam, first to these islands off the shore of Trat Province, where we could circle around and see the blue, plastic sheeting that had been dropped to give the refugees shelter in stormy weather. We could see refugees down there on these islands. Then we flew to the provincial capital of Trat, where we met the Governor. He had just replaced his predecessor, who had been “sacked.” He was grim and extremely tense. Well, after all, we were imposing ourselves on him, contrary to the orders issued by his ministry.

I got into the Governor's car with him. I noticed that he was wearing a “class ring” from an American college. I said, “Governor, is that a U.S. college ring?” He said, “Yes. I went to the States many years ago.” I asked him: “How did you go?” He said, “It was under a USAID grant.” I said, “Did you enjoy the experience?” He said, “Yes, I did.” I was trying to “loosen him up.” I said, “Look, you've got a problem, and I've got a problem. I understand your problem. What I have to do here is to satisfy myself quickly that you have taken positive action to deal with the refugees. I understand that you have taken action. However, I have to see it. I have to visit a couple of refugee camps. I have to see these new arrivals. I need to be able to report to Washington that these people are being sheltered, fed, given water, and medical care as needed. If we can work this out, it will be good for you, good for me, good for your ministry, good for the refugees. In fact, it will be good for everybody. I'm not here to attack you or cause you embarrassment. So please come with me. Take me to some of these camps.”

So we visited some of the refugee camps. The camps were extremely crowded. This was a real, emergency situation. I said to my Refugee Officers: “Look, you guys speak Vietnamese. I speak Chinese. Once we enter the camp, I will ask, in Mandarin, whether any of the refugees are of Chinese. While I'm meeting the Chinese, you guys circulate and talk with the others in Vietnamese. We can then quickly put together a picture of what has happened.”

We wanted to know how they got there, and whether they were they true refugees. The official Thai attitude which had developed was to dismiss these people as “economic migrants.” That was a “buzz” expression which now was increasingly prevalent among those who were stalling or slowing down efforts to help the refugees. There were people who were saying: “Enough is enough. These are not 'refugees' in the classical sense. They're migrants, people who bribed their way out of Vietnam to get a job abroad. That's all.”

Q: By the way, the term “economic refugee” was used in the 1960s, when I was in Yugoslavia. We dealt with a lot of people who really were “economic refugees.” They wanted to get a better job.

BROWN: Yes. On the other hand we also encountered people who had mixed motives for leaving their homes. Take the phenomenon, for instance, of the great flow of Vietnamese refugees into Hong Kong. These were people from North Vietnam, some of whom you could classify as “economic refugees.” However, others wanted to get the hell out of the highly oppressive system in North Vietnam.

So, in the course of the visit to this refugee camp, we encountered a very crowded situation. I noted that there were plastic sheets used to protect them from the rain and sun. After I wandered around a while with the Provincial Governor, I said in a loud voice in Mandarin “Are any of you Chinese?” Sure enough, up went some hands. I said, “Okay, you people come over here with me. I just want to have a short chat with you.” When they got together with me, I said, “Tell me how you got here.” They would answer: “Well, I paid a silver bar to a man in Ho Chi Minh City. That got me part way. I paid another silver bar, and the deal was: final payment on delivery in Thailand.” In other words, there was a network moving these people to Thailand. You made a down payment, you made later payments, and then, if you made it to Thailand, the final payment was made to your contact back in Ho Chi Minh City. It was a trade, in effect.

I asked how the circumstances were on the way. They described the hardships they had endured en route to Thailand. Then I asked, “Why did you come here?” These were Sino-Vietnamese, who amounted to about 20-25% of the total. Their answers ran something like this: “You don't know what it's like to be a Chinese in Vietnamese society at present. The schools have been closed down. You can't get a job, you get sent to re-education camps. We're discriminated against. I just couldn't stand it any more. Besides, I heard stories that So-and-So did well abroad. They had relatives somewhere in Australia, Canada, or the United States. I wanted to get out.”

Meanwhile Bruce Beardsley and his colleague had interviewed the non-Chinese. The Provincial Governor drove us back to the helicopter pad. I said, “Look, first of all, we can report that you are dealing positively with the situation. You're giving these people food, water, medical attention, and shelter. Although it's meager, it's adequate. I want to express our appreciation for that. I talked with a groups of Chinese, as you saw. My officers who

speaking Vietnamese, which neither you nor I speak, tell me that at least 25-30% of these people are refugee candidates, by our definition, and ought to be so treated. I'm not asking you to comment on this, but we are both dealing with a critical situation. Thank you very much.”

We returned to Bangkok by helicopter and then I flew to the United States. I was somewhat irritated by the fact that I was being summoned as the American Ambassador to Thailand to testify before Congressman Solarz's Sub-Committee. I wondered, in telephonic conversations, how many other American Ambassadors were also being summoned from their posts on a variety of subjects. I use this account to indicate the amount of heat that could be generated and was generated in Washington on this issue.

I testified before the Solarz Sub-Committee and was grilled at some length. I was, at times, critical in my remarks of the Thai authorities, handling of this crisis and assured the Sub-Committee that we continued to be vigilant about the situation. However, I also laid out the historical perspective and the fact that as a country of first refuge, Thailand had accommodated hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Lao refugees. Moreover, the influx of refugees continued. Overall, the Thai should be thanked for what they had done. I said that we in the American Embassy would continue our best efforts. However, to do this, we needed the resources to demonstrate to the Thai that we were doing our best to move these refugees out of Thailand, despite the dramatic decline in the offtake of refugees by other countries.

I felt that this presentation was a balanced view of the problem. I also noted that the Thai remained a very important, security partner of the U.S. as we faced developments in Vietnam, including 100,000 Vietnamese troops deployed in Cambodia and 50,000 Vietnamese troops deployed in Laos.

While in Washington I was asked by the Deputy Secretary of State, John Whitehead, to discuss the situation. When I got to his office, there was a circle of senior State Department officials who were directly or indirectly involved in refugee affairs. I won't go into names, but some of them sounded off, demanding to know what was happening on my watch, etc.

As the questioning went on, I said to myself: “How am I going to cope with this? How can I relate to the Deputy Secretary and say something that is meaningful and will get results?” When the questions and comments by these senior officials ended, Whitehead said, “This is a very serious situation. We're very disappointed with the Thai. I'd like to hear your comments.”

I said, “Mr. Secretary, I understand that you were a major figure on Wall Street. I am reminded of an expression used by a very close friend of mine, who also worked on Wall Street. When it came down to really important decisions, he used an old, Yiddish expression, which you may or may not have heard. The expression goes: 'Tuchus affen tish'. Roughly translated, it means: 'Put your ass on the table. I have heard here a lot of

criticism, which I will certainly register. However, if you want results, I need to be able to tell Foreign Minister Sitthi Sawetsila is: 'Mr. Foreign Minister, by the time the sun goes down on the last day of the fiscal year, on September 30, we will have taken 10,000 more Indochinese refugees off your hands.' Mr. Secretary, 'tuchus affen tish.' Give me the money and the commitment that I can bring to the Thai Government to take 10,000 more Indochinese refugees off their hands. That, and that alone, is what will work. All of the jawingboning means very little unless we are willing to 'tuchus affen tish.'"

In the end I got the resources and the commitment I needed and we worked our way out of the crisis.

Q: Did you feel, when you had this meeting with Deputy Secretary Whitehead, that his colleagues were basically a bunch of bureaucrats who were just sounding off but were not coming up with solutions?

BROWN: Well, Stuart, I don't want to go that far. These were highly committed people who felt very seriously and passionately about the issue and they were the people on the firing line back here in Washington, as far as criticism from Congress and the refugee constituencies was concerned.

I have to add quickly the saying: "What goes around, comes around." A year before I left Thailand in 1985, I said to two of my daughters who were working in New York: "Why don't you come to Thailand? I won't be around as Ambassador much longer. Come and spend a couple of weeks or months, or even a year here." They did and they loved Thailand so much that when I left Thailand, they stayed. They moved out of the Ambassador's residence and went out looking for jobs. Both of them ended up working for refugee agencies. As we speak, after 12 years in Thailand, they have just come back to the U.S. One of my daughters now has a refugee job with the U.S. Catholic Conference here in Washington. It's rather ironic that, after I left Thailand, my daughters told me their stories and feelings on refugee matters, which I kept very much to myself, as I did not want to go back and muddle around in the problems of Indochinese refugees in Thailand.

After I left Thailand a great breakthrough came with the Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia, and hundreds of thousands of Cambodian refugees returned to their homes. However, some residual groups still remain. There are still institutional problems between the State Department and the INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service] and refugee constituencies.

I've discussed purely refugee matters. In a sense, the POW/MIA [Prisoner of War/Missing in Action] issues were even more contentious. Senator Bob Smith [Republican, New Hampshire], Congressman Dornin [Republican, California], and some other colorful figures came into Thailand as crusaders on the POW/MIA front. They were absolutely convinced that there were live American Prisoners of War about whom the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok, the Pentagon, and the State Department were lax, if not outright negligent. They believed that our staff was sitting on its butt and ignoring valid evidence and that

they really had to put the heat on in every way possible.

Q: Whom did they want you to put the heat on?

BROWN: On Hanoi, Vientiane, the Thai Government, and everyone on all sides. I'll return to this later.

Remember that at this time, given the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia, domination of Laos and the MIA/POW issues, we still had a rather bitter outlook on Hanoi. However, I had a cleared channel to the Vietnamese Ambassador in Bangkok, even though we had no diplomatic relations. Washington did not authorize general discussions, but we could have business-like discussions confined to specific cases. I'll give you an example. (End of tape)

Q: You said that these sessions meant a lot and were helpful...

BROWN: Yes. They were between the American and Vietnamese Ambassadors in Bangkok. The Vietnamese Embassy was a small mission, but it was always headed by a very senior Ambassador, who might soon become, let us say, a Vice Foreign Minister or very senior official back in Hanoi. They were very professional types. I had been briefed on these meetings by my predecessor, Ambassador John Gunther Dean. Of course, looking far ahead one could project the possibility that eventually we would move to, let us say, where we are now. However, at that time conversations had to be handled very carefully.

One day I received a high priority message from Washington that an U.S. Navy plane was missing in the South China Sea area off the coast of Vietnam and that the co-pilot was a pregnant woman. I was asked to contact the Vietnamese Ambassador in Bangkok immediately to see whether the Vietnamese were aware of this incident, whether the crew had survived...

Q: I take it that this involved a small, private plane.

BROWN: It was a small, U.S. Navy plane, not a private plane. Well, it turned out that this aircraft had taken off from Singapore after repairs. It had a pilot and co-pilot and one or two crew members. Its scheduled flight path was to take it from Singapore to what I used to call Jesselton, now called "Kota Kinabalu," North Borneo, which is now called "Sabah," and then on to Cebu in the Philippines. The plane had not arrived at its destination and was listed as "missing." Washington was very upset.

So I instructed my secretary to call the secretary of the Vietnamese Ambassador and ask for an appointment for me to call on him. Before my secretary could call the Vietnamese Embassy, the phone rang, and it was the Vietnamese Ambassador's secretary calling to ask if I would receive him! Now, he and I lived opposite each other on Wireless Road in Bangkok. I lived in a rather palatial colonial setting on 10 acres of ground, and he in a

small residence with an adjacent chancery. Our Embassy offices were no more than 1,000 yards apart on Wireless Road.

I instructed an officer to position himself on the front steps and asked my Marine Security Guards to salute the Vietnamese Ambassador and accord him all honors. He drove into our Embassy compound with his Vietnamese flag flying. Our officer greeted him and escorted him past our Marine Security Guard, who saluted him, and up to my office with due ceremony. I greeted him and offered him some Asian tea. We looked at each other, I suppose, with a twinkle in the eyes of each of us. The Vietnamese Ambassador said that the Vietnamese authorities had rescued this U.S. Navy aircraft crew. The plane had run into an electrical storm between Singapore and Borneo. Having lost the use of all of their navigation equipment, the crew lost their sense of direction, and their fuel supply became critical. Realizing that they were lost, they did some rough reckoning and reached a small island off the coast of Vietnam. They made a last-minute radio call, not knowing whether it was received. They spotted a ship and made an emergency landing on the water near it. After they struck the water, they got out through escape hatches. They swam as quickly as they could, to get out of the oil slick surrounding them, fearing that it would be ignited.

The next thing that they saw was a long boat with military people on board, who had red stars on their caps. They had all been briefed about the perils of being captured by the Vietnamese communists, so they were really tensed up. As soon as they were hauled on board the long boat, the male members of our crew all pointed at the co-pilot and made gestures to show that she was very pregnant.

The Vietnamese understood and raced them back to their vessel. They were briefly interrogated and passed up the line to the mainland of Vietnam with the word that the co-pilot was pregnant. She was given a medical exam. She was asked to sign a document stating that she had been examined. Under arrangements that I made with the Vietnamese Ambassador to Thailand they were flown from South Vietnam, I think on our Attache plane, to Bangkok, where I interviewed them. Of course, the press was eagerly waiting outside the room where I talked to them.

The Navy Lieutenant was about 6' 1". She was lean as a pole and was about three months pregnant. She was a career Navy officer. Her husband was also a career Navy officer. It was quite a story. That's the kind of businesslike approach the Vietnamese Ambassador to Thailand and I were able to make on matters of common interest to both of us.

This was a refreshing experience in the wake of the kind of pressures we came under regarding refugee and POW/MIA matters. We had some Congressional Delegations come to Bangkok on POW/MIA matters. I vividly remember on such delegation which demanded and got our Air Attache plane to take them to Hanoi. They were on a hunting expedition and were determined to would examine possible sites in Hanoi, where they believed American POWs were living under terrible conditions.

In the American Embassy in Bangkok there was Joint Casualty Research Committee

(JCRC) office, headed by an Air Force Lieutenant Colonel, which handled POW/MIA cases. This group dealt with some crude characters who would say, for example: "I have here the finger bone of an American pilot. The rest of him is just across the border in Laos. If I can get a visa or \$10,000," or whatever the current price was, "I can recover the rest of him, either dead or alive."

That's the kind of crowd we were dealing with. A few of them, to my regret, were American veterans who had married Thai women and were now living on their pensions in northeastern Thailand. I certainly don't want to smear them as a group. I'm just saying that there were a few characters among them who were unfortunate types, if I may put it that way. They played to the Bo Grits and others like him...

Q: Who was Bo Grits?

BROWN: He was an adventurer, a soldier of fortune, who created quite a bit of publicity for himself by stating that he had live, video evidence of POWs still in Indochina. You know, guys with that kind of background were not welcome in Thailand but some had connections and could enter Thailand and manage, in some cases, to launch private expeditions across the border into Laos or Cambodia. There were nuts and wacko types involved in this as well. It was a very grisly business. Part of the problem was that certain members of Congress were so passionately involved in this that they had gone sour not only on the State Department, but also sour on the Pentagon itself. They claimed that the Pentagon was suppressing evidence and so forth. So it was a big problem.

Sometimes we encountered Congressmen who would come in with a variety of refugee cases, as well as their POW/MIA cases. So this made things, at times, rather exciting.

Q: I'm trying to capture the period. Let's not talk about how you feel about it today, but rather, at the time, how you and your Embassy officers felt about the POW/MIA cases. I mean, recovering the remains of the dead is a practical problem. However, the POW issue is something quite different. One keeps having to ask what's in it for the Vietnamese in terms of hiding these people? It's a problem to keep people in jail, unless they would have some reason for doing this, other than just being nasty. Particularly in terms of the so-called live prisoners, what was your feeling, and perhaps that of others, on this?

BROWN: Let me remind you that, for years, I was a so-called "Asian Specialist" posted abroad. For years, in Moscow and elsewhere, I had been keeping a "watching brief" on MIA/ POW matters as a Political Officer. I can remember being briefed in India by visiting specialists. I had files with photos, showing POWs who had been forced by the Vietnamese to giving false testimony. In the photos one could see that they used hand signals, some of them obscene, to pass the message that this was all bull.

During the time we're covering, my son, Alex, was a B-52 pilot, a career U.S. Air Force officer. I had a very critical attitude toward the Vietnamese communists who exploiting the POW/MIA issue for all that it was worth. They absolutely denied that they had any

POWs but they were doling out remains of pilots who had been killed when shot down or who died in captivity. They had warehoused these remains. We had specialized, identification teams in the Honolulu Joint Casualty Resolution Center. We used various intelligence channels. A tremendous amount of effort was made within and by the U.S. Government to do everything that it could do to deal with these cases. I found it an affront, to put it mildly, that exploiting this in its obvious efforts to extract eventual diplomatic recognition and aid out of us. Colonel Dick Childress, who was on the NSC [National Security Council] staff, was involved with these matters. There was also a lady who acted as an intermediary between the MIA/POW families and the U.S. Government. I can't remember her name now. She and Dick Childress would come out to Bangkok periodically, then often go to Hanoi, and talk with these Vietnamese communist officials.

Similarly, I mentioned before that our Embassy over in Laos was attempting to get permission for us to explore sites in Laos and excavate for remains of U.S. personnel who may have died there. The Lao government was also playing this issue in the same way that the Vietnamese government was doing. In essence, they were saying: "We've turned over everything that we have. Meanwhile, our people are angry because you launched war against them." Their message was that we should face reality, and give Laos some aid. Then, maybe, they could do something more about finding our MIAs.

We couldn't be seen to be bargaining with either Hanoi or Vientiane that way. It had to be done on a strictly, professional basis. However, in between there were, how should we call them, winks and nods as to where all of this might take us. If, for instance, we could get more identifiable MIA remains out of Hanoi, then, on a humanitarian basis, the means might somehow be found to provide prosthetic devices for the thousands of Vietnamese amputees who had suffered from the bombing of North Vietnam. The Vietnamese communists never failed to let us know, in these conversations, the enormous losses that they had suffered through carpet bombing, and so forth. There was a lot of rhetoric floating around.

However, to come back to the working level, whenever we had visits from Congressional Delegations, and we had many of these, we found that in a typical delegation of five or 10 members, they had a laundry list of what they wanted. They had a refugee laundry list, a POW/MIA laundry list, and a laundry list on trade questions, depending on their constituency...

Q: They probably had a laundry list on narcotics.

BROWN: Of course, they had a big narcotics laundry list for the Thai. For example, what were the Thai doing about narcotics, and couldn't we get them to crack down harder on the drug traffic? When I was Ambassador to Thailand, I had an iron rule that I personally would go out, day or night, and many of them landed at night, to meet these Congressional Delegations. I wanted to start off on the right foot with them by meeting and greeting them out at the airport. We chartered buses if the Delegation were large enough. I would stand in front, next to the bus driver, with a microphone and brief them

so as to get them on the right track. I would promise to make available members of my staff who would go into detail with them on these issues.

Let's now discuss the problem of getting the Vietnamese to withdraw their troops from Cambodia. Well, we had a not so covert program for doing this. Secret funds had been appropriated by Congress which were not publicized, but those who wanted to know, already knew about them. We were supporting the non-communist resistance led by Prince Sihanouk and, more especially, by his son, Prince Norodom Ranarit, on the one hand, and non-communist rivals of theirs who had been former officials of the Cambodian Government on the other hand.

Together with some other countries of the region, we were working with certain Thai institutions, shall we say. We were paying for equipping and arming non-communist resistance groups. These people always had their hands out for more assistance, but their effectiveness in operating across the Cambodian border was minimal.

Meanwhile, the Chinese communists, with the knowledge and acquiescence of the Thai Government were arming the real fighters against the Vietnamese. And the real fighters were the Khmer Rouges. Where did the Khmer Rouges draw their support? From special refugee camps occupied by people who supported the Khmer Rouges, along the Thai/Cambodian border. These camps were highly organized in an authoritarian manner, using their women and young people as porters. These were the people who were really going out, penetrating Cambodia, and fighting against the Vietnamese. They were doing so with Chinese arms and support.

There were even those Congressmen or their staffers who wanted to go and visit the Khmer Rouges and see what these real fighters were like. They asked us whether we couldn't establish some kind of liaison with these Khmer Rouges. We said, "No, this isn't U.S. policy. These are hated, pro-Maoist, brutal, dictatorial, authoritarian killers. We don't want to have anything to do with them. We're supporting, with funds that you have appropriated, the non-communist resistance. So let's stay away from the Khmer Rouges. The situation is bad enough as it is. Let's not in any way, even inadvertently, support the Khmer Rouges." Some of these visitors would say, "Okay, but in your briefings you're telling us that they're the ones who are involved in the real action. Why can't we get some of the same results that they do?"

Prince Sihanouk himself would periodically appear in Thailand with his wife, Princess Monique. This was a rather strange situation, because Sihanouk with his peculiar lifestyle, his proclivities, and so forth was the guest of the Chinese communists, on the one hand, and Kim Il Sung, on the other. However, when he visited Thailand, and I would call on him. He would thank us for the help we had given him and then ask for more assistance for his son, Prince Norodom Ranarit, and his group.

As I said, these Congressional Delegations often brought along with them mixed laundry lists of what they wanted, which we had to address, one way or another. We also often

had Congressional Staff Delegations that came in separately from the regular, Congressional Delegations. Often these Staff Delegations were more difficult than the Congressional Delegations.

Sometimes we would have other types of Congressional Staff Delegations, such as those sent by Senator Jesse Helms [Republican, North Carolina]. Often they would come unannounced and not contact the Embassy. in Bangkok. They had their own agenda which included, prominently, tobacco.

The Thai had a national tobacco monopoly. The Thai shipped tobacco to the United States for blending purposes with American-grown tobacco, but all tobacco consumed in Thailand was by law to be Thai tobacco, or under control of the monopoly. As we negotiated on trade matters with the Thai, Senator Helms, Senator Fritz Hollings [Democrat, South Carolina], and other Senators from the southern, tobacco states wanted to break this Thai tobacco monopoly and arrange for American tobacco products to be sold freely in Thailand. After all, they argued, the U.S. was buying Thai tobacco; why couldn't we sell American cigarettes and tobacco products to Thailand? Well, as we negotiated with the Thai on that particular subject, across the table we would find the representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry were smoking American cigarettes, which were illegal at the time in Thailand.

Sometimes we would have tobacco strategy sessions at the Embassy. I'll never forget one incident, when at a Country Team meeting we were reviewing our latest efforts on behalf of American tobacco to break the Thai tobacco monopoly and market our goods. Finally, the Regional Medical Doctor could no longer restrain himself. He said, "Mr. Ambassador, we've been talking, I think, for about 10 minutes on this subject. As a doctor, I have to raise my voice and note the obvious, that smoking tobacco is highly injurious to health. As I sit here and listen to all of you discuss how best to market American tobacco products abroad, this just galls me. This is highly objectionable. I just can't sit here without raising my voice in objection to what you are saying."

I said, "Well, let's put it this way, Doctor. I grant that smoking tobacco is injurious to one's health. As you know, we work in a smoke free environment here in this Embassy, at my direction. However, we have our interests and our constituents. Why don't I sum it up this way? How about a slogan for the Thai: 'If you must smoke, smoke American.'" [Laughter]

Here I was as a newly arrived Ambassador, with a very broad agenda running a very busy Embassy on a wide variety of fronts. I've mentioned security, the political situation, narcotics, Indochinese refugees, and POW/MIA issues, among others. It was a fascinating time and, on balance, a most enjoyable time, from the professional point of view. That is, until December, 1985. I had done my parachute jump, I had been concerned with ASEAN issues, and I had seen the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs on so many matters. I had seen His Majesty, the King of Thailand.

However, in December, 1985, I learned one day with shock that, in what was called the “Christmas Tree” omnibus bill there was a provision specifically aimed at Thai rice exports. This kind of omnibus bill was frequently passed without debate as Congress rushed to adjourn for the Christmas holiday season. Members of Congress in both Houses would tack on their favorite Christmas presents to their various constituencies. On this occasion the American rice lobbies, seeking to enhance American exports of rice tacked onto this bill provisions which targeted Thai rice exports. The bill stated that we would meet or beat the Thai competition by subsidizing American rice exports abroad. This, of course, came up without notice to the State Department and had been rushed through Congress without debate. All of a sudden, life became much more difficult for me.

Thailand was in a stage of rapid transition from having a traditional, agricultural economy to having an increasingly significant, light industrial economy. It was producing textiles, garments, and other light industrial products. It was beginning to export computer software products, to the United States and Europe. So, in dollar terms, the balance was shifting to a new crop of non agricultural exports. However, politically speaking, Thailand remained very much an agricultural entity. Members of the Thai Parliament who had been elected from the countryside of Thailand had powerful rice and sugar constituencies.

Q: Oh, yes, both of which are produced in Louisiana and California.

BROWN: Right. They are produced from southern California all the way through the South, including Louisiana, Alabama, and so forth. I began to see public demonstrations against American legislation which the Thai saw as injurious to their interests. There were increasing protests from various elements within the Thai Government, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The situation seemed so bad that we became worried about a Congressional Delegation led by Congressman Gibbens, and another Congressman from Minnesota, a Republican. These were very senior and very powerful people. They were coming over to Thailand for what they thought would be a nice, enjoyable Congressional visit. We had to warn them that there might be demonstrations. In the end Thai representatives greeted and garlanded them, then said politely, “Would you please bear in mind our concerns on these matters?”

I got quite an education as I sat there and watched this Congressional Delegation, which was a very large one, debate with a group of well-dressed, highly articulate, U.S. educated Thai bureaucrats from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Commerce and Industry. These Thai officials knew their stuff and were highly experienced in such matters.

I'll never forget the remarks of Congressman Pickle from Arkansas. He listened to the Thai protests about U.S. legislation on rice. When the discussions became rather warm, he said, “Gentlemen, I very much appreciate your hospitality. I'd like to tell you something from my vantage point. You know, I come from the State of Arkansas. I had a very good colleague from just across the border in the State of Texas. He was somewhat

of a liberal, shall we say, on trade matters. He was just defeated in our elections. You know something? I like my job. I very much like my job representing my people, who grow and export rice. I just want you to understand that I hear what you're saying, but I like my job and I'd like to keep it." [Laughter]

During a period of subsequent consultations in Washington regarding this "Christmas Tree Bill," I called on Congressman Vic Fazio [Democrat, CA], a liberal from southern California. I had a meeting with him, one on one, in his Congressional office. I said that this legislation really pained the Thai, who are our allies. They are accommodating us on refugee and narcotics matters, as well as on Vietnam, on ship visits, and so forth. However, this bill struck the Thai as a gross attack on their rice exports to countries like Iraq, Iran, and so forth. I asked him what the prospects were of "dismantling" this bill. He said, "Are you kidding? We have our own concerns." I might note that the rhetoric so often used in Congress referred to the need to protect the ordinary, middle American farmer as the pillar of American society, around whom the constitutional framework had evolved. Well, when you got into it, you found that our rice farmers in fact were operating large, rice plantations. This was a big industry in the United States.

Q: You're not really talking about the poor farmers out in the rice fields in Iraq...

BROWN: No, on the American side you're talking about major agro-industrial combines. The same thing applied to soybeans and other American crops which we wanted to market around the world, including in Thailand. We got into the question of marketing American soybeans, but soybeans had to be played against rice. You know, one hand washes the other, etc.

Well, in the midst of all of this, among many other concerns, came the bombing of Libya in 1986. Colonel Qadhafi was suspected of having ordered the sabotage of Pan Am Flight 003...

Q: Qadhafi was suspected of having ordered the bombing of a night club in Berlin, in which several American soldiers were killed. I think that the bomb explosion on the Pan Am aircraft was considered to be in retaliation for the bombing of Libya.

BROWN: Yes. Then the situation was exacerbated by the Pan Am plane explosion. Anyway, we bombed Qadhafi. I'm citing this episode to show how things apparently unrelated issues can suddenly mesh. We mounted a campaign at the UN to "quell" any criticism and to defeat a draft UN resolution condemning our action. It so happened that Thailand, at that time, was a member of the Security Council, serving its rotational term. The Thai were under pressure from both sides.

I had a special relationship with Sitthi Sawetsila, the Thai Foreign Minister. I could go to see him in a "one on one" meeting. However, his experts in the Thai Foreign Ministry were very concerned about the whole Arab situation. They were cautioning Foreign Minister Sitthi against just glibly agreeing with anything that I said, and they briefed him

in this regard. Lo and behold, it turned out that the Thai were going to vote against us! Not just abstain but vote against us! When the Department of State heard this, I was given instructions in the name of Secretary of State George Shultz to go right in, see Foreign Minister Sitthi, and tell him that this was a matter of “vital U.S. national interest.”

After years of being a career officer in Thai military intelligence, Sitthi had been propelled into the prestigious position of Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Prem Government. He had later been persuaded to become the nominal head of the Social Action Party, a major party within Prime Minister Prem's coalition government. Sitthi was no politician in the ordinary sense of the word, but now he had to get into “rough, tough, Thai politics,” to make speeches and go around and shake hands, and to do the things that a Thai politician does to be elected and re-elected. Once he assumed this responsibility, his colleagues in the Social Action Party said, “Well, if you're such a great friend of the United States, as Foreign Minister why do you let them get away with targeting us on rice exports?”

So when I went to see Foreign Minister Sitthi, face to face, on this matter, which had been identified as a vital U.S. national interest, the Foreign Minister said to me quietly, but with his face twitching with emotion: “What about MY vital interests?” He seemed to be referring to questions of rice and other, similar matters. It was a real awakening for me. Suddenly, I realized that I was in a new ball game here. I was no longer dealing with Sitthi solely as the Thai Foreign Minister. I was dealing with him as a new politician who was subjected to terrific pressures.

The Thai voted against us in the UN Security Council. Deputy Secretary of State Whitehead announced that we would never forget what the Thai had done. This caused great concern in Bangkok. Sitthi was scheduled to meet with Secretary of State George Shultz at the ASEAN meeting in Bali to raise a variety of issues.

You'll recall from my earlier remarks that President Reagan had originally been scheduled to visit Jakarta and Bangkok in 1983, on a Southeast Asian tour, which had been scrubbed due to the assassination of Senator Aquino in the Philippines. The Thai King and Queen had spent over half a million dollars decorating the Grand Palace in Bangkok for Reagan's visit and the Thai were still annoyed that the visit had been canceled, just as the Indonesians were very unhappy that the Reagan trip to Jakarta had been canceled.

Now Washington had announced to the Indonesians that the President and Mrs. Reagan were going to visit, not Jakarta, the capital, but Bali. Bali is a lovely island and a great center for culture and tourism. Washington had also decided to invite the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] to come to Bali and meet with President Reagan and Secretary of State Shultz. However he may have felt over the fact that President Reagan wasn't coming to Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, President Suharto agreed to meet in Bali. Paul Wolfowitz was now the American Ambassador to Indonesia. He pulled out all of the stops.

There was some “heart burn” in Washington in the entourages of President Reagan and Secretary Shultz about the fact that the Thai had voted against us in the UN Security Council on the Libyan issue. I got together with Thai Foreign Minister Sitthi and some of his advisers to prepare for his Bali meeting with Shultz.. Later one of the advisers said to me: “Speaking very candidly, Bill, do you realize how vulnerable we are here in Thailand? Thai Airways flies throughout the Middle East. We are absolutely defenseless against a PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] or other Middle East terrorist attack. When it comes to such matters, we have to be very, very careful.”

Indeed, a South Korean aircraft was blown out of the sky over Burma, as it was approaching Bangkok from the Middle East and there was great loss of life. A North Korean team, composed of a man and a woman, had placed a bomb in this South Korean aircraft.

Q: A man and a woman?

BROWN: Yes, and subsequently...

Q: They put the bomb on the plane in Bahrain.

BROWN: Yes. I was in the thick of all of that business. However, this incident highlighted how vulnerable the Thai felt, when they became involved in Middle Eastern matters.

Q: The Thai also had workers in the Middle East.

BROWN: They had tens of thousands of workers. They had them in Israel and in hot, tough, dirty places, including Libya, where work was under way on a “chemical factory” which we suspected was designed to produce weapons of mass destruction. (End of tape)

I think that we can wrap this segment up shortly, but for our listeners or readers I'll highlight the extremely complex situations which you can get into, as the Ambassador of a large Mission with so many different components, simultaneously trying to cope with so many different issues.

Q: How did the ASEAN meeting in Bali come out?

BROWN: Well, the meeting played out in several different stages. I conveyed to Secretary Shultz my recommendation on his meeting with Sitthi reminding him that Sitthi was a great friend of the U.S., that he was under heavy pressure on the rice issue and that he had done his best. Since Secretary Shultz was a man of vision and experience, he let it go at that.

The ASEAN Foreign Ministers then met President Reagan, and President Suharto gave a grand and spectacular evening of Balinese and Javanese dancing, accompanied by a

gamelan orchestra [traditional orchestra featuring gongs]. Meanwhile, I was working on the sidelines on a couple of fronts. First, I was asked whether I could persuade President Reagan to go to Bangkok, now that he had been to Bali. Well, the word from President Reagan's entourage was "No, but maybe we can get Mrs. Nancy Reagan to go to Bangkok." After all, Thailand has a big narcotics problem, and she was the spokesperson for the "Just Say No" tactic of dealing with it. So, I thought, if we handle this right, maybe we can get Mrs. Reagan to go to Bangkok and represent President Reagan.

I flew back to Bangkok and rapidly found myself involved in a very delicate situation. Working with the personal private secretary to the King, I passed the along the message that, although President Reagan was now under a tremendous press of business and couldn't visit Thailand, Mrs. Reagan might be able to visit Bangkok.

In this connection, I had several conversations over an "open" telephone line with the White House staff in which I now was instructed to arrange to have Mrs Reagan invited to visit Bangkok and to stay at the Grand Palace. The personal private secretary of the King immediately reminded me that all sorts of foreign royal dignitaries had visited Bangkok and stayed at the Oriental Hotel which, as I knew, was just down river from the Grand Palace. Furthermore, the King and Queen of Thailand were now down in Hua Hin, on the Gulf of Siam, where they traditionally performed ceremonial functions relating to the Thai agricultural and religious calendar. As a result, it was by no means sure that they could come to Bangkok. However, the private secretary said that he would do his best. Meanwhile, he repeated, the Oriental Hotel was an appropriate place for Mrs. Reagan to stay in Bangkok. I was in the position of saying: "Yes, that would be nice, but it would be 'wonderful' if she could stay at the Grand Palace." So around and around we went on this subject. It was extremely delicate.

In the end, the King and Queen returned to Bangkok and Mrs. Reagan stayed at the Grand Palace and slept in the Royal Suite. As she visited Bangkok, and I escorted her around the usual sights. Of course, for a First Lady of the United States to visit Bangkok is really "something." I had to arrange for her to travel around Bangkok in an armored "Presidential" Cadillac which was flown into Bangkok.

The Thai very kindly offered to Mrs. Reagan the use of the King's cream colored Rolls-Royce. I had to thank them very sincerely, insist that Mrs. Reagan travel in a White House Cadillac. We don't have to go into all of the details, but the arrangements were exceedingly complicated. High level visits require a large number of arrangements to be made "behind the scenes." This was a highly programmed visit. Mrs. Reagan's every step was measured, taped, and choreographed in advance. Marking tapes were laid out, and minute directions were prepared for photo opportunities. A "spontaneous" demonstration by children would occur at one site, where "God Bless America" would be played on traditional Thai musical instruments of bamboo, accompanied with gongs. Then on to a drug rehabilitation center, and so forth. All of this had to be choreographed down to the minute. It was really something.

However, I had gone through this kind of process with Michael Deaver, so I had some experience with it and could...

Q: Did you get any feel for the “astrological” complexities that Mrs. Reagan thought so much of, according to report?

BROWN: No. In the event the whole program went off very nicely.

Q: How did you find Mrs. Reagan?

BROWN: It all went very smoothly. At one point, when she was in the Cadillac, she said to me: “Where are the crowds?” At this point we were whistling along at high speed in an enormous motorcade, with sirens and so forth. I to explained to her that it was a Thai religious holiday, and the crowds were in the “wats” [Buddhist churches]. However, shortly after that we arrived at the site where there was a good-sized crowd around a children's band playing “God Bless America.” [Laughter]

Q: Okay. I think that we might stop at this point. Let me put at the end here, as I usually do, that the next time I'd like to talk about visits, both Congressional and other type. People had business to take care of, and Thailand is important. However, Thailand also had the reputation of being a very good place to shop. Also, for those who want to look into sexual services...

BROWN: I wouldn't want to mix shopping and sex. [Laughter]

Q: Anyway, we'll change the subject there. I wonder if you could talk a bit about traffic in Bangkok and how that affected planning a visit. Another subject that occurred to me was whether you and your Economic Section were concerned at all about something which came up about a year ago. That is, the Thai economy and its practice of showing favoritism, cronyism, and overinvestment. I'm not sure what all of the considerations were. However, developments occurred which showed how vulnerable Thailand was to all of that. Could you talk about that?

BROWN: Okay. If you keep your check list handy, we'll go over these issues next time.

Q: One other thing. Would you also talk about the Embassy Moscow problem?

Today is August 20, 1999. Bill, there is a whole series of things that we want to talk about. I'll let you go ahead and chose which you want to raise first.

BROWN: Okay. First of all, let's talk about visits and the handling of Congressional Delegations in particular, although we had many other senior, non-Congressional visits which take place at a post like the Embassy in Bangkok.

These visits are extremely important in terms of educating visitors, for many of whom, particularly the younger ones, World War II is ancient history. We're now in a stage where even the Vietnam War is pretty old history. So the old idea of hands across the sea and we fought together in common struggles for liberty and in opposition to communism has already worn down somewhat. At times you need to undertake an educational effort. You find some people who are remarkably well read and, with their other connections, have a pretty good feel for Thailand before they come. However, some of our visitors were grossly ignorant and really needed to be educated in terms of our national interests.

Secondly, I found that, as Ambassador to Thailand, I often had to meet with large delegations, many of which had a long laundry list consisting of such issues as human rights, refugees, the situation in Vietnam, narcotics, sex, and trade issues. I had to be very careful in handling these larger groups and get them off on the right track. So I made it an iron rule, during my tenure in Bangkok, that I would go out to the airport, day or night, and meet any Congressional Delegation. Of course, I would also do that with four star or equivalent military figures. Very frequently I would charter a bus. I would get behind the driver, stand up in front of the main group when they were seated, and between the airport and their hotel, I would brief them. Some of them would be nodding off, but I thought that it was very important to get them to focus on what I considered the key issues for them to think about. This would preempt some of their questions which could go on at the follow on session. This practice certainly worked out well in the sense of precluding the need to have another big briefing, with the whole Country Team there whereas the visitors want to go out and shop and take care of their own interests.

It is remarkable how these visits can reverberate, for better or for worse, in unexpected ways. If I haven't done so already, let me discuss the visit by Senator Ernest Fritz Hollings [Democrat, South Carolina].

Q: It doesn't ring a bell. If you've already covered it, we can always chop it out. So go ahead and discuss it.

BROWN: Senator Hollings came out to Bangkok. I had some knowledge of the Senator as a very powerful and senior member of the Senate and very independent convictions. At times, he was something of a maverick within his own party.

Q: Which party does he belong to?

BROWN: The Democratic Party. For example, and I know that I mentioned this before, there was the Hollings' stance on Taiwan, following the break with Taiwan during the administration of President Carter. There was also the attempt by the Department of State to roll over the remaining budget of the Embassy, which we closed in 1979 and use it for the new American Institute in Taiwan. Senator Hollings, who was the Chairman of the relevant sub-committee in the Senate which handled the Department's budget, refused simply to approve this without detailed consideration. The State Department mistakenly

tried to play the security card on this issue with Senator Hollings. Instead, he dug in his heels. In his speeches during the debate on the Taiwan Relations Act, you will see that he denounced President Carter, a Democrat, for having set up a “sham,” a “facade,” that is, setting up the unofficial “American Institute on Taiwan. Coming from South Carolina, he also represented powerful garment and textile constituencies. Thailand was already a very significant producer of these goods, shipping them, and sometimes overshipping them to the United States. With that background, I was a bit concerned and did some homework, the result of which was that I went to General Chaowalit, the commander of the Thai Army. I asked him: “Do you have any graduates of The Citadel in South Carolina? You usually send one or two students to West Point and sometimes you send one to VMI [Virginia Military Institute]. Did you ever send any Thai go to The Citadel?” He answered: “Yes, we have some alumni around somewhere.” We then arranged a lovely evening cruise on the Chao Phya River, which flows through Bangkok. Once we were in the countryside, we came to a dock which was beautifully lit up with torches with an orchestra playing. We stepped ashore and were met by a group of Thai Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels in their uniforms. They sang together, with Senator Hollings, the anthem of The Citadel, of which he was a proud graduate and member of the Board of Visitors. [FYI: In fact, Hollings was commander of the brigade of Citadel Cadets during his final year at the school. END FYI] They enjoyed a good meal and a lovely evening, filled with camaraderie.

The next day I accompanied Senator Hollings on a visit to a top quality textile and garment factory in Bangkok. He knew that business very well and remarked that this was a well run, modern facility. In all of this, as we talked about a wide range of issues, including narcotics and security matters. The Senator was been an important player in the whole defense and security field. Later, when I received him in my office, I mentioned that my office was peeling away from the rest of the Embassy building. In view of the ground settlement problem in Bangkok, with the drop in the water level and the subsiding of the ground, the Embassy was getting into a perilous situation. I had special pillars installed to keep my office attached to the rest of the building. In a word, I presented the case for a new Embassy building.

Now, plans had been drawn up to build a new Embassy building, but I knew that in terms of other priorities, having a new Embassy funded and built would take an enormous effort, not only for me but for those who came after me. Construction of a new building would take years and would be very expensive. Furthermore, we were increasingly aware of security matters. There was the question of building the right kind of building to achieve the right kind of security. I'll come back to that later on. This matter was paramount on my mind, so I had an extended discussion with Senator Hollings on this problem.

Several months later, in the middle of the night, I received a telephone call from one of Senator Hollings' staff aides. He said that the Senator couldn't talk with me at that point because he was next door at a committee meeting. However, he had asked the aide to give me a call and ask me to summarize, in about a minute, why we needed \$70 million to

build a new Embassy. The Senator wanted to be updated on the situation. So, in about a minute or so, I summarized the various considerations as to why we needed a new Embassy building and why we needed about \$70 million to build it. And that was that.

Now, some years later, there now stands in Bangkok a large, new Embassy, about a block long. Some people call it "The Fortress." I don't want to downplay any other aspect, but it was Senator Hollings, in his position at that time as Chairman of the Sub-Committee on the State Department budget who put us over the top. I register, first, my thanks to Senator Hollings, and I hope that all Foreign Service Officers will join me. Secondly, I use this story as an example of how important it is to handle Congressional visitors the right way. I could also give some negative examples, as well.. When members of Congress and the Senate are irritated, things go badly. The Foreign Service has some disastrous stories to tell which involve dissatisfied, unhappy Congressional visitors to our posts overseas.

One of the topics which you wanted me to discuss is the traffic in Bangkok. When I was in Bangkok, this was already an enormous and growing problem. It was said that something like 500 additional vehicles were added to the traffic every day, flowing through the streets of Bangkok. In a word, traffic was already "jammed." There were plans for overpasses, some of which are still "hanging in the air" uncompleted. Numerous patchwork solutions had been tried. However, the traffic remained jammed and there was a deterioration of the already polluted atmosphere. Many of these vehicles were old, unregulated diesel powered trucks and buses. So Bangkok became an unhealthy city in which to serve. It may be beautiful and have a bit of its old, nostalgic charm, but it is a nightmare to drive in. At the moment, in the rather extended, economic depression, there is now less traffic than there was. However, once Thailand recovers from this recession, road traffic in Bangkok will again become a nightmare.

My daughters, who worked in refugee affairs in Bangkok over a 12 year period, lived out by the airport. They would have to leave their house no later than 5:05 AM to get into work in, let us say, half an hour or 45 minutes. If they left at 5:30 AM or 5:45 AM, they would spend two hours in commuting. If they left the office in Bangkok after 3:00-3:15 PM, the same consideration applied. It was just nightmarish. This situation has continued. With prosperous times in Thailand, it will worsen.

Q: I was wondering whether this kind of traffic was a real pain in the neck for getting to the airport from downtown Bangkok.

BROWN: Well, not only that, but getting to the Foreign Ministry and getting to other appointments. There were times when you were just locked into traffic. Thank God that we had the beginnings, in my time in Bangkok, of what became mobile phones. My telephone in my limousine was still rare. It was not a modern Motorola mobile phone, but it was a radio that would enable me to call the Embassy and have my office phone the Foreign Ministry regarding my next appointment.

This kind of delay was already becoming somewhat standard, since so many Thai officials and businessmen were caught up in similar circumstances. Unless you were involved in a state visit and were accompanied by a flying wedge of police and sirens, pushing people out of the way, you were just stuck. This situation meant that all appointments became rather shaky. You had to budget that much more time to get to a given appointment, and your host had to be understanding.

Regarding the “sex issue,” since the Vietnam War at least, Bangkok had become quite a “sex center.” First, there was an influx of American soldiers from the various services on leave in Bangkok during the Vietnam War which, as we know, extended over a long period [roughly, 1962 to 1973]. These servicemen were loaded with cash and were bubbling over with their sexual drives. If you wanted sex this way, that way, or the other way, whatever you wanted, the Thai would provide it for a price.

The sex industry by no means catered exclusively to Americans. After the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, the great bulk of people coming to Thailand for sex were Europeans. They came to Bangkok from Germany, the Scandinavian countries, and England. Furthermore, a lot of Saudi Arabians, and other Arabs also came to Bangkok for the same purpose. Their domestic, moral strictures notwithstanding, they could come to Bangkok on a scheduled or chartered aircraft and have a heck of a good time for a couple of weeks. These people could “rent a Thai wife” for a month, let us say. They could go down to the beach or romp around Bangkok. Or they could go to the other, provincial cities of Thailand as well.

As American Ambassador to Thailand and considering the profile that I had, I never went to a sex show. My wife went to one of these shows with visiting friends from Europe and came back with some rather graphic descriptions of what went on. Wow!

Q: I went to a Consular Conference in Bangkok in 1977, I think it was. As you say, “Wow!”

BROWN: The sex trade brought in not only a great deal of money, but something else as well. By the time I arrived in Bangkok, the Thai were just getting into the AIDS [Acquired Immunological Deficiency Syndrome] phenomenon. I had some knowledge of AIDS because one of my daughters is a veterinarian, an epidemiologist, and a former U.S. Public Health Service Officer. Already by 1979 or 1980 the technical literature published by the U.S. Public Health Service [USPHS] was beginning to spot this phenomenon in the gay communities in New York, San Francisco, and other cities. The USPHS was beginning to warn of the potential consequences of the geometric spread of AIDS related disease. However, human nature being what it is, it took more dramatic evidence to wake people up.

When I arrived in Thailand, there came to my attention what I guess was the first AIDS case within our own staff at the Embassy. A staff member who had “problems” in this regard refused to take a physical exam. The Americans in his apartment house didn't want

to be in the same elevator with the man or have any contact with him before he departed for the U.S. There was a real “scare” in those early days of the AIDS epidemic about any contact with somebody who was believed to have AIDS. Meanwhile, out in Thai society “honest” observers began to spot evidence that certain individuals had contracted this disease. The typical reaction among the Thai officials at the time was to deny it. They argued that AIDS was a “foreign” problem primarily affecting foreigners. They said: “We are Thais, we don't have AIDS, and this is not a problem for us.” In other words, they avoided saying anything which could possibly hurt the tourist trade.

In contrast to the very positive, family planning campaign led by Dr. Meechai, which I mentioned before, the Thai initially “stuck their heads in the sand” regarding AIDS. Among the results is a very disturbing spread of AIDS within Thailand. The brothels up in northern Thailand, which it was standard practice for young men to use, became a source of AIDS. Then AIDS was discovered within the Thai military services, and not just at the enlisted men's level. The Thai authorities reacted poorly, too late, and they're paying a very significant price as a result.

Q: Were we involved in trying to get the word to the Thai, as our research developed?

BROWN: Yes. We had a medical research facility on the ground in Thailand, which I mentioned before: AFRIMS [Armed Forces Research in Medical Science], a branch of the U.S. Army's Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, DC. So here you had professional American medical personnel dealing with Thai medical personnel. For example, epidemiologists with a medical, scientific background. There was no problem there in convincing the Thai medical specialists. However, getting action at the government level, obtaining funding, and starting a campaign against AIDS was something else.

Regarding the Thai economy, the Embassy had very active contact with the Thai in both the government and the private sector on a range of economic and commercial matters. We were very sensitive, for example, about Thai textile and garment shipments to the United States. I mentioned Senator Hollings and other members of Congress and the Senate and their sensitivities to the concerns of the textile and garments sectors in the U.S. The sectors have their internal conflicts. Textile and garments buyers love foreign made products, if they can buy these items cheap and make a good profit when they resell them. However, domestic textile and garments producers, both management and workers, bitterly resent the specter of losing jobs and business. It's a constant tug of war, domestically in the U.S.

Overseas, through the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative [USTR], we were engaged in trying to establish what were called “voluntary quotas.” We sought to persuade the host government, in this case, Thailand, to limit exports of textiles and garments to the U.S. There would be limits of so many per year of the items involved. I ran into a considerable problem when the Thai, not surprisingly, grossly exceeded their voluntary quotas.

This became a serious issue. Fortunately, we had a very capable Economic Counselor

who dealt with a very able senior official of the Thai Ministry of Commerce. Using my office phone at night (given the difference in time between Thailand and the U.S.), they negotiated for something like four hours with the USTR in Washington. They worked out a solution which tapered down and stretched out Thai exports of textiles and garments. This incident was a reminder of the corruption and poor regulation which often would creep into the implementation of such agreements with Thailand and which had to be monitored carefully.

Q: Who was your Economic Counselor?

BROWN: I'll have to get back to you on that. He was a very senior officer and very experienced. [It was Paul Stahnke.]

Q: What were the carrots and sticks that we used to apply these voluntary restrictions to Thai exports?

BROWN: Basically, there was the threat that if they didn't accept voluntary quotas, we would place a mandatory quota on Thailand. Congress could force such a mandatory quota on the U.S. Trade Representative. Or the USTR had the authority to place such a quota on his own. However, in view of the overall bilateral relationship, we preferred to be gentlemanly. These agreements allowed Thailand measured, gradual growth. They were designed to head off gross and wildly dramatic overshipments of textiles and garments.

Q: As you were looking at trade, there seems to be a progression among many countries trading with the U.S. They begin with clothing and then move up to electronics.

BROWN: Yes. Remember that I was a Commercial Officer in Hong Kong on my first tour of duty in the Foreign Service. I had witnessed the beginnings of the garment export boom there. Later on, in Taiwan, I witnessed the move from an agricultural base to a light industrial base. Their exports had moved from illegal, pirated items, which were once so popular, into textiles, garments, and then up the ladder to light industrial products. Of course, in the interim the trade progressed up to computer chips and so forth. So over the years we had to adjust to those changes in the composition of trade. We had to bear in mind, of course, that so much of this trade was driven by a voracious U.S. market, which was able to accommodate a tremendous growth of exports from Asia as well as elsewhere to the U.S. However, Given the fact that mainland China had been excluded from the U.S. market and was suffering from internal economic disarray, the main exporters for these goods at this time were in Southeast Asia.

Meanwhile, Japan became an increasingly important market for Southeast Asian products, but the really big market was the U.S. The Japanese market had a fragility to it which we have seen again of late, when the Japanese economy went down, following Thailand and other East Asian countries.

Q: Speaking of the economy, were you looking at the infrastructure, or whatever you want to call it, in the sense of the overall investment pattern? Was there concern about this?

BROWN: Oh, yes. There was concern on many fronts. There was concern about the Thai economy overheating, and the boom-bust cycle. You could see this in the construction sector, even in my time in Bangkok. There was concern about the movement of money into narcotics and, from narcotics and money laundering, into construction. There was concern about very tight Thai protectionism in certain fields. Banking was one sector about which we were concerned. Those American banks which hadn't already opened branches in Thailand just couldn't get in, unless they bought out an existing, foreign bank license, and these were not to be had, with very rare exceptions. In effect, the Thai had slammed the door on the entry of additional, foreign banks.

There was also restriction on foreign lawyers, after 1972 or 1973. The Thai legal lobby arranged to have legislation passed which prohibited foreign nationals from setting up new legal practices in Thailand. As a result, American lawyers who were already established in Thailand, became millionaires. I know several of them, and they flourished with this form of legal protectionism. After 1973, if you wanted to work as a new foreign lawyer in Thailand, you had to work for somebody else. You couldn't establish your own practice.

There were various forms of protectionism against imports of American goods. These included soybeans and edible oils, among the agricultural products, because the Thai palm oil industry was protected by law or regulation. There were limitations on imports of foreign pharmaceuticals. These were especially disturbing, because the Thai were pirating U.S. made pharmaceuticals. If you wanted to play it straight and register an American product for sale in Thailand, the Thai requirement was that you deliver a large bundle of documentation setting out all of the experiments and the history behind the development of these products. A Thai competitor could then go to the same office, get a copy of that pile of documents, and reproduce the product, saving years of research and the expenditure of large amounts of money. Or, even worse, and this was frequently the case, they would simply crank out a product that looked exactly like a U.S. product. So, during my time in Thailand, there was a wide variety of pirated goods for sale in Thailand. Among the products made and pirated in Thailand were Rolex watches, automobile brakes, and garments with the Lacoste Crocodile trademark and many pharmaceuticals.

Increasingly, videos and software components were pirated. The Thai were already heavily engaged in pirating compact discs, CD-ROMs, computers, and computer software. This very much angered the respective sectors of U.S. industry. So my Economic and Commercial Sections and I were heavily involved in this sort of activity.

Before I leave this subject I might note that we briefed many Congressional Delegations on piracy of U.S. trademarks. Sometimes we would then find that members of the

Delegations were walking across the street from their posh hotels and buying the very stuff over which they had frowned and clucked.

Another concern involved sales of military equipment to Thailand. We had and have a JUSMAAG [Joint United States Military Assistance Advisory Group], under whose umbrella U.S. Government funds are made available so that the Thai could take that money and buy F-16 fighter aircraft, tanks, and other items of military equipment. Here you get into the corruption of the Thai military, while paying lip service to the concept of interoperability. That is, as a result of their interface with us, a Thai military unit could in theory use our artillery, and we could use theirs, because it was the same kind of equipment. A lot of that concept was outdated because we had moved ahead, and the Thai didn't have the money to remain modernized in every respect. As an old artilleryman, I would find that the Thai artillery units were using the kind of weapons, of 1950s vintage, which I had fired when I was in the Marine Corps. When I visited a U.S. Marine Artillery outfit which had deployed to Thailand I found that they were using equipment which was simply beyond what the Thai could handle.

We found that the Thai military had made what struck us as irrational purchases of Italian, Swedish, and God knows what other kinds of equipment, because the decisionmaking process was so corrupt. Military commanders were getting substantial bribes and commissions to purchase many kinds of equipment from other countries.

Another major issue which came up during my time in Thailand was the procurement of civilian aircraft. Now, Royal Thai Airways was a Thai Government entity. It had a nominally independent Board of Directors, headed by the Air Chief Marshal commanding the Thai Air Force. The Board of Directors included prominent Thai Government officials. In this atmosphere the technical staff of Royal Thai Airways examined their equipment needs, including the need to support intercontinental flights through the Middle East to Europe and across the Pacific Ocean to the United States. Time and again the technical staff would recommend Boeing or McDonnell-Douglas aircraft over aircraft produced by Airbus-Industrie, and particularly the French aspect of Airbus.

Q: Airbus-Industrie is a European owned consortium which competes with Boeing and McDonnell-Douglas in producing passenger aircraft.

BROWN: To put it mildly, the French would stop at nothing to promote sales of Airbus-Industrie aircraft. I ran into a particularly egregious case where, after years of study, comparison, and so forth, the technical staff of Royal Thai Airways had opted for the McDonnell-Douglas aircraft. The initial contracts were signed, and then, suddenly, the contract began to come apart. There began to appear in Thai newspapers stories which, we found, had been planted by Airbus-Industrie, to the effect that the McDonnell-Douglas aircraft was an inferior product. (End of tape)

The stories stated that the American aircraft was sub-standard, over-priced, and so forth. Quietly, the Royal Thai Airways technical staff, the professionals, came to us and would

say, "For God's sake, don't you see what's happening? This aircraft purchase is going to go the other way. Do something!" We would make our pitch at various levels, but the situation deteriorated. Finally, I learned what was going on from our Commercial Counselor. He had been previously stationed in Bangkok as a representative of a major U.S. company. He had also been a key member of the powerful American Chamber of Commerce in Bangkok.

He went in to see Chatchai, an experienced Thai politician (now deceased) who was made a Deputy Prime Minister overseeing the lucrative Ministries of Commerce and Industry. At this one on one meeting with Chatchai, whom he had known for years in an earlier, private capacity, Chatchai said to him: "Come on, you know the game. It's a matter of five percent of the contract."

Well, that did it for me. That and other evidence made it clear to me that the whole process was being corrupted. I requested a meeting with Prime Minister Prem. You don't ask for such an appointment lightly. To go in and see the Prime Minister of a country and, in effect, tell him that you consider that the decision-making process involving a state-run, state-owned company, in this case, Royal Thai Airways, is being corrupted is not something that you do lightly.

I won't go into all of the details. However, through a special channel, I arranged to see Prime Minister Prem and his adviser. I had prepared a letter, which I embellished orally, because there were things that I didn't want to put in the letter. I said that all we wanted was a fair and square, technical comparison to be made of the competing aircraft, and let the better aircraft win. This had always been our stance.

Well, Prime Minister Prem was very solemn and tight-lipped. Predictably, what I got was the answer: "What you're saying is very serious, Ambassador. We will look into it." I said, "Thank you, that's all I ask," and we finally won the contract. However, it took that kind of intercession to do that.

That takes me back, Stuart, to what I said about the bonding of the relationship as I worked my way through my tenure as Ambassador to Thailand. Just marching in cold and demanding a review would not have taken me anywhere. It was so helpful to have a broad-based relationship and connections in many, many ways, so that I had different channels available and different ways of handling these very complex subjects. Sometimes I had to be a bit Byzantine in all of this. It was a fascinating challenge. I ran into the same thing later in Israel. The relationship was different, but I ran into the same kind of problem there.

Q: Bill, this incident leaves something open for comment. This is something which has bounced around from time to time and has been mentioned by Washington operators, including some rather senior Foreign Service Officers. You know, with the Internet and the long distance telephone and so forth, the real need for diplomatic representation abroad is turning out to be less and less significant. I wonder if these things can really be

handled adequately from Washington.

BROWN: I say, Hogwash! I can imagine certain scenarios in which some people in Washington, by virtue of their unique connections, background, and so forth, might be considered by a foreign government to be the channel to deal with a given issue, by which they could operate accordingly. However, across a broad spectrum of relationships, the right kind of Ambassador, with the right kind of staff and institutional, professional, and bureaucratic connections and support in Washington can be and should be a very powerful instrument. However, that question takes you into the process of selection of Ambassadors, their experience, their background, their contacts, their education and training within the U.S. bureaucracy, and their current connections and clout in Washington. All of these considerations are very important.

Q: Speaking of bureaucracy, you mentioned that you were in a very desirable post, one of those places such as Mexico City, Paris, London, and some other places which we could mention which attract American Government agencies which want to set up shop there.

BROWN: Yes. During my time in Bangkok this became a very interesting issue, particularly under Secretary of State Shultz. I've forgotten whether it was in 1986 or 1987, but this issue came up in connection with President Reagan's visit to Bali, Indonesia, where he met with Indonesian President Suharto. To this meeting the Foreign Ministers of the ASEAN countries were invited, as were the American Ambassadors to those countries. Some big wigs from Washington came to this meeting with President Reagan, particularly from the Department of Defense.

At this time there was a growing feeling within the Foreign Service, and particularly in Southeast Asia, with which Secretary Shultz agreed, that we were running into real problems with the expansion of other U.S. bureaucracies abroad. I call this process the internationalization of the American bureaucracy. As one who had served in a variety of Foreign Service posts elsewhere, I had been aware of this process for some time, but it really hit me in Bangkok. It seemed that everybody wanted to come to Bangkok, and everybody, once there, felt that it was necessary to expand. Let me give you some examples.

The head of the U.S. Secret Service, John Simpson, with whom I had developed a personal relationship, was constantly sending me "first person" messages proposing the establishment of a Secret Service office in Thailand. The purpose of this office would be to handle, among many other things, special problems, including the "money" problem. This office would have been distinct from an FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigations] office.

Q: The Secret Service is in charge of the investigation of counterfeiting.

BROWN: Yes. Bangkok was a regional center of some very good quality counterfeiting of U.S. currency. This activity was mainly carried on by Chinese who, from a base in

Bangkok, were circulating bogus U.S. currency in Bangkok, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, and Hong Kong. They were a constant headache.

The FBI was constantly after me regarding the establishment of a "Legal Attache Office," which would be a regional center for FBI activity. In their view, they had a lot of business that had to be done. They felt that it was costly and time-consuming to send agents out to these various Embassies, and what better place would there be for such a regional office than Bangkok?

When I arrived in Bangkok, there already was a representative of the Bureau of Customs. He was charged with a variety of customs issues. No sooner was he well established in Bangkok than the demand for service grew. He was tasked by the head office of the Bureau of Customs to cover a considerable region. He was assigned to Indonesia and Singapore, in addition to Bangkok and became heavily burdened.

In terms of Thailand alone, he also had to cope with pornography. The whole pornographic issue, and especially child pornography, involved the use of the U.S. mails and communications. This was a major, growing burden for him to handle. So in that context alone he was constantly after me, politely but in a very determined way, to get additional American personnel assigned to his office. He was able to document his work load. He said that he needed larger offices, more staff, and so forth.

Lo and behold, without any consultation whatsoever with him, his head office in Washington added India and Pakistan to his work load. They just expanded the region for which he was responsible. He was now tasked with an enormous, new chunk of territory. From his viewpoint his situation was patently ridiculous. He simply couldn't handle it all.

Bangkok was a very attractive place to be assigned to, although I have to add a footnote. Many an American wife got pretty sick of living in Bangkok and fairly quickly. The traffic, the pollution, and their concerns about their husbands were problems they faced. Bangkok lost a lot of its charm after a time to people who actually lived and worked there. Bangkok was neither Paris nor London. On the other hand, let's say that it was very attractive, compared to many other places in the world. It was a great place to base regional activities.

So I was dealing with a growing problem as far as size was concerned. When I went to meet with Secretary Shultz in Bali, I was approached by Charley Hill, his Executive Secretary and an old friend of mine. Charley said, "The Secretary wants to have a conversation with the American Ambassadors assigned to this part of the world on the subject of regional services. We want you to lead off the discussion." So I did some research and then laid out the problem. Other Ambassadors quickly chimed in. Like myself, they were being approached by representatives of other agencies seeking to open or enlarge an office.

Altogether, we put up a united front. We said, in effect, that we ought to stop this

creeping expansion of regional offices. This was creating a growing load on us, from the administrative point of view. If these other agency representatives have to have forward bases, why couldn't they forward base a representative in a place like Guam, for example, or some other place in the middle of the Pacific Ocean? Then, if they have to, they could fly out from there.

We discussed a wide range of possibilities in this respect. It was in this atmosphere that a couple of Ambassadors approached our good friend, Rich Armitage of the Pentagon, who was on this trip, accompanying President Reagan and Secretary Shultz. We wondered how amenable the Pentagon would be to a common approach to place a cap on all of this. Rich gave us an interesting answer. He suddenly placed his head in a sleeping position and simulated snoring. This meant that we wouldn't get any sympathy from the U.S. military in this respect.

Against this background, coming down to detailed examples, I had been a staunch fighter on the anti-narcotics front and a considerable supporter of a very strong effort by DEA [Drug Enforcement Agency] in Thailand. As I examined what to do practically, and on the advice of Chas Freeman, my DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] in Bangkok at the time, and other Foreign Service Officers, I embraced the idea that we could reduce our DEA presence.

We had dozens of DEA officers scattered around Thailand, and not just in Bangkok itself. They were out there in the countryside, where much of the action was taking place. These were very dedicated men. Indeed, they were zealots. However, we had been training the Thai for years, providing them with money, equipment, intelligence, and backup. The Thai professed to be as concerned about the narcotics traffic as we were. Why couldn't we now begin a program for gradually shifting more of the burden to the Thai? Perhaps we could streamline our own approach. In other words, we could maintain our presence but streamline it so that we could concentrate on training the Thai and backing them up, as opposed to having Americans out in the front trenches, one step behind the Thai, carrying automatic shotguns.

When I proposed a reduction in the size of the DEA Team in the Embassy, I ran head on into strong opposition from its members. They were adamantly opposed to this kind of change. I tried this proposal in a conversation with the Director of DEA and with Edwin Meese, the Attorney General. Their response was: "Fine! Why don't we streamline our efforts and get more funding. However, we need to have even more officers assigned to Thailand, because the problem is growing."

This account provides another example of a generic problem in handling different kinds of bureaucratic cultures within the U.S. Government. Here I was, an Ambassador presiding over the weekly meetings of the Country Team. The senior representatives of the different agencies represented in the Mission attended. Behind each of these people was a unique bureaucratic culture with its own pay and promotion systems and goals and objectives. Yes, they are parties to the country plan, which is reviewed back in

Washington. However, when you get down to the nitty gritty, these people are selected, assigned, promoted, and evaluated entirely independently, on the basis of different criteria and not on how their representative gets along at Country Team meetings. They are judged in terms of results, the results evaluated by the parent agency in Washington.

Over and over again the other agencies' answer to a problem was: throw more people at it. They meant: "OUR people. We have to have OUR people and OUR institutional backup for them." As I said, you also witness unilateral procedural changes in accordance with the rules laid down by the head office in Washington of an agency.

The second issue that I would go into in this respect is a dramatic matter of a different sort. That is, what I would call, the "Moscow scandal." Around midnight one night, I received a phone call from Secretary of State Shultz, who said to me: "Bill, we've got a scandal involving a Marine Security Guard assigned to the Embassy in Moscow. His name is Lonetree, and another Marine is also involved in this affair. The issue is 'white hot' back in Washington. Demands have been made for the establishment of commissions to investigate this matter. I need someone whom I can trust to do a 'quick and dirty' review of this situation, taking, perhaps, five or six weeks. You're an old Marine and you served in the Embassy in Moscow. I'd like you to come back to Washington right away and handle this matter for me." Some 30 seconds later, my wife said, "What kind of a conversation was that? All you said was, 'Yes, sir.'" [Laughter] I said, "Well, that's it. When the Secretary of State asks you to do something, you do it."

So I got together with my new DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission], Joe Winder. I said, I'll be gone in Washington for five or six weeks on this matter. Don't 'sell the farm too cheaply.'" I fly immediately to Washington and arrived in the middle of a maelstrom.

Q: Would you give us the background of what had happened?

BROWN: A Marine Security Guard, a native American named Lonetree was the person principally involved. In Vienna Lonetree walked into the Embassy and conveyed a confession that he had been suborned by the KGB [Soviet secret police] in Moscow during his tour of duty there. There emerged the impression that together with another Marine Security Guard, he had given the KGB access to the inner workings of the Embassy in Moscow. That caused an uproar.

Q: This happened when?

BROWN: 1987, the spring of 1987. Things really hit the fan at that time. I arrived in Washington and was immediately whisked into Secretary Shultz's office and then to Colin Powell's office in the White House. There was a frenetic atmosphere about the whole incident. Hearings in Congress were taking place that day. Ambassador Arthur Hartman, a distinguished American diplomat then finishing his tour as Ambassador to Moscow, was on the griddle. This turned out to be his last day in 40 years spent in the Foreign Service. And what a day it was for him!

I went over first to a hearing in the House of Representatives. There, were then Representatives Olympia Snow [Republican, Maine] and another Representative from New Jersey who had just made an investigatory trip to Moscow, where they found that the whole Embassy was assumed to have been fully penetrated by KGB bugs. Therefore, they had resorted to communicating with each other and accompanying staff by the use of Mickey Mouse writing pads. That is, you write on the pad, and the writing shows up. Then you lift the sheet of plastic, and the writing disappears. These two Committee members were charging Ambassador Hartman and the Foreign Service with having permitted this gross scandal to take place.

From the House of Representatives we raced across on the underground Congressional subway to a meeting in a "Secure Hearing Room" of the Senate. There the Senate Intelligence Committee looking into this matter. The Director of the Navy Investigative Service and other, senior security officers were being grilled as to the investigation of this matter and the confessions which Lonetree and the other Marine Security Guard, an African American had made. I remember Senator Borah asking the Director of the Naval Investigative Service: "Did you do it 'right' this time?" He clearly implied that there had been other cases which had not been handled very well. The NIS Director assured him that the Navy Investigative Service had conducted a proper investigation and that the confessions and testimony which had been taken from Lonetree and the other Marine were valid.

Well, I returned to the office of Secretary of State Shultz. I gave him a quick report. Deputy Secretary of State Whitehead attended this meeting. I was told to make and investigation prepare an "eyes only" report for Shultz. I managed to secure the assistance of help of Vic Dikeos, a former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Security, with whom I had worked when he was a "fraud fighter" in the consular Fraud Unit at the Consulate General in Hong Kong in 1957. I also recruited Bill Courtney, a good drafting officer who later became Ambassador to one of the Central Asian Republics, formerly part of the Soviet Union. He was a solid officer with an extensive background in Soviet affairs. I also got a secretary or two, repaired to an office in the Operations Center, and opened up my own approach to this issue. I did not have authority to take formal testimony as a legal investigator with full powers; I was simply to investigate the situation and report back with recommendations to Shultz.

We read through the files made available to me. The Foreign Service Inspection Corps had already gathered its own files from its own Foreign Service Inspectors over the years on the question of the security status of Marine Security Guard units. This was not the first problem which had arisen in connection with Marine Security Guard detachments in various Embassies, including some in communist countries. Inspections by Foreign Service Inspectors had revealed "peccadilloes" or breaches and suspected improper conduct by Marine Security Guards. We touched base with people in CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] and, of course, in the Marine Corps.

Then I flew with Secretary Shultz to Moscow where he had scheduled, major meetings with then Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze and, ultimately, with Soviet President Gorbachev. I had already come to some preliminary conclusions which I conveyed to Shultz's executive Secretary Charley Hill. Charley Hill took me up to the front of the plane to talk with Secretary Shultz, en route to Moscow.

I'll never forget that conversation. I said, "Mr. Secretary, by the time I'm through, you'll probably want to throw me off this plane at 35,000 feet." Already, Moscow, I had discovered patterns of conduct which were very disturbing, not only regarding the behavior of Marine Security Guards. I had learned some of this from former Directors General of the Foreign Service and senior security types. There had been quite a few cases which have developed over the years, in which Americans have been blackmailed and suborned by the KGB and other communist security services. These cases by no means involved just Marine Security Guards. Foreign Service Officers, including some fairly senior Foreign Service Officers, and, in some cases, Ambassadors, have been 'lured' by the KGB and its sister services. I told Shultz that we had a very serious problem. Even though Shultz had asked me to look at the problem affecting Marine Security Guards, he had authorized me to look at anything else of this nature. I told him that I had some 'drastic' options to submit. One option would require polygraphing senior Foreign Service Officers, including Ambassadors who are posted to communist countries. Immediately, I could see a flush rising in Secretary Shultz's face, because he was on record as being adamantly opposed to taking polygraphs.

Q: He once said that the day a Foreign Service Officer has to do this, he, Shultz, would resign.

BROWN: Well, it was more personal than that. This also had to do with an imbroglio in the White House where very high people were pointing fingers [i.e., making accusations] at each other over some leak. Finally, it was suggested that everybody be polygraphed. Shultz and Jim Baker [then White House Chief of Staff] said that they would quit before they would go through such an indignity. I was well aware of this background and appreciated the problems associated with it. Of course, we didn't yet know about the Ainsworth Ames spy case in CIA. However, in the atmosphere of the time, and I stress this, given what I had come to learn as a result of my inquiries, was deeply disturbing so much so that one had to wonder what else was going on.

Q: Ames was a CIA officer who spied for the KGB.

BROWN: Yes. He was in Counter-intelligence and had been rolled or came to cooperate with the KGB for money. Of course, we didn't know that at the time. However, there were other CIA, as well as Department of State cases that were very, very disturbing. [Addendum: see also the later FBI Hanson case.]

I gave the Secretary of State the option of authorizing a limited series of polygraphs as deterrents. That is, put on a 3" x 5" card "open questions" to be asked an Ambassador, a

DCM, or anybody else who had authorized access to the “crown jewels” [highly sensitive files] of the Embassy, especially one in a communist country, including the Communications Room, the neighboring storage vaults, and so on. I drafted a question which would be asked such officers before they were ever appointed to a position in a communist country. It would go something like this: “Did you, during your tenure, give unauthorized access to the crown jewels?” It was as simple as that. You could carry this card in your pocket as a reminder, and that would be it. Well, as I said, a flush rose on the Secretary's face when he heard this. There's a passing reference to that conversation in his book of memoirs.

I also told Secretary Shultz that I was deeply disturbed at the time over the issues of accountability and responsibility. As I interviewed senior people up the chain of command in the Department of State, I found a distinct disinclination to accept responsibility. I had been a Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs and had, along with Frank Wisner and other counterparts, co-drafted a directive which reminded every new Ambassador that his chain of command ran through the regional, Assistant Secretary of the Department of State and, thence to the Secretary of State and the President. This was intended to cut off cowboy conduct which some Ambassadors engaged in, intending to could circumvent their regional, Assistant Secretary.

I was a typical Foreign Service Officer in that respect. I accepted that there was a chain of command. An Ambassador reports to his regional Assistant Secretary, thence to the Secretary of State, and then on to the President. However, when it came to a disaster like this (remember that at the time it was alleged that our Embassy in Moscow and our Consulate General in Leningrad had been completely penetrated by the KGB) no one seemed willing to recognize this or any other chain of command for taking responsibility. Their attitude was: “This involves the Embassy in Moscow, and we have an Ambassador over there. How in the world can I be expected to accept any responsibility for the meanderings of some Marine Security Guard?”

On the plane, I highlighted for Shultz the problem of enforcing responsibility and accountability. To dramatize it I said that I had recently learned that, within the Department of State, he as Secretary of State, couldn't fire anybody. I was alluding to the case of an officer who was to be dismissed but appealed he decision. The ruling at the time was that the Secretary of State could not fire him. I added that I found that the most that an Ambassador could do was to transfer somebody and issue an oral reprimand which could be done only under very special circumstances and had to be delivered face to face. Meanwhile, the person involved could not be suspended without pay.

By this time, Secretary Shultz had turned crimson, but I continued my remarks, I said, “If heads have to roll, you will be under great, political pressure, but your options are limited, along the lines which I have just described. One of the things that you might consider would be a series of Letters of Regret.” Ambassador Hartman has retired. You could write Hartman a letter which said, 'Dear Ambassador. As you are now retired from the

Foreign Service, I am writing you a letter in which I wish to praise the good work you did during your very distinguished career. However, I have to register for the record a sense of regret that, during your tenure as Ambassador to Moscow, this situation developed.”

I also told Secretary Shultz: “You could send a similar letter to the DCM. You could also write a similar letter to the Administrative Officer in the Embassy in Moscow and the Security Officer, since they are in the line of command. You could also send a similar letter to the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, who is senior to Ambassador Hartman and the Assistant Secretary of State for Security, who is responsible for overseeing the security situation in the Embassy. You could also go higher than that.” Secretary Shultz looked at me and said, “What do you mean?” I said, “You could prepare a letter of regret from the President of the United States to you, saying: 'Dear George, you've been a great Secretary of State. However, I note with regret that, during your tenure this deplorable event occurred.’” At this point Secretary Shultz said, “What about Secretary of Defense Weinberger?”

Q: The rivalry between the Secretaries of Defense and State goes way back...

BROWN: I also said that the Secretary of State could send a letter stating that, as an old Marine, he expresses regret that Marines under the Secretary of Defense had been derelict in their duties.

Well, while we were in Moscow, Secretary of State Shultz went off to his meetings with President Gorbachev and Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze. I talked with the DCM, Dick Combs with whom I had served in Moscow and with a variety of other senior officers. The atmosphere was terrible. Marines on duty had a security officer seated next to them signaling lack of trust, and the assumption was that all rooms and all equipment had been compromised. I visited the Consulate General in Leningrad and found a similar mess. I went back to Moscow and arrived early in the morning just as Secretary Shultz was being shown the new building for the Embassy. We had been constructing a new Chancery after years of arduous negotiations with the Soviets. The new building was down a slope, not far from the old Chancery. The new Chancery had very nice living quarters around it, a snack bar, and club facilities.

As I visited the new building with secretary Shultz we saw that after boring into various parts of the new structure, security technicians found that the whole building was one huge, KGB radio station. That is, there were transmission elements in the columns supporting the structure which had been built, under supervision by experienced teams of U.S. security specialists and to our specifications. In other words, right under our noses, the Soviets had fully penetrated the building. They had done so to such an extent that, in effect, it was a broadcasting station, transmitting to Soviet listeners. Whole teams of Seabees [Navy Construction Battalions] had been brought to Moscow to ensure the security of the Embassy construction, but these precautions had been in vain.

When we finished this inspection of the new building, Secretary Shultz asked me, “What

are your recommendations on this?" I said, "Mr. Secretary, you have the Laird Commission and the Schlesinger Commission, which was specifically devoted to this problem. Really, I don't think that I'm your man to make recommendations on this. However, I'll say this. The old Chancery, built during the time of Stalin, is now run down because the Department knew that we were going to give it up, and it was not properly maintained for some years. Nevertheless, this old Chancery is still capable of holding the staff of the Embassy, so I would plan to continue in that old building for the next 10 years. You might consider that, by the time this scandal is over, it will take 10 years for the blood pressure of the U.S. Congress to recover. Meanwhile, all the new plans and procedures will also take 10 years to complete. Meanwhile, it will take the Soviets another 10 years to get over their hangups. So you should prepare for 10 years of continued occupation of the old Chancery."

Lo and behold, that's what it took, 10 years. However, I said that I didn't want to get involved in this issue. (I could see, looming before me, the prospect of never returning to Bangkok.) Rather, I said that for comparative purposes I wanted to visit our embassies in Bucharest and Budapest, where old colleagues were serving as ambassadors, and get a feel for their Marine Guards' situation. (End of tape)

Meanwhile, I had evolved in my own thinking to a kind of new structure, a new layout for the Embassy in Moscow as well as other U.S. embassies. We could take a page from the Soviets and, rather than just strengthening the buildings, we would structure things in such a way that a foreign visitor coming into the Embassy in Moscow didn't go up to the top floors, where the Ambassador's and other senior offices were located. Visitors wouldn't take the elevator but would come into a nicely furnished reception area on the ground floor, where the Ambassador or other senior officers would meet them. In this way we would cut out all of this non-official travel, up and down, in our buildings.

Meanwhile, we could minimize the possibility of penetration by the host government's security apparatus through the use of janitorial help, repairmen, and so forth, by having our own, American citizen janitors and repairmen. Furthermore, we would accommodate those agencies which disliked this arrangement, like USIS [United States Information Service], the Department of Commerce, and so forth, by having them in a separate building, with different rules of access.

Q: Consular operations could be separate, also.

BROWN: Yes. I immediately ran into all kinds of cross currents and tensions as I got into this matter, particularly at smaller Embassies like Bucharest and Budapest. Our Ambassador in Budapest, Mark Palmer, had very strong reservations on this.

So I went back to Washington, firmed up my thoughts, and had meetings with senior officers in CIA, arranged through Vic Dikeos. These included counter-intelligence officers and others whom I would normally never meet. I needed to get as comprehensive a picture as I could of Soviet operations against us over a period of decades and the

problems which they had run into.

I also made a call on the Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, General P. X. Kelly, in his office early one morning. He was with his two other generals, both of whom later became Commandants of the Marine Corps.

I began my presentation, saying: “General, I'm an old Marine and I have had several fantasies in life, professionally. I dreamt of becoming an Ambassador and cutting the cake at the annual Marine Corps Ball and I achieved that. As a young Marine officer, I dreamed of occupying this office, and here I am, albeit as a visitor. I always hoped to take the review of the Marine Corps parade at 8th and I Streets, some Friday evening at the Marine Barracks in Washington, DC. After what I'm about to say to you, I realize that I'll never achieve that. You'll never accommodate such a fantasy.” Then I laid out my findings on the Marine security situation in Moscow and other posts.

General Kelly sat there, looking very grim, as I went through my findings. He said, “Look, I'm taking my lumps. But what about others?” That day he was particularly concerned that Secretary Shultz, a proud old Marine, had been quoted as commenting on the Marine Security Guards' conduct in this business.

I went back to the State Department and spent several days with Vic Dikeos and Bill Courtney preparing an extremely sensitive report, wrapping this situation up. Meanwhile, I was summoned by Deputy Secretary of State John Whitehead and asked if I would stay on in Washington and become the Executive Secretary for the Laird Commission. This was a formal commission which would take formal testimony. I said, “You really don't want me for this. My best contribution is what I've just done. I just want to get back to my Embassy in Bangkok.” I suggested the name of another gentleman who did become the Executive Secretary of the Laird Commission, and I wonder whether he's ever forgiven me for that. [Laughter]

Then I submitted my report with recommendations to Secretary Shultz. Once he and Charley Hill [Executive Secretary of the Department] became aware of what I'd actually written, they immediately issued instructions that distribution of my report was to be greatly restricted, maybe five copies in all. I certainly understood that.

As I reflect back on this episode, I would emphasize that I was reacting to circumstances at a special time, in the wake of dramatic revelations involving more than just Marines. I did my best, and that was that. The reason that I have told this story in some detail is that we professional diplomats have to cope with circumstances as they are. Those circumstances change, and the reaction to them also changes. The once mighty Soviet Empire has fallen, and we don't have the same kind of problem facing us. Or do we? Do we not still have some of the same problem, whether it involves the Chinese or the Russians, with some of the KGB retreats running operations against us?

Jack Matlock, a career Foreign Service Officer who later served as Ambassador to the

Soviet Union, wrote a book in which, among other things, he was quoted as saying: “This event [in the Embassy in Moscow] really never happened.” He wrote that a check of Marine Security Guard records in Embassy Moscow convinced him and others that Lonetree and his cohort could not actually have given the kind of access to KGB operatives which was allegedly given. However, in the meantime, it raised havoc with the Marine Corps image and with the image of the Department of State, as far as the operations of our Embassies abroad were concerned. This episode had a profound influence, so much so that one of the things that I did for Secretary Shultz was to draft a first person cable of instructions for all Ambassadors. It said in effect: “I hold you personally responsible for everything that goes on in terms of security in your Embassy.” Shultz signed the cable, and it went out.

I went back to Bangkok, called my Security Team together, including the Chief of Station, the Security Officer, the Military Attaches, and others. I said, “I want to read this cable to you. I know you've already seen it but I want to read it to you and go through it with you, because I drafted it. What this means, ladies and gentlemen, is that, henceforth, I may swing for something which goes wrong, but, by God, you'll swing with me. Now, within this Embassy, we're going to map out exactly who is responsible for what and lay it out in specific terms. For example, if a Marine Security Guard or our Security Officer cannot go into a particularly sensitive area, then, by God, whoever is responsible will be personally responsible, to me.”

This subject of the other bureaucratic cultures which exist in our Embassies and the potential implications which lie beneath the facade of one big, Country Team is fascinating.

Q: I would like to ask one question about this subject. You say that you went to the Embassy in Moscow and looked at the situation, ab initio, or right from the beginning. All of us have been warned about the Soviet intelligence people operate and how they will try to do things. You say that you tried to uncover things affecting both Marine Security Guards and non-Marines. This went up and down the hierarchy, including senior people in the Mission. What was the motivating force behind what happened on this occasion? Was it sex, money, drugs, or what?

BROWN: It was the standard human frailties. Sex, money, resentment or the need for gratifying an unfulfilled desire. And the KGB, like other intelligence organizations through history, developed information to help it to achieve its goals and objectives, using rather sophisticated means of attracting the attention of certain individuals in our Embassies. They called this process “running swallows,” that is, using beautiful maidens or whatever. They study their targets' heterosexual or homosexual proclivities, or other chinks in their armor, to get some sort of grip on these Americans. In the case of certain senior Foreign Service Officers, when it was finally uncovered, handling that became one of the important but unadvertised jobs of the Director General of the Foreign Service. The Director General had to call such people in and say, “You're leaving the Foreign Service, either by resignation or otherwise.”

Q: Were you able to tighten up the regulations so that more could be done?

BROWN: I left a series of recommendations as to what actually might be done in terms of tightening the regulations. Now, my memory is kind of weak on that. Of course, this was a period of much greater security awareness of the need to alert the security element of the Department of State, so that it could go into high gear. A sense of security concerns permeated the Foreign Service.

Naturally, in the nature of things, over time, this sense of security consciousness relaxed. I imagine that with the disappearance of the Soviet empire, there was a further, how shall I say it?, mental "relaxation." I don't wish to imply that people fell down on the job, but a relaxation would be understandable if it happened. When we read nowadays of the Chinese operations against ethnic Chinese U.S. citizens, as well as others, or when one bears in mind, that many a KGB officer was simply retreaded and reassigned to the new, Russian Federation, it would be an interesting subject to consider. However, I'm no longer really qualified to address that matter.

Q: Yesterday I talked on the phone with Ambassador Tony Gillespie, who was our Ambassador in Colombia about the time you were in Bangkok. We were talking about a recent scandal about a colonel's wife in Colombia sending cocaine through the APO [Army Post Office]. He said that he was terrified about the security of his whole staff in the Embassy during the entire time he served in Colombia because of the large amounts of money available and the great corruption possible from drug money. I'm sure that this possibility is always there.

At the time, did you ever question or raise the issue, and this has concerned me, frankly, about Marine Guards. They are a great addition to our posts overseas, and you are an ex-Marine. I guess that you are never an "ex-Marine." You were a Marine.

BROWN: Let's just say, "an old Marine."

Q: I remember seeing this situation, when I served in the Embassy in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. I was there for five years. We had Marine Security Guards there, and they were fine people. However, there was a continuing series of problems with young, unattached men. There were problems with girls. These Marines go to bars.

BROWN: Stuart, there were those who looked at the problem, including security experts, who would say, "It is unnatural to put young males between the ages of 18 and 25, into that kind of atmosphere, in the case of Moscow with a KGB service arrayed against them, and tell them: 'Thou shalt not have sex. There shall be no fraternization. Now, watch out and be good boys.'" Human nature being what it is, there are those who argue that it would be far better to hire a cadre of married people...

Q: Perhaps composed of ex petty officers in the Navy or ex sergeants in the Army or

Marine Corps.

BROWN: Yes, retired guys, accompanied by their spouses.

Q: The British do this.

BROWN: Remember, now, that I had some further experience with this problem. I had had to close down a Marine Security Guard unit in Taiwan, along with the rest of the American Embassy when we broke relations with the Republic of China. My Security Officer in Taipei, John McPoland, had to reconfigure the security system without U.S. Marines. He and I were now in a non-official capacity in Taipei, but running a U.S. Government-like institution. It was a challenge, but it turned out that it could be done, without going into all of the details, on a small scale.

The Foreign Service Inspectors had already run into this problem. There were some who had gone so far as to say, "We ought not to have young Marines doing this kind of job. It's an unnatural assignment. It just runs counter to the laws of nature." Some said, "Get older people." Others said, "Get married ones." Still others said, "Rotate them earlier from these assignments." Others said, "Just get rid of the Marines and hire married, contract types." Look, no matter whom you hire, whether you hire a 40-year-old, ex-Marine, married, and with his wife there, the KGB and other similar services will still run operations against you. Statistically speaking, one way or another, they will find some "chinks in the armor." Take the case of Ainsworth Ames. He was a professional counter-intelligence officer in CIA. He was married.

Q: And he was the son of a distinguished CIA officer.

BROWN: And, of all things, he was a counter-intelligence officer!

Q: To close this subject off, I have to mention that I did an interview with Jim Macartner, who was an officer in our Embassy in Moscow and then in our Consulate in Vladivostok during World War II. He said that the KGB had it all worked out. Well, maybe the Soviets called their counterintelligence organization the NKVD or the MVD. You could tell where you stood in their hierarchy by the type of girl you ended up with. High-ranking American officials got ballerinas, from the top ballerina in Moscow down to a ballerina from Minsk. The most junior officer ended up with a circus acrobat! [Laughter]

BROWN: I concentrated on the Marines, but I found that among non-Marine, military personnel in Moscow, there had been problems. The attitude was: "We'll handle our own problems. We have our own investigative service." Again, I introduce this under the larger rubric of dealing as an Ambassador with other institutional cultures and the problems which can arise. I think that, in different form and fashion, these problems will arise in the future.

I think that now we might return to the Embassy in Bangkok. Toward the end of my tour

there at the end of 1987 or early 1988 I began to get intimations that I might become Ambassador to Israel. Naturally, having been DCM in Israel many years previously, and, given my outlook, this would be a highly valued assignment for me. To be appointed Ambassador to Israel would be a really challenging, top-line assignment. In response to an inquiry as to whether I would accept assignment as Ambassador to Israel, I said that I would be absolutely delighted.

Q: Weren't you looking at the calendar in 1988?

BROWN: I was looking at the calendar because a presidential election was coming up in November, 1988, and I said to myself: "If this assignment is to be made, then let's move now, lest I get hung up in pre-election, political games. I said to Charley Hill [Executive Secretary of the Department of State] and others that I would be delighted to be appointed Ambassador to Israel. However, I said, "For goodness' sake, let's move the nomination process along."

Well, bureaucracy being what it is, I didn't get the call from President Reagan until late April, 1988. At the time I was at the baggage carousel at Kennedy Airport in New York, with the baggage rumbling around. An announcement came over the phone asking Ambassador William Brown to call such and such a number. I went to the phone and plugged in. President Reagan came on the line and asked whether I'd be willing to serve as Ambassador to Israel. I said that I would be deeply honored. I was on Cloud Nine.

Well, I then made some inquiries, and it seemed that things just were not moving. Meanwhile, my own tour as Ambassador to Thailand was coming to an end. I wanted to arrange for a hearing from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and get on with the process of formal appointment as Ambassador to Israel. But the wheels of government grind slowly, and the process went dragged on. Finally, I became very concerned about this appointment.

When I returned to Washington, I consulted with Max Kampelman, a wonderful gentleman who was then Counselor of the Department of State. Then I found that there was a hangup. By now Kampelman, representing Secretary Shultz, had communicated with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee chaired by that venerable Yankee, Senator Claiborne Pell [Democrat, Rhode Island]. Kampelman found a certain disinclination to give me a hearing on the part of Senator Pell and Senator Paul Sarbanes [Democrat, Maryland], a man of Greek ethnic background. They had apparently decided that they would not hold a hearing for me as the prospective Ambassador to Israel or for another prospective Ambassador to Athens, whose name I have forgotten. So we were at a standstill.

Q: Was there any reason given? Was there any objection to you?

BROWN: None given openly. However, the reason seemed to be that they expected Governor Dukakis [Democrat, Massachusetts] would win, and that Dukakis would

therefore wish to name his own Ambassadors to Israel and Greece. This had been going on for some time, and here I was, hung up. However, having sought, in vain, a meeting with Senator Sarbanes, I was finally able, after persistent efforts, to arrange a meeting with Senator Pell.

I went to see him alone and first met with two staff aides, who were rather brusque, both before and after the meeting with Senator Pell. I won't name their names. One of them is now an Ambassador. Their clear message to me was: "Don't you get it? You should withdraw your name because the Committee on Foreign Relations isn't going to give you a hearing. That's that. You should withdraw your name, as the candidate to be Ambassador to Athens already has done." I said, "I hear what you're telling me but I'm not going to withdraw my name. I'll want to see Senator Pell."

I was then ushered in to see Senator Pell. He was a courtly gentleman who came from a patrician, Rhode Island, Yankee family. He was very courteous. He said, "Ambassador, as I look at your background and credentials, you seem eminently qualified. In the normal course of events, there would be no problem. However, the fact is that we, as the Democratic majority on this Committee, think that Governor Dukakis will win the election and strongly believe that, as the new President, he ought to have his choice of all Ambassadorial appointments, particularly in this case, for Ambassador to Israel, which is a very important position." Senator Pell was polite, but very firm in his position.

Finally, I said, "Thank you, Senator, for giving me an audience. I will abide by your decision. If your decision is not to give me a hearing, so be it, but I hope that that can be changed. In the meantime, I am going to go and study the Hebrew language. Now, since we're in private, I'll say something personal. The irony of the situation is, and I've never said this to anyone before, all my life I've been a Democrat. As a professional, career officer I've never allowed politics to show. I've been scrupulous in that respect. It so happens that I'm a lifelong Democrat and have never voted for a Republican! It also happens that my wife's maiden name was Eleni Melpomeni Coutchavlis, born of Greek parents in Boston, whose the family doctor was none other than Dr. Dukakis, the father of the Governor. He saved my wife's life by performing an appendectomy. When I joined the Foreign Service, we went to Dr. Dukakis for inoculations and medical consultations. I just find this whole thing ironic. I've even worked with Kitty Dukakis, the wife of Governor Dukakis, as Ambassador to Thailand where I addressed refugee problems which were so important to her. However, if it's your decision, the best I can say is that I'm going to study Hebrew, and thank you very much."

So I started a crash course in Hebrew. I reported my discussion with Senator Pell to Max Kampelman, who talked with Secretary Shultz. There were further conversations between Kampelman and the staffers of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In the course of these discussions Max Kampelman passed the word that if the Committee would not give me a hearing, then there was another, possible route, that is, an interim appointment when the Congress recessed prior to the elections. Kampelman told me that the Democrats on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff had said, "You wouldn't dare!" Kampelman

said, speaking on behalf of Shultz: “Just watch us!”

So that's how it went. I was not given a hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Congress recessed, and President Reagan gave me an interim appointment as Ambassador to Israel. This meant that I received just about the same exequatur [commission] which all Ambassadors receive, to hang up on the wall of my office. However, if you looked at the commission carefully, it stated that the appointment was for this session of Congress. That's how it came about.

Now, many years later, I read in the papers about Republicans yowling about the fact that President Clinton was making recess appointments against the will of the Congress, or that there are hangups and delays on judgeships and the play between Senator Jesse Helms [Republican, North Carolina] and the White House on certain, Ambassadorial appointments. Again, this process remains ironic. This was an example of how a professional, senior officer can get unwittingly caught in the gears of a domestic, political hassle.

Q: While this was going on, were you approached by AIPAC [American Israel Political Action Committee] or other groups in Israel?

BROWN: Yes. The word spreads like wildfire on anything to do with Israel. Probably before even I knew of my interim appointment, AIPAC and other Israeli interest groups knew that I was a prospective candidate as Ambassador to Israel in the first instance and that I had received a call from President Reagan on this appointment. So I began to get all kinds of invitations and approaches in this regard, while I was assiduously trying to learn Hebrew, a very difficult language for a man of my age at the time. However, I went at it as best I could, having learned to speak, read, and write a number of other languages. Knowing at least a modicum of Hebrew was to prove very, very useful to me.

Q: Who was our Ambassador who preceded you?

BROWN: Our Ambassador was Tom Pickering, a distinguished diplomat.

Q: Had he left Tel Aviv?

BROWN: No. However, since Secretary Shultz had obtained the interim appointment as Ambassador to Israel for me, he wanted me to go to Tel Aviv as soon as possible. This resulted in one of those situations which frequently happens where the incumbent Ambassador, having served with distinction for a certain period doesn't feel in any hurry to leave the post. The incoming Ambassador wants to get to his post as soon as possible. So, let us say, there was a certain amount of jockeying back and forth.

Finally, Ambassador Pickering and his wife left Tel Aviv. Our paths crossed briefly at the airport in Paris. They were leaving for the United States, and we were on our way to Tel Aviv. We had five or 10 minutes of conversation before we separated.

In that regard I think that it's useful to pause a bit and reflect on the situation as it was in late 1988. Secretary of State Shultz had the courage to engage on a very delicate, contentious initiative by a lame duck [outgoing] administration. That is, he made an offer to Yasser Arafat [of the PLO, the Palestine Liberation Organization] and his supporters. Shultz said that, notwithstanding the by then well-established restraints on official, U.S.-PLO contacts, if Arafat could bring himself to say the necessary words and make the necessary commitment to a peaceful solution with the State of Israel and an end to "terror," we would open a dialogue with the PLO.

You may remember from my previous remarks that people could, and did, get into real trouble on this issue. For example, Andrew Young, Ambassador to the UN in the Carter administration, lost his job due to what turned out to be an unauthorized meeting with a PLO representative in New York. I believe that Ambassador Young initially hid the fact that he had met with the PLO representative. When it was discovered that, in fact, he had met with the PLO representative, he lost his job as Ambassador to the UN. President Carter was very upset at this incident because Ambassador Young was a very valuable asset to Carter, both internationally and domestically. There were those who had long argued for opening a dialogue with the PLO, but President Reagan and Secretary Shultz had initially resisted this. Then they came to the point that, if the necessary conditions were met, such a meeting could be held. That is, if Arafat would renounce terror and support a peaceful solution then we would open, under very special limitations, a dialogue. That dialogue would run through Ambassador Robert Pelletreau in Tunis and a PLO representative of Arafat.

I think that it is also worthwhile to remember how Arafat got to Tunis. Over the years Arafat had carried out many terrorist operations against Israel, some of which affected us. In 1970 he attempted to overthrow King Hussein of Jordan by a coup d'etat. This was the so-called incident of Black September, 1970, which was put down by King Hussein, and Arafat and his supporters were driven from Jordan with heavy losses and took refuge in Lebanon. He then burrowed into Lebanon, moving into the gaps between the Phalange, the Christians, the Syrians, the Shiite Muslims, and the Sunni Muslims. He established in Lebanon what became a sort of mini state on the Israeli-Lebanese border. He then launched paramilitary operations against Israel, which I witnessed as DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] in the American Embassy in Tel Aviv, in the 1979-1982 period.

This PLO activity initially escalated to the point where the Israelis countered, first with Operation Letani in 1978, in the wake of a particularly serious, Palestinian terrorist operation involving an Israeli bus. Then, later on in my time in Israel, in June, 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon and crushed the PLO. The Israelis surrounded the PLO in Beirut and then bombarded them. Finally, with our intercession, Arafat was allowed to leave Beirut, with his PLO forces, and some of their dependents, under U.S. observation and with the UN involved. He initially left Lebanon and was embraced by Papadopoulos in Greece and then found refuge, not in Damascus, [Syria], not anywhere else nearby, but way over in Tunis. So the PLO had suffered a disastrous setback, notwithstanding its own

attempts to describe it otherwise.

For years Yasser Arafat hung out in Tunis, where in response to certain PLO provocations he also suffered a couple of Israeli counter raids in the process. Some of his senior lieutenants were killed in these Israeli raids. He was pretty isolated and beleaguered over in Tunis. So Arafat had an interest in making some kind of breakthrough. I was not consulted in all of this, although I was Ambassador-Designate to Israel. My views were not sought, and this operation was run out of Secretary Shultz's office. Do you remember such do-gooders as Rita Hauser and others? They themselves operated in this gray zone with Arafat and his representatives, urging him to say the right thing in public. Arafat reached the point of saying part of it, but he couldn't quite say all of it. Shultz said, "No, that's not good enough." I think that it was at some international conference, possibly in Geneva, where Arafat got in front of the TV cameras and finally read the script which we had crafted for him.

Q: He had his own supporters to conciliate.

BROWN: He had his own constituencies to contend with. PLO extremists damned all of this and called for the inevitable armed struggle with Israel and its total eradication. However, Arafat finally made this statement, just as I was going to Israel.

Q: Had the Intifada started at that point?

BROWN: Oh, yes. In fact, the Intifada had been going on for some time. I think that it began at the end of 1987.

Q: You might explain what that was.

BROWN: The Intifada was an uprising in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank areas, by Palestinian youths, natives of Palestine, the local crowd. They insisted on their own uprising and for their own purposes. In retrospect, it appears to have been very largely domestic and local, to the point where it became embarrassing for Arafat. I would say that, from my vantage point, he appeared to relish the thought of the Israelis being embarrassed and the spectacle of an outbreak against Israel. However, he did not relish the thought or image that this series of incidents was domestic in origin and that he was just an outside player.

The Intifada was a very delicate problem for Arafat, and, as with many other, historic examples, it was fraught with danger for him. Look at the uprisings in Eastern Europe and what happened to those who rose against the communist governments after World War II. Then the Soviet Army moved in and crushed these uprisings, and many native communists who had started them went to the wall. It's a very delicate matter to see domestic liberation or freedom fighters rise up, when you're sitting 1,000 miles away, breathing fire and brimstone.

Anyway, the Intifada began. As I said, it was conducted essentially by Palestinian youth, it was domestic in character, blessed, of course, from Arafat in Tunis, but not really run by him. The Israeli response was conducted by a coalition government which rotated between Shimon Peres [Labour Party] and Shamir [Likud Party]. Under that peculiar arrangement, as of 1988 Shamir was the Prime Minister of Israel. The Defense Minister was none other than Yitzhak Rabin. Rabin's response to the Intifada, as the minister responsible for the occupied territories of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, was reportedly: "Break their bones!" The Israeli military, employed a variety of its riot control techniques, including rubber bullets, and resorted to demolition of terrorists houses by tanks and explosives. Hundreds of these Palestinians were interrogated and given quick, administrative trials. They were then incarcerated in security centers. Some were released after a relatively short time and then ran through the same operation again as the Intifada continued.

So the Intifada was proclaimed as a great success for Arafat, but it was an embarrassment, both domestically and internationally for him.

Q: It was played on TV on a daily basis and made the Israelis look like big bullies.

BROWN: Yes. The Israelis, who had played on the Holocaust theme and acted as the misunderstood of the world, found themselves now under the international spotlight. The publication of our own, annual Human Rights Reports, under successive administrations, made Israel increasingly vulnerable to U.S. criticism. So that was the scene in Israel as I took over my duties as Ambassador.

Now, just before I left for Israel, I had held a whole series of meetings with American Jewish leaders, including AIPAC, B'nai B'rith, the Zionist Organizations of America, the Anti-Defamation League under Abe Foxman, and some other groups which were quieter but still very important, including representatives of the ultra-orthodox Jews.

I met with a significant, ultra-orthodox Jewish leader in his investment office in New York. I had a very interesting conversation with him, which covered not only the views of the ultra-orthodox Jews on Israel but on his group's operations in the Soviet Union as well. For years they had been running ultra-orthodox networks in the Soviet Union, in their determination to keep that aspect of the Jewish faith alive there. It was a sophisticated operation. It involved the distribution of their literature, their own agents, and their own channels. Altogether, it was fascinating.

Of course, we also watched the development of the Sharansky case. You may recall that I had been involved in the Sharansky case years previously in Moscow. In Moscow we dealt with the Sharansky case, the "dissentniks," and the "refuseniks." These people met with Secretary Shultz in April, 1987, in Moscow. I was with Shultz when he met with them in Spasso House, the American Ambassador's residence in Moscow, for a Passover or Seder meal. Shultz put on a yarmulke, but had to excuse himself later on, because Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze called him by phone. I stayed with the others. We

had a kosher Passover meal in the American Ambassador's residence, with all of these refuseniks and dissentniks, who were later given permission to leave the Soviet Union and go to Israel. A new process was under way. The mood was changing under Soviet President Gorbachev. We didn't yet have the huge influx of these people in Israel, but the way was being prepared for what developed into a massive exodus as the Soviet Union fell apart. A very fascinating period opened there. So that was the background as I went to Israel as American Ambassador.

I arrived in Israel, having been appointed by a lame duck President Reagan. (End of tape)

I went to Israel just as George Bush had been elected President of the United States and was waiting to be sworn into office. Present at my swearing in at the Department of State was James Baker, the prospective Secretary of State. In a surprise move, Secretary Shultz brought Baker into his office, as I was preparing to go out and be sworn in. Baker, wearing his Marine Corps tie, looked at my Marine Corps tie and said, "I don't like the school you went to [Harvard University], but I sure like your tie."

I had met extensively with Dennis Ross, who was to become a key negotiator on Middle Eastern questions. I met President-Elect Bush in the Vice Presidential office through Dennis Ross. I remember that President-Elect Bush asked Dennis Ross: "Dennis, are you going to stay with us here?" Dennis said, "Well, sir, I think that the better course would be to move over to the Department of State and work from there." Bush said, "All right, good luck to you." Bush also wished me well. I'd also met with Larry Eagleburger, who was then President of Kissinger Associates up in New York and was being tapped to be Deputy Secretary of State. When we met, one on one, in Larry's office, it hadn't been officially confirmed, but it was known that this was a done deal. Larry said, "Bill, it's going to be a different ball game. I know these guys, and you're going to see changes made."

I met with retired General Scowcroft, who was an associate of Eagleburger in Kissinger Associates, down here in the Washington office. I met with him one evening, and it certainly reinforced Eagleburger's comments about prospective changes. Scowcroft was still in the private sector at the time. However, having met and heard what Larry Eagleburger said and then hearing what Scowcroft said, I came to realize that we were in for a distinctly, shall I say, "firmer" attitude toward the Israel in general and the Shamir Government in particular.

Knowing all of this, I realized that I was in for quite a challenge as Ambassador to Israel. All of these cross currents were going to develop and sharpen, if you will, in the new administration.

Q: Did you sense, from your discussions with President-Elect Bush, that there would be a colder eye looking at Israel? Ronald Reagan had come out of the Hollywood atmosphere, but...

BROWN: I didn't sense it immediately, during that brief meeting with Dennis Ross and Bush in the Vice President's office. Incidentally, in the middle of the conversation, Bush and we rushed over to the White House Lawn because President and Mrs. Reagan were taking off in a helicopter and going someplace. The atmosphere was very jovial and convivial. They wished me luck. So I didn't get that impression in that particular meeting, but I certainly got it after Bush became the President of the United States.

So off I went to Israel in these very special circumstances. One could say that the circumstances affecting any new American Ambassador to Israel are special. When I arrived in Tel Aviv at the end of 1988, I was just delighted. You could say that this was my highest career aspiration. I knew that it was going to be tough, but perhaps I didn't realize fully how tough it was to become.

I paid my call on the President of Israel, Chaim Herzog, an old warrior who had an Irish accent, having been born in Ireland. He was the son of the Chief Rabbi, first of Belfast and later of Dublin. Later, his father became the first Chief Rabbi of Palestine and of Israel. President Herzog himself had served in Military Intelligence in the British Army during World War II. Then he became the head of Israeli Military Intelligence and was a noted military historian, having published several books on the Arab-Israeli conflicts. He was a gracious gentleman and I had a very nice meeting with him.

Then I began my calls on the then leaders of the Shamir Government, starting with Prime Minister Shamir, an old, hard line member of the Likud Party. Prior to that the Likud Party had been known as the Herut Party. Before that Shamir had been the head of the "Lehi Stern," or "The Stern Gang," as the British called it, advocating violent struggle for independence from 1946 to 1948. He was a tough man, given to very few words, especially in conversation with an American Ambassador. He would listen very carefully and was very polite. He was unyielding and unbending in his attitude on the basic problem of the Palestinians, but he was willing to listen.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance was Shimon Peres, the leader of the Labour Party. He served alternately with Shamir as Prime Minister, when Likud and Labour had come out of the previous election virtually tied in terms of the number of seats which they held. They agreed to form a National Union Government, with the position of Prime Minister rotating between Peres and Shamir. This was already in effect, and Shimon Peres had already served as Prime Minister for two years, prior to my arrival in Israel. Shamir had previously done his time as Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister and was now the Prime Minister.

Yitzhak Rabin was the Defense Minister. He was a tough figure, and I talked to him many times about the Intifada. The Foreign Minister when I arrived in Israel was Moshe Arens, a fascinating gentleman, a survivor of the Holocaust and an immigrant to the United States at about age 11 or 13, or something like that. He had come up in the world as an aeronautical engineer and was a graduate of MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] and California Technical Institute. He had also served in the U.S. Army. He was a

younger member of the Likud Party who had immigrated to Israel with his American accent and outlook, if you will, in the very late 1940s or early 1950s. He had come up in Likud Party politics and had been appointed Ambassador to the United States in 1982, when I was DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] at the American Embassy in Tel Aviv. He had chosen a bright, young man named Binyamin Netanyahu as his DCM in the Israeli Embassy in Washington. So I knew him from those days.

When I arrived in Tel Aviv, I was without instructions. It was expected that I would wait until the new administration came in. However, I knew that what we were coming up against was a revival of the land for peace approach. This had worked with Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat in dealing with the Sinai, but applying this principle to the West Bank and Gaza in dealing with a Likud government was quite a different matter. There was this problem with the Intifada, there was an unresolved series of issues, especially the Israeli occupied Golan Heights, outstanding with President Hafiz Assad of Syria, while the Israelis were still in Lebanon. It was quite obvious that the new American Government would come up with a variant of the land for peace concept. The question was whether we could persuade a coalition government headed by Prime Minister Shamir, with Foreign Minister Arens and other, tough, Likud Party members in it, to accept this approach.

So I went separately to Prime Minister Shamir and some of his colleagues in the cabinet and, frankly and honestly, said to them: "I am without instructions from my Government. However, what I foresee is an opportunity along the lines of 'land for peace.' I hope that you and your colleagues will think about this, because I wouldn't be surprised to see this coming." I got the standard answer from Prime Minister Shamir, which was polite but, in essence, meant: "We've already made concessions to the Arabs. We've already given up 90 percent of what we took in the 1967 War."

Q: He was mainly referring to the Sinai.

BROWN: The Sinai, yes. Lock, stock, and barrel. He added that I was talking about territories, which, in his view, were of historic, religious significance and of vital security interest as well. He said that there was a way to deal with the Palestinians and he had no desire to act as conqueror. If the Palestinians wished to reach an accommodation with Israel, there was a way for them, even under the Camp David Agreement, to run more of their affairs, peacefully. However, Shamir saw no necessity to give up land to them. He was well aware of my arguments and U.S. positions, but he simply do not see it that way. The same was true as far as Syria and the Golan Heights are concerned. Much blood had been shed there. From the positions the Syrians held they dominated Galilee and approaches to vital Israeli centers. President Assad was a brutal dictator, as shown by what he had done to his own people and to Lebanon. Shamir did not see any need to give up the Golan Heights, a vital piece of land, to Assad. Accommodations could be worked out, but Shamir did not see the need to give up this land.

With Shimon Peres I used a different approach. On the one hand, he was Deputy Prime

Minister but he had distinctly different views from those of Shamir, to put it mildly. He had tried, with King Hussein of Jordan and Ambassador Tom Pickering, my predecessor, to work out a Jordanian deal. It had been discovered that he was trying to negotiate this, and that had caused quite a flap. There was also residual criticism of the way the U.S. had handled the Jordanian option in 1982.

You may recall that a land for peace approach had been presented by President Reagan and Secretary of State Shultz in September, 1982, just as I left Israel. So these possibilities had already been tried out, in one form or another. However, now there was a new wrinkle. For the first time there was to be an opening for a U.S.-PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] dialogue in Tunis. In fact, the dialogue began, not with Yasser Arafat, but with one of Arafat's lieutenants. This was a very disturbing development for the Shamir Government in Israel, so I had to cope with that.

In my discussions with the Shamir Government I was speaking truthfully and honestly, but without instructions. I reported on these discussions back to Washington and on the manner by which I had tried to discuss matters with the Israelis. The answer to what I said from the Likud Government was simply, "No."

I returned to Washington for consultations and was ushered in by Dennis Ross to see Jim Baker, the new Secretary of State. I said to Baker: "As I look at the situation, notwithstanding what I heard in response to my initial probes, I believe that there is a chance of making some progress, if this administration really puts its shoulder to the wheel. It would take your efforts, Mr. Secretary, and it would take a presidential stamp to make progress. You can't make progress at a lower level. You will have to spend your time and energy, but I do believe that we are at a moment of opportunity with the new administration. I urge you to push along those lines."

Do you want to take a break here?

Q: I think that this is a good place to do it, so we'll review the last thing you said, about talking to Secretary Baker, when you said that you felt that there was a chance of making progress on an Arab-Israeli settlement. I hope you will discuss the role, as you saw it, of Dennis Ross, and we'll just go on from there.

BROWN: Yes.

Q: Today is August 27, 1999. Bill, let's continue with what you said to Secretary Baker and what Dennis Ross's role was in all of this.

BROWN: When we broke up before, I was describing my arrival in Israel, for the first time as Ambassador.

Q: You were there from when to when?

BROWN: From late 1988 this time through the very beginning of 1992. I retired from the Foreign Service in January, 1992. Like all years in Israel, these were momentous.

I said at the end of my last interview that when I went back to Washington on consultation, although the Israeli Government was headed by Prime Minister Shamir and his tough minded, dominant faction of the Likud Party, I still felt that there could be a breakthrough in the development of the peace process. I said that to Dennis Ross, who had come over to the State Department from the NSC [National Security Council] staff at his own choice. He thought that he could do more to achieve a breakthrough in the peace process under Secretary Baker at the State Department than by just staying on at the NSC, where he had served during the Reagan administration and where he had flourished.

Q: Did I talk to you previously about Dennis Ross, in the context of your relations with him?

BROWN: I knew Dennis only tangentially before. He had, of course, been a key figure in the Washington Near East Policy Institute and was well connected. He was a young, dynamic man with an academic background and a keen interest in Middle East matters.

Q: I was wondering if you would talk about his background, because he was and is an important player in Middle Eastern affairs, and where he seemed to be coming from.

BROWN: At first this remained to be seen. He had a Jewish background. I don't know whether he had studied in Israel, but he had good connections and was a dynamic player. I would say that, in terms of politics, he was middle of the road. His earlier experience happened to have been in the Reagan administration, where he had done well. As I mentioned in a previous interview, I was with him when I paid a brief call on the Vice President and President-Elect George Bush at the White House. On that occasion Bush said to Dennis: "Are you going to stay here in the White House?" Dennis said, "Well, I'd prefer to go over to the Department of State and help Secretary of State Jim Baker in hopes of a breakthrough." Bush said, "Good luck to you!" It was a very instructive conversation. I was aware from that exchange that Dennis had very good credentials with the incoming, Bush administration.

Now, coming back to my arrival in Israel, remember that this was at the end of 1988, in the dying days of the Reagan administration. I mentioned that I had called on Prime Minister Shamir and others on a personal and private basis, stressing that I was not speaking under instructions. The newly-elected Bush administration hadn't yet taken hold. However, I expressed the hope that something meaningful could be developed in terms of land for peace. I was received courteously and graciously by Prime Minister Shamir, but it was quite obvious that we had a long, hard row to hoe, as far as convincing an Israeli Government dominated by the Likud Party that it should give up significant portions of land for peace, in accordance with UN Resolutions 242 and 332. They felt that they had

given up an enormous amount of territory in the Sinai Peninsula. That is, they had given up more than 80 percent and, indeed, almost 90 percent of what they had taken in the previous conflicts with the Arabs. They had given up strategic depth, they had given up oilfields, they had given up a massive military infrastructure which they had built in the Sinai. This was obvious to anyone who looks at a map of that area.

Looking at the Syrian situation, one is struck by the bloody battles which for years had raged in and around the Golan Heights. I was again struck by the dominant aspect of the Golan Heights in any offensive movement against Israel. The Shamir Government was also opposed to ceding territory to a Palestinian entity, such as turning over the Jordan Valley to the Palestinians and opening up the possibility that a future, hostile regime, such as a Jordanian regime which might be taken over by Saddam Hussein [of Iraq]. Such a regime, for instance, might wind up on the doorsteps of Israel. All of this was made quite obvious to me. So in recommending that we move ahead on the peace process, I knew full well that we faced very, very severe challenges in this respect. Nevertheless, Israel had a coalition government, with senior elements of the Labour Party in it. Namely, in this respect, it contained Shimon Peres - who had just stepped down as Prime Minister and who was now Deputy Prime Minister and, concurrently, Finance Minister, the latter a very important job, with patronage and so forth - and Yitzhak Rabin as Minister of Defense. I thought that, if we played this right, we would somehow find leverage develop within the coalition government. I would say that I was received enthusiastically by Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin when I called on them.

Q: When did you arrive in Israel as Ambassador? The Reagan administration was still in office...

BROWN: I arrived in Israel in December, 1988. It was in the dying days of the Reagan administration. Secretary of State Shultz met with Moshe Arens, incoming Israeli Minister of Defense in Washington. I was present when they met again in Paris. I think that they met in January, 1989, just before Bush was inaugurated as President.

The Shamir Government was very unhappy with the American announcement at the end of the Reagan administration of the opening of a dialogue with the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] in Tunis. However, I hadn't been involved in that decision. To the contrary, I hadn't even been briefed or approached on this matter. So I didn't have a cloud over my head in terms of the Israeli view of me in this respect.

Q: Did you have the feeling, at this time, that the Shamir Government was looking at Ronald Reagan as coming from California, which is in the movie business and the Jewish element is very strong there. Reagan was considered a very pro-Israeli person. Now George Bush was coming in as President. He represented the Eastern establishment, which was not so infatuated with Israel.

BROWN: Well, I would put it this way. The Israelis have very good biographic files on everybody prominent on the American scene. So they probably had a far better readout of

past statements, remarks, and off the record and private comments made by George Bush than I did. I had a sort of neutral feeling concerning President-Elect Bush himself but I had it from none other than Larry Eagleburger, who was to become the Deputy Secretary of State and who was very well plugged in, that there would be changes. The Bush administration included people, such as Brent Scowcroft in particular, whose basic approach to Israel was certainly not to fall all over themselves. They were not anti-Semitic or anti-Israeli, but they had a firmer, more measured and cooler approach to Israel, shall we say. That's the way I saw it at the time.

As time went on, I learned more about the views of President Bush and other key figures in the administration. I didn't have a readout of Secretary of State Jim Baker in that regard. The Israelis sure did, but I didn't. He was an ex-Marine officer, of my age group, and had had a very successful law practice. He also had a reputation for being cool, well-prepared, and a good planner. I had nothing that suggested that he was going to be really tough on Israel, or anything like that. That was to come later.

Now, there's one thing that I want to pause on. In the final period of the Reagan administration negotiations had advanced, through my predecessor as Ambassador to Israel, Tom Pickering, on a convoluted agreement on the buildings of the American diplomatic establishment in Israel. For years the Israelis had been pressing, and Jewish lobbies in the United States had also been pressing, to move the American Embassy from Tel Aviv up to Jerusalem. For years U.S. presidential candidates and their supporters had pledged that this would be done.

Q: This was when the Jewish lobbies in the United States were in New York. I was going to say Miami, but I should blame New York.

BROWN: Time and again, when they were elected to office, and facing the realities of the documented U.S. position on the status of Jerusalem, succeeding Presidents had decided that the time was not ripe to move the Embassy to Jerusalem. However, in recent years there had been some movement on this. The Israelis, playing this issue for all that it was worth, had taken things to the point that formal negotiations were held, on the buildings of the American diplomatic establishment in Israel. As I said, this question is rather convoluted, and I won't go into all of the details.

Basically, a deal was worked out, whereby the Israelis would find a site in Jerusalem for our Embassy. It had been more or less negotiated and chosen. It was a site which was just on the western side of the old line between eastern and western Jerusalem. That is, the line that had formerly divided the Jordanians from the Israelis, prior to 1967. So this site was in the western portion of Jerusalem.

There was no particular time table for moving the American Embassy to Jerusalem. The site, at this particular stage, wasn't necessarily to be called the location of the American Embassy in Jerusalem. However, the Israelis, with their skillful approach to the matter, had negotiated us into a position where this site would be called the location of an

American diplomatic facility in Israel. It would be a place where the American Ambassador would do business and so forth. In other words, it wasn't a clear cut statement that the American Embassy was to move to that site in Jerusalem and open up as the American Embassy, but this arrangement represented some movement on this issue.

Meanwhile, the arrangement was that the Israelis would eventually get our building, the old Embassy, in Tel Aviv. As a further possibility, the Israelis would open up other sites in the Tel Aviv area where we might construct a building. So we might go ahead and build something in Jerusalem, and a plot of land was negotiated for this purpose. The Israelis would get our old Embassy in Tel Aviv and the adjacent parking lot for which we had negotiated a lease-purchase option during my previous time as DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission]. This was a rather substantial parking lot which gave us the right to put up a building there. So we had something with which to bargain.

Secretary of State Shultz was responsible for this negotiation. He wanted to cinch it and move ahead. I ended up signing documents as the new Ambassador in Tel Aviv. This culminated the negotiating process which Ambassador Pickering, my predecessor, had started. That background has a relevance, even today. There is a basic document involved in this negotiation, which lays the groundwork for a possible move of the American Embassy to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv.

Q: What about our Embassy in Tel Aviv? Was there a problem with it? You had been in Tel Aviv, and you were saying that you might move to another site. Why would we move?

BROWN: I have to be careful about this, since we are speaking for the record. This is my personal view, Okay? There are many different views on this and related subjects.

Personally speaking, I had reached the view that we should move our Embassy, as an Embassy, to Jerusalem. That certainly was not the mainstream view in the Foreign Service. The issue is complex and highly political. It is loaded in many ways. However, here were a couple of concerns as I saw the matter, apart from my political view that this move should be made from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. In my view the American Embassy in Israel should move to the western side of the city of Jerusalem and handle its business there.

First of all, I don't want to go into detail, but in security terms, the American Embassy in Tel Aviv was, and in my view, remains vulnerable. The setback of the Embassy building in Tel Aviv has been remarkably deficient for years. The setback is the technical term for how far you setback the building from the entrance to the property on which it is located. I don't know what the current standard setback is now, perhaps 150 feet, or something like that. Perhaps the standard setback now is 200 feet, bearing in mind the bombing of the Embassy in Beirut and so forth. However, the setback in Tel Aviv is the width of a sidewalk. There are a couple of concrete barriers between the external wall of the Embassy building and the sidewalk, but a truck well loaded with explosives could easily

approach and breach the wall of the Embassy. In short, the Embassy building in Tel Aviv is vulnerable.

There is a parking lot adjacent to the Embassy in Tel Aviv. There are vehicle parking areas all around the Embassy building. The building itself adjoins a bar in a rather seedy district of Tel Aviv. It used to be a red light district, in fact. Next to this bar is another structure. Thus, the location of the Embassy makes it vulnerable to attack in several respects.

Secondly, the Embassy building in Tel Aviv was initially started in the 1950s as a second or third rate hotel. It was not originally constructed as an Embassy. It was purchased in the middle of the construction period. The Embassy building faces the Mediterranean Sea on one side, and the salt in the composition of the concrete construction material produced deterioration of the building over time. One answer to this problem is that we could reconstruct the building, piece by piece. Over the years, as pieces fell off the structure, bits of patchwork were added here and there. Engineers were now telling us: "Hey, this is a serious situation. It's not going to get better. It's going to get worse." The building was crowded because the Embassy staff, over the years, had grown.

As a sailor, I very much enjoyed the building since it was close to the sea. However, we were also vulnerable to terrorist attack from the sea. Indeed, later on in my tenure in Tel Aviv such an attack was launched against Tel Aviv from the sea side. One of the targets of this attack was clearly the American Embassy. This attack was launched by an extremist faction of the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization]. This attack was aided by one of the Navy ships of Colonel Qadhafi of Libya. I'll get to that later on.

I found nothing sacred about the location of the Embassy. Of course, it was downtown. It was close to the Israeli Ministry of Defense, which was a plus. However, access to the Embassy is hindered by traffic involving people who wish to arrange for consular services. There are great streams of people lined up in front of the Embassy's consular section during working hours. That also created another security problem. The Embassy in Tel Aviv was past its time as a functioning Embassy building. Having said that, I would admit that we could function there. It wasn't dangerous to health, apart from the possibility of a terrorist attack.

There was and still is another, major factor. Over the years the U.S. and other foreign governments sternly warned the Israelis not to move any of their government ministries up to Jerusalem. You'll find discussion of that issue in your interviews, when you look back at the old days. The Israelis ignored this advice and, piece by piece, moved their government ministries up to Jerusalem. That meant, for the American Embassy, that more and more of our official business inexorably moved up to Jerusalem. This was handled by having the Ambassador, the DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission], and other officers of the Embassy, both senior and junior officers, travel up the hill to Jerusalem. With the increasing traffic congestion, this trip from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem often took a minimum of one hour and 15 minutes, to an hour and a half, or, under the worst conditions, two

hours. Up and down, up and down we went. Let me tell you, this kind of travel is wearing and time consuming. It consumes personnel, vehicles, gasoline, and time.

Especially for an Ambassador and a DCM. I can remember when I was DCM under Ambassador Sam Lewis. It was extremely taxing to go up to Jerusalem, do business at night, come down to Tel Aviv, call in secretaries, dictate cables and other correspondence, and get cables out, because the more important cables have to go out right away. So this process was time consuming and physically wearing.

As I looked further into this process in 1989, I began considering various sites for a new Embassy building. The Israelis would offer us sites in the Tel Aviv area and then withdraw the offers. The objection to one of these sites was that it was too close to the Israeli Mossad [Israeli intelligence organization], or too close to this or that sensitive, security area.

Q: You seem to be saying that the Israelis really didn't want to give us anything.

BROWN: Right. They wanted us to move the Embassy to Jerusalem. However, we had a negotiated deal, and they had to go through the motions, at least, of offering us a decent site in the Tel Aviv area.

Then you got into the predictable Foreign Service controversy about where the American Embassy should be. I don't care where you are, this issue always comes up. I've mentioned my experience in Moscow and elsewhere. It is a Foreign Service syndrome that the American Embassy should be downtown, in the center of town, since the action is symbolically there. Over the years, not only as a result of my experience in Moscow, I had developed a contrary view. That is, you can take the American Embassy and put it in the outskirts of the capital city. In fact, in a small country you can move it just about anywhere you want. Those who want Embassy services, particularly the applicants for consular services, businessmen, and others, will come to you wherever the Embassy is located. They will adjust. There is case after case where an American Embassy, which was originally on the outskirts of the capital city, ended up in the center of the urban mass.

Q: That was the story with the American Embassy in Athens. At one time it was way out in the boondocks. By the time I got to Athens it was not so far out, and now it is virtually in the center of Athens.

BROWN: So, compared with other members of my staff, I was amenable to looking at the outskirts of the city, because of my sense of history and of the way the system works. However, there were those on my staff who understandably said, "Well, if we're going to stay in the area, why not stay where we are?" Or some said, "Goodness, this site that the Israelis are offering us is really shabby, out in some wheat field." However, I was looking at various possibilities very seriously.

Some of the sites offered us were, shall we say, rather trashy. I remember saying to Eli Rubenstein, who was a key player in all of this, as Cabinet Secretary under Prime Minister Shamir. Now Eli is Attorney General of Israel. Anyhow, on one occasion he offered us a site in a town near Tel Aviv. My staff universally turned their noses up at it. I didn't necessarily turn up my nose at it, but in jest I said to him: "Eli, as you know, I'm studying Hebrew, and I'm looking at this site, which you are really pushing. I wonder. How do you say dump in Hebrew?" [Laughter] I meant a place where you dump trash and so forth. Anyway, that effort at that time to find another site for the Embassy in essence came to nothing.

A great deal of the effort to find another site had to do with the Israeli security establishment. There were times when I would go to the Defense Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, and talk to him alone. I would say, "Come on, your people offered us this (or that) site and then withdrew the offer." We went through that process several times. One had to be very diplomatic in these matters because of technical security considerations on both sides which were unmentioned but which were obviously in people's minds.

Q: We're talking now about eavesdropping.

BROWN: Well, you said it. [Laughter]

Q: This was the name of the game all over. The Israelis, of course, wouldn't eavesdrop on the Americans, and the Americans wouldn't eavesdrop on the Israelis.

BROWN: Senior professional people on both sides were concerned about these security considerations.

Q: We're spending a lot of time on real estate, but I think that it's important. This is something you have to consider. After all, Hillary Rodham Clinton is running for the Senate in New York, and we're talking about putting an Embassy up in Jerusalem, which is not surprising.

Anyway, what were you thinking about at the time in terms of the problems of putting our Embassy in Jerusalem? Why not put the Embassy in a place near or next to Jerusalem, but not in Jerusalem?

BROWN: Israel is such a small country that, speaking personally and in a technical, administrative sense, I think that we could have done so. The Embassy could have been on the road between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, provided, and you have to be sensitive in this respect, that it wasn't in the Occupied Territories. The Israelis had eliminated the signs which showed where the Occupied Territories began and ended. You know, the old Green Line and so forth.

Q: You could have put the Embassy in a place where everyone could say that this is Israeli territory. You could have said that it was placed there for security reasons.

BROWN: Except that in practical terms, Stuart, once you start down that road, then there are lobbies and various interest groups which would say, "Well, if you vacate that building in Tel Aviv, why not go all the way," and the natural destination would be Jerusalem.

Now, at the time, as I said, this search for another site didn't go anywhere. We'll come back to this subject later on, because I got heavily involved in another version of this search. However, there is one other element here, and that is, apart from the well-known views of the Israelis, the well-known views of Jewish lobbies in the United States, and the well-known views of sympathetic people who are running for office in the United States or were sympathetic to this view. There is another aspect.

From the peace process negotiating viewpoint, there is a strong feeling still held in certain quarters that this move of the Embassy, if it takes place, should be saved until the end of the peace process. That is, it is a sort of pawn or trump. This would be, in this view, a last, final gesture which, if handled the right way, would advance our causes. By this it is usually meant that this would be useful to push the Israelis over the top. In a tough negotiating situation, you might say, "Okay, if you will do this, this, and this, all of which, we realize, is very tough for you, then we'll move the Embassy. Until then," the argument goes, "We should hold off such a move."

I developed a different view, a view that with the passage of time this question no longer had the importance it had once had, I thought that we should not, how shall I put it, hold such a question hostage to anything. In my mind there would always be at least 111 different reasons from the Arab side why we can never do this. Never, and I'm not joking. There will always be those who fiercely oppose moving the Embassy to Jerusalem and will view this as caving in to the Israelis. I don't believe that an issue of this importance should be held hostage to other factors.

Now, I would like to review my dealings with the Israeli National Coalition Government headed by Prime Minister Shamir. Shimon Peres was the Deputy Prime Minister and former Prime Minister. Moshe Arens was the Foreign Minister, and Yitzhak Rabin was the Defense Minister. The Intifada [Arab uprising] was going on and causing damage to the Israeli image. I had private talks with important Israelis, people whose names you wouldn't necessarily recognize, but men who were former generals or senior security officials. Among these I found that a significant number had sons in the military. These sons were also senior, very tough, battle hardened commanders with great reputations. They were telling their fathers, who were veterans themselves: "What am I doing down in Gaza, commanding troops who are shooting these Palestinian kids with rubber bullets because they're throwing rocks and bricks at us? Who cares about Gaza? Gaza is a miserable, overpopulated, totally underresourced quagmire. What's so important about Gaza in security terms?"

So I sensed that there was a side of the Israeli psyche that was very disturbed about all of

this because the Israelis were now so strong that they didn't have to worry about the Palestinians as a major security threat. As an irritant, yes. As something which was damaging their national and domestic, internal image and psyche, yes. However, there was no contest as far as the Palestinians or other Arab countries taking on the Israeli military establishment was concerned. In conventional warfare terms, Israel was capable of defeating any Arab neighbor at the time and, probably, any combination of immediate neighbors such as Syria, Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon. The Israeli military establishment was a well proven, highly effective force, notwithstanding its deficiencies, of which there were many.

I was finding more indications of concern about the future, particularly on the Labour Party side of the National Coalition Government. We were getting this sort of rumbling.

Q: This was a different feeling that you had when you were DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] in...

BROWN: When I was DCM in 1979-1982 there was no Intifada.

Q: So you were finding a different...

BROWN: This was a different ball game. With communications, TV, the development of human rights consciousness, and the annual U.S. Human Rights Reports, all of this was increasingly important. It had to be dealt with. I had to make demarches to the Israeli Government, which I did. I usually made them to Yitzhak Rabin, the Defense Minister, because he was responsible for the situation in the Occupied Territories. Essentially, everything that went on in the territories fell under the Minister of Defense, Yitzhak Rabin. When the Intifada broke out, he is reliably reported to have said to his commanders: "Break their bones."

Now, when I went to see Rabin on such matters, he was, as always, courteous and polite and received me well. However, I couldn't get very far with him, or, indeed, with any Israeli like him. I would raise the matter of the shootings of Palestinians. The Israelis had carefully read the Human Rights reports and had developed counter arguments. We would quote the Geneva Convention and say that Israel, as the Occupying Power, ought not to be shooting at civilians. They would quote the Geneva Convention or other things back to us and say, "We are working under rules inherited from the British. By the way, Ambassador, if you are so exercised about the rules of engagement, under what circumstances would you raise your rifle and fire your rubber bullet against a mass of young people who are showering you with bricks, projectiles, and so forth? Have you ever managed to get the rules of engagement of your the British, in Northern Ireland? You won't get them. If you were to get them, you would find that they are rather gruesome, by comparison to what we do."

I would say that this business of taking tanks and bulldozers and knocking down the house of the family of a suspected member of the Intifada because he threw a brick or did

something similar, is just not done nowadays. Rabin would say, "Oh, no? Would you prefer that I instituted hanging, which is perfectly legal for the occupying power under the Geneva Convention, after due trial and processing?" So these arguments would go on and on. The Israelis knew the script, and I knew the script. However, I had to lodge these protests.

Q: Well, but since you frequently went in to see Israeli Government ministers to discuss these matters and reports of incidents of this kind were on TV almost every day, did the Israelis seem to realize that we were watching what was happening in Gaza and on the West Bank? People back home in the U.S. were saying: "These Israelis are on a losing streak." Did they understand this?

BROWN: The Israelis studied American public opinion very carefully. There was instant reporting from the Israeli Embassy in Washington and from their Consulates elsewhere in the U.S., in addition to telephonic conversations and backchannel reporting. Oh, yes, the Israelis covered us better than we cover ourselves! So this was a disturbing development to them.

One could sense concern, particularly with a minority party such as Peace Now, Shulamit Alloni's group, and others. Some were adamantly, openly opposed to Israeli suppression of the Intifada, and their voices were increasingly heard. Naturally, in the Labour Party group, there were hardliners, but these matters were the focus of increasing, internal concern. When you talk about Israel, you're talking about a country where mothers are really, genuinely concerned about their 17 and 18 year old sons. They know that their boys are stationed down in some Palestinian village, where they may be hit on the head by a brick. There were casualties in the counter-Intifada operations. People wondered what purpose all of this served. I had many, many conversations with ordinary Israelis on this. However, the concerns expressed by ordinary Israelis didn't seem to have any result. The majority of Israelis supported the government's policy, albeit with increasing concern.

The second factor that was really grating the Bush administration was the ongoing development of Israeli settlements on the West Bank and around Jerusalem. Let me pause a second here and refer to the interviews which you had with Ambassador Sam Lewis, covering seven or eight years of his tenure as American Ambassador to Israel (1977-1985). There are also supplementary comments by others, in this regard.

Way back, during Labour Party dominated governments, they faced the phenomenon of hard line, zealous groups. These groups particularly considered the West Bank area sacred, Jewish ground. They believed that this was documented in the Bible, documented by Jewish cemeteries, by the remains of ancient Jewish synagogues and manifold, other, anthropological data. They were determined that they were going to go back and reestablish a Jewish presence in what Westerners called the "Occupied Territories." The Israelis call the West Bank "Judea and Samaria." Gaza is in the Occupied Territories but it has never had the same pull on Israeli heartstrings as the West Bank.

These zealous groups are not necessarily ultra-religious in orientation, but they represent a combination of Zionist and religious groups which are determined to reestablish a permanent presence, particularly in Judea and Samaria, but also in Gaza. The expression they used was that they wanted to reestablish facts on the ground.

Q: Would the term Zionist, in your definition, refer to a religious group?

BROWN: No. You have to be careful there. The Zionists can be secular, religious, or mixed secular and religious. The term is used very loosely. In general, "Zionist" means someone who is dedicated to the proposition that there is a land of Israel and that it should be a Jewish state. At this point you notice some differences between the various Jewish groups. Among the Zionists there are some who hold the view that they need to reestablish a Jewish presence in the Occupied Territories. This certainly was the viewpoint of the Likud Party and of its predecessor, the Herut, which was the hard core of the Likud. Going back to the views of Jabotinsky [founder of the modern revisionist Zionist movement], the revisionist Zionists considered that they were entitled to hold both sides of the Jordan River in modern Palestine. These people take the view that the British behaved disgracefully in 1921 by carving up the old Palestine Mandate and removing from it what the British called "Trans-Jordan." This is what we now call simply "Jordan." The British earmarked "Trans-Jordan" and said that that was an Arab entity under the Amir Abdullah. In other words, no Jewish settlement was allowed. The rest of Palestine was to be a combination of Arab and Jewish. The Jabotinsky school of thought clearly rejected that proposition.

Coming down to the modern period, the "settlement movement," as we currently use the term, began under the Israeli Labour Party Governments. The settlements consisted of isolated groups of Jews who chose such places as the high ground often overlooking an Arab town or city. Often these areas were totally unoccupied and were, in fact, bare hillsides. However, they had some religious, or some religio-political significance to the settlers. They dug into these places. In a more extreme case, they moved into hotel space in Hebron, nominally as tourists. Then they stayed in a hotel and turned it into an armed camp downtown Hebron. This was an "in your face, here we are, and what are you going to do about it," armed presence.

One has to remember that this process began when a rather weak, Israeli Labour-dominated coalition government, led by then Prime Minister Rabin, accommodated itself to this situation, somewhat reluctantly accepting the new settlements. It was on the basis of such new successful settlements that the Movement grew and grew.

Now, when in 1977 Menachem Begin became Prime Minister and Ariel Sharon arrived on the scene, this process really took off. By the time I came back to Israel at the end of 1988, these settlements had mushroomed so that they had become large, well-established communities. They were bedroom communities for commuters to Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. They were advertised as having advantageous mortgage rates, subsidized by

the Israeli Government, with a network of highways and other infrastructure in and around them. This was really serious, and it was constantly expanding.

Q: Was American money involved in these construction projects?

BROWN: No U.S. Government money could be identified in these projects. The U.S. Government is dead against this. However, you run into the old problem that money is fungible [can be transferred from one account to another]. The United States Government gives \$3.0 billion annually in easily identifiable aid to the Government of Israel, of which \$1.8 and \$1.2 billion is for military and civilian aid, and I forget which segment is which. So \$3.0 billion in aid is annually appropriated for Israel after debate by Congress, in a bill which is passed and then signed by the President. Furthermore, there are additional amounts of aid for other purposes. There are those who argue that this U.S. aid to Israel frees up Israeli money to be spent on the settlements. Periodically, we would ask for an accounting of these funds. Meanwhile, I made demarches at the Foreign Ministry about the new settlements.

At times I made demarches to the Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, whose facial expression and demeanor told me that he was not at all happy with this situation. However, he had other and very important things to do. Rabin would say that some damned woman in the Israeli Ministry of the Interior approved this or that project, unbeknownst to him, and, well, this sort of thing happens. He made it clear that he was not happy with this situation, but he was not going to fall on his sword over this issue. Neither, by the way, was anybody else in the Labour Government, except a tiny group of peaceniks who said, "This is just creating further problems that are going to come back to haunt us later on." Moreover, over time, some people began to say, "Wait a minute. Why are such large subsidies going to the Occupied Territories when that money ought to be spent in my poor, backward, town of Moroccan Jews within Israel proper? These settlements are siphoning off money that I could be getting for my work here."

Q: Was there a certain amount of middle class charity in Israel? I would think that the people who were benefitting from this aid would be better educated...

BROWN: They would be better educated and dedicated. As I said, many of these settlements were bedroom communities where some people with high tech qualifications lived. These people would be prosperous, dynamic, can do, achiever types who moved out there with their wives and kids.

Q: They were being subsidized.

BROWN: They were being heavily subsidized, provided with cheap mortgages on their homes, given schools and other infrastructure, and issued defensive weapons. The Israeli Ministry of Defense was charged with defending these settlements and making sure that they had proper barbed wire barriers and were monitored and patrolled. It was a rapidly growing irritant in the view of the new Bush administration. As a result, as I

accompanied, say, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, or the Defense Minister on calls in the United States in the Oval Office at the White House, I saw the President of the United States sooner or later raising this subject. The Israeli visitors, for their part, were sidestepping his remarks and questions.

There was one particular case where Rabin, as Israeli Defense Minister, had a pretty good meeting with President Bush on other matters, but sidestepped the settlement issue. Then Rabin departed to call on Vice President Dan Quayle. Secretary of State Baker and I were the last of the group leaving the Oval Office, when President Bush beckoned us to come back. Baker and I were alone with the President in the Oval Office. The President was very angry over the settlement issue. He thought that he had had assurances from Prime Minister Shamir that the construction of further settlements was going to end or be significantly reduced, and this had not happened. Settlement construction was continuing.

The President said to us: "I'm not going to put up with this," and he began to pound and slash the air with his fist. He got very agitated. Secretary Baker said, "Mr. President, you don't have a problem with Bill Brown. He's on our side." I tell this story to show you the depth of President Bush's feelings on this subject. He felt that he was being double crossed on the issue of Israeli settlements on the West Bank. However, Prime Minister Shamir didn't feel this way at all.

There was a later visit to the United States by Prime Minister Shamir, which was fascinating in many ways. He came on a regularly scheduled visit, as the head of the Israeli Government. I would like to go off on one, tiny, tangential aspect of this visit.

Q: Go off on as many tangents as you wish, because I think that this relationship between Israel and the United States is so important. We all need to talk about it.

BROWN: Let me mention this one, small glimpse at the Israeli psyche as an element in this connection. Prime Minister Shamir moved into Blair House. A dinner was given at the White House in the evening, preceded by a small meeting upstairs between the President and Shamir. Then they were to go down to the diningroom. Anyway, it was a black tie affair.

I received a phone call from the Israelis because they were disturbed about the fact that Shamir wouldn't go to this dinner wearing a black tie tuxedo rig. Here you have a situation which requires you to be so careful about stereotypes. In the stereotyped view of most Americans, the Labour Party of Israel had the open collar, tieless, sort of proletarian, egalitarian approach. The Likud Party, under Menachem Begin, was more accustomed to wearing white shirts and ties. Now here was Yitzhak Shamir invited to a black tie dinner at the White House. He refused to wear a black tie or to put on a tuxedo. Now the members of Shamir's entourage, especially those who had served in the United States, all had tuxedos with them, but they couldn't wear them. So I was asked to explain and resolve the problem. I said, "Sure, just wear a dark suit with a dark tie, and it will be okay." Back home in Israel, the average Israeli official wouldn't dream of wearing a

tuxedo. In all of my time in Israel I never wore a tuxedo. Most senior Israeli officials had tuxedos for use overseas, but they didn't wear them in Israel.

There was another interesting reflection of this attitude toward formal attire when Moshe Arens was Foreign Minister. He and I were supposed to address a graduating class of American Jewish medical graduates from the Faculty of Medicine at Tel Aviv University. They now had studied there for three or four years and were getting their degrees as Doctors of Medicine. For such an occasion cap and gown were designated, and I had my Harvard Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] crimson gown and my cap all ready to put on. We got to the university president's office, where they had a black gown for Professor Moshe Arens, who was a Ph.D. and a Professor of Aeronautical Engineering in Israel. Arens said, "I'm not going to wear that gown." He would not put on a cap and gown for this ceremony. The university President said, "But this is the way it's done." Arens said, "I don't care. I'm not going to wear that gown." I said, "Well, if that's the case, I'm not going to wear my cap and gown, either." So Moshe Arens and I went out in business suits. This gives you a little glimpse of the peculiarities in Israel as far as public imagery is concerned.

Anyway, President Bush had a meeting with Shamir, at which I was not present. At the last minute the meeting was made highly restricted, with only Prime Minister Shamir and Yosip Ben Aron, then the Director General of the Prime Minister's office; President Bush; and probably Secretary of State Baker attending. I don't know whether Dennis Ross was there or not. They were in the President's office for quite a while. Then came a larger meeting in the Cabinet Room. I could tell, when President Bush came to this larger meeting that, although he was not discourteous, he was obviously unhappy. He gave a general review of the situation, including the remark that, "We have our differences." Shamir, for his part, was correct and gracious, but I could tell that the atmosphere was not good on this occasion, and then it got worse.

In all of this, harking back to my earlier remarks, my assessment was that, nevertheless, as I said to Secretary of State Baker, I thought that it was worth making the effort to advance the peace process. So in 1989 and continuing through 1990 Secretary Baker led an effort to achieve peace between Israel and the Palestinians. In our view, it was based on the concept of land for peace, and all that UN Security Council Resolution 242 entailed. The negotiations began with a meeting between President Bush and Prime Minister Shamir. The more detailed discussions were conducted by Secretary Baker and Moshe Arens. There was a second track, and that was handled by Secretary Baker and Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli Defense Minister. At the same time the growing frustration and unhappiness of Shimon Peres was apparent. So was the rivalry between Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin within the Labour Party.

I was faced with handling many messages and conversations, most of them oral. Peres was predictably all for our of approach and was pushing us to go ahead faster, through him.

Q: What was Peres' position in the Israeli cabinet?

BROWN: He had been Prime Minister and then, under the agreement with Shamir, was rotated back down to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. Moshe Arens was the American-accented, highly articulate and hawkish Foreign Minister in the Likud Government. Shamir was Shamir, which meant that he was usually silent. He would receive you courteously, listen to what you had to say, make some facial expressions, but express minimum remarks. He was noncommittal but certainly showed no signs of budging.

However, the attitude of Rabin is the one I want to focus on. We developed a sense that Rabin was willing to negotiate, really negotiate. Now, this situation was exceedingly delicate. The foreign relations between the U.S. and Israeli Governments, at least on paper, are normally conducted between the State Department and the Israeli Foreign Ministry. However, in fact every Israeli Prime Minister has dominated the foreign relations between the two countries. That is, for the major questions.

Shamir was, a tough, quiet-spoken man. Moshe Arens was a highly articulate, former Ambassador to the United States, former Defense Minister and now Foreign Minister. Arens was willing to take on Secretary of State Jim Baker or anybody else on issues of theory, practice, and implementation of initiatives concerning the Palestinians. He had been through all of this as the former Chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. In his previous role as Ambassador to the United States and as former Defense Minister, he knew the issues backwards and forwards from the viewpoint of a Likudnik. As I said, Rabin was willing to play. This developed to the point that Secretary of State Baker wanted to open a unique, special channel to Rabin. Dennis Ross instructed me to set one up. Indeed, and I think that this is the first time that I have discussed this, I approached Rabin after consultations with Dennis on how to handle this. I had a secure phone at home in a special vault in my residence. I would invite Rabin over for drinks, which he never refused. We would have a glass of this or that, would go upstairs to this special vault, and I would then bring out and key in the secure phone. Having made telephonic contact with Dennis Ross, I would then turn the secure phone over to Rabin, and he and Dennis would conduct a conversation. I didn't involve myself in these conversations. I just kept silent and listened to the proceedings.

A key issue which developed, among others, was whether the Shamir Government would open a dialogue with the Palestinians on our version of a peace process, which meant land for peace. This process had been brokered by the United States. In the longer term this meant that the Palestinians would have more say on the various issues outstanding.

In this context Shamir and Arens immediately began to lay down all kinds of markers [standards]. One of the markers was that the Israelis said that they would never, ever talk with the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization]. They reminded us that we had staunchly supported that Israeli position for many years. They said that nothing should play into the hands of Arafat. Therefore, they did not want to negotiate with the PLO in

any way. They would not negotiate with anybody identified with the PLO. This was an old Israeli line: never deal with the PLO. That was the official position of both the Labour and the Likud parties, since the PLO was regarded by them as a bunch of terrorists.

Shamir also said that they wouldn't deal with Palestinian detainees, that is, people who had been arrested by the Israelis. Well, this involved a hell of a lot of people who were important on the Palestinian scene and who had been picked up and detained, one way or another. Sometimes they had been held for a short time, sometimes they had spent years in Israeli jails. The Shamir wouldn't deal with such people or with anybody openly identified with the PLO. Well, as you often found when you talked with anybody on the Palestinian side, no one was going to deny adherence to and support of the PLO. The Israelis also wouldn't deal with outsiders. That is, Palestinians from outside the area, from the Palestinian diaspora.

So, there were many, negative markers laid down by Shamir and Arens. Meanwhile, here was Rabin, who was discussing something extremely delicate in these unique conversations with Dennis Ross. These conversations were taking place in my residence, using my secure phone. Rabin was saying: "I think that I have a list," and Palestinian names would be mentioned. Dennis Ross, on his side, would say, "Have you thought about so-and-so?" Rabin would say, "Yes. On the other hand, there is a problem there." These were extended conversations. Rabin would sometimes indicate that he thought that he could push it and take it to a new level, including some new names as possible interlocutors.

Periodically, Rabin, like other Israeli Defense Ministers, would use his security establishment to summon Palestinians. The standard approach was that an Israeli military jeep would pull up to the home of a prominent Palestinian. An Israeli colonel, or some such person, would jump out and say: "You are wanted to meet an important Israeli figure. You'll see him tonight." It would turn out that it would be Defense Minister Rabin whom he was meeting. Rabin would then hold forth on Israel's peaceful intentions. He would say that the Palestinians should "get their act together" and stop the Intifada.

So Rabin was doing things on his own, some of which we didn't know about. He was using his own channels internally within Israel to carry out his own kinds of probes. This was a delicate matter. Israeli Foreign Minister Arens believed that he was entitled to know what was going on. The Foreign Minister was a sharp, perceptive, well-connected man who communicated with me, as the American Ambassador, and sometimes directly with Secretary of State James Baker.

I remember one evening when there had been an extended telephonic conversation between Secretary Baker and Moshe Arens. By this time the tension between the two of them on where to go next had reached the point where phone conversations had become somewhat contentious. So I received an instruction, from Dennis Ross, to "go in tonight and see Arens. Here are the points which we want you to make. Review the conversation which Secretary Baker has just had with him [Arens] a few hours ago. Baker wants to be

very sure that Arens understands the position and doesn't get it distorted." I got a lengthy read out from Dennis Ross on what I should say to Arens. By the time I got all of these points straight and made the appointment with Arens, who lived outside of Tel Aviv, it was about 11:00 PM.

Referring to his conversation with Secretary Baker some hours previously, I said that Baker had asked me to review the discussion and emphasize the following points which he had made during the conversation. Then I read these points out. Arens heard me out and said, "That's not exactly the way I remember the conversation. The way I remember the conversation, Secretary Baker made these points and I made the following replies." I was taking notes on all of this. By now it was after midnight. As I said good night to Arens, he said, "I suppose now that you're going over to see Rabin." I said, "That's right, Moshe."

Then I went over to see Rabin under instructions. By now it was well after midnight. I reviewed the points in the Baker-Arens conversation as Dennis Ross had given them to me, as well as the points which I had made to Moshe Arens. Rabin just sat there in his home, soaking it in. I'll tell you that at times in this process I thought that I was dealing with about four different Israeli Governments, day and night. I deliberately have not mentioned others, but I have just mentioned my conversations with these four major participants in the discussions.

One could get, on any given day or night, four different interpretations on what was at issue and what had been said. However, the delicate and extremely sensitive part of it was that we were running a separate dialogue with Rabin, on my secure phone. At a certain point, after I had been involved in many of these conversations, Rabin made it very clear to me that he was reporting to Prime Minister Shamir. He said, "I want you and Washington to know that I'm not playing games here. I am telling Shamir what's going on." Naturally, I would ask, "And what was his response?" Rabin would say, "Well, he just sits there, listens, and sort of nods." In other words, this was typical behavior by Prime Minister Shamir, who usually played things very close to the chest.

Meanwhile, as time went on, Deputy Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres was getting more and more agitated. He probably had at least a whiff of what was going on. He wanted to participate in more of the action in an effort to move the Israeli coalition government to...

Q: But you were not instructed to go to Peres...

BROWN: Well, at times, yes. At times I would be instructed to make general points to Peres. There was one time when Peres was suddenly taken violently ill. He was up in a provincial hospital at Afula. I hurried over there and found the poor man was receiving IV [Intra Venous] treatment. His face was flushed and he appeared to be running a temperature. He was very unhappy that he wasn't the main channel for these discussions with the Americans. He made a remark that I should understand that "these young men in

Washington” were mishandling the situation. He clearly meant that Dennis Ross and his associates ought to be dealing primarily with him.

Remember that Shimon Peres had a strong rivalry with Rabin, in addition to his other problems. As time went on, the Israeli coalition government was under increasing tension internally, on a variety of issues. It became apparent to me that Shimon Peres was maneuvering to bring down the coalition government.

Q: One thing that I would like to comment on. What you're telling me right now is that it sounds as if Moshe Arens was acting something like the British and was being almost too clever by half. He knew so much to counter every argument that, in a way, it was not something that you could deal with. All this is true, but...

BROWN: Wait a minute. Here was Arens, a highly articulate and experienced man. He was the Foreign Minister of the Israeli Government. I was the American Ambassador. Indeed, Secretary Baker had phone conversations with Arens, but Baker was a tough player in his own right, and he and Dennis Ross were not getting back from Arens the kinds of positive material and the wherewithal which they wanted. On the other hand, through the conversations with Rabin, Baker and Ross had the hope that Rabin, given his unique position and his direct entree to Prime Minister Shamir, as well as his reputation as a tough, old warrior, might be able to help them pull something off.

Meanwhile, further settlements were being built or extended, President Bush was very unhappy, and the signs of strain within the Israeli coalition government were growing. It became apparent to me, as I said, that Shimon Peres appears to have decided to bring down the coalition government. He was working to bring it down and to trigger a situation where he could take over and where the Labour Party would become the dominant partner in the government, in one way or another.

Remember that his taking over the government would not necessarily have to be done by a general election. Under the Israeli system of the time, if a Prime Minister resigned, and if you had the necessary votes in the Knesset, you could go to the President of Israel and say, “I can form a government to replace this government, without the need to have automatic elections.” That, apparently, was what Peres had in mind, as time went on.

Again, I would like to refer to Ambassador Sam Lewis in his comments on how an American Ambassador, in delicate times, and they always are delicate times, deals with the Israeli Government. You'll find a great deal of very useful material in Sam Lewis's remarks. I don't want to repeat all of that. The Israeli political process continues, day and night. There are heavy strains on the American Ambassador traveling up and down between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, dealing with different people, not only in the Israeli Government, but with different people in the U.S. Government as well. Remember, too, that Washington has all kinds of players who are going off on their own tangents. So, while in my view the main action was in the hands of Secretary Baker, you have to remember that there were all kinds of other players in Washington who wanted to do their

thing.

For example, Jack Kemp, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, wanted to make a trip to Israel. I became aware that Vice President Dan Quayle also wanted to visit Israel. Neither of these trips took place because Secretary Baker didn't want them to happen. He wanted to control this process and, understandably, he wanted to create an image among the Israelis that, if they wanted to do major business with the United States Government, they should do it with Jim Baker, who represented the President of the United States and who was the all-powerful, Secretary of State. And they had better not forget it.

This situation produced growing tensions and strains which I have outlined here. As an American Ambassador, like my predecessors, I had all kinds of Congressional Delegations and other, high level visitors from the Executive Branch of our government. I had all kinds of leaders of American Jewish organizations coming through. Sometimes there were non-American Jewish groups or individuals coming to see me. With a new government in office, because the Bush administration WAS a new government- (end of tape)

-in its dealings with the Israeli Government. Indeed, the Bush administration was in tough with the Prime Minister's office. In this situation all kinds of unofficial American visitors would arrive to deal with the Israeli leaders. If I was lucky, they would come to see me first. We would discuss things. Sometimes, these visitors came and went, using their own old boy network. In many cases, by a wink and a nod or a brazenly open statement, they would say to their Israeli interlocutors, "I'll tell you the real situation. I'll give you the real dope on what's going on in the White House, and you can deal with me." It was an amazing parade of individuals. You had to stay in touch. You could not sit and simply deal with the Foreign Ministry. You had to be on your toes day and night. You really had to keep your ear to the ground. You had to have good sources back in Washington. The support of the Israeli desk in the Department of State was of paramount importance. You had to have a Director and Deputy Director of Israeli-Arab Affairs who were well plugged in and who would give you information which was never contained in the cables as to what the real play was and what things to watch out for, as well as what visitors to handle as special cases, and so forth.

I'll give you another example. Inside and outside the U.S. Foreign Service I was considered sympathetic to Israel. I had done my stint as DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] and had now been Ambassador for nearly a year. There came a time when our annual economic assessment of the country was due. My Economic Counselor approached me regarding the Embassy analysis of the budget for military and civilian aid to Israel, which amounted to roughly \$3.0 billion. Roughly this level of aid had been provided to Israel for years. Progressively, it had been increased. When I was DCM, it had largely been in the form of loans. By now it had evolved to an outright grant of cash, part of which was used to pay off previous loans, and the rest to purchase military equipment which was needed to upgrade the Israeli military establishment. However, it now was grant aid.

There was a counterpart aid program of nearly \$2.0 billion for Egypt, which the Egyptians very much treasured. It had been made quite clear to the Egyptians that they were getting their \$2.0 billion as a result of living up to the provisions of the Camp David Agreement and being good guys, for instance maintaining an Egyptian Ambassador in Israel. The \$2.0 billion in aid to Egypt was, in my view, far more important to the Egyptians than the \$3.0 billion in grant aid was to Israel, given the state of Egyptian finances, the nature of their economy, and their growing population. Of course, other aid recipients around the world were increasingly vocal as they saw their aid totals go down, while aid to Egypt and Israel was maintained and even increased.

In essence my Economic Counselor was asking me what I thought of all this. I knew, of course, that any important message, no matter how labeled, from the American Embassy in Tel Aviv to the State Department would be widely read and distributed. These messages often went beyond the reaches the addressees for whom they were initially intended.

Q: We're talking about the Israeli League, which means that certain Senators receive messages even before the Secretary of State.

BROWN: Well, let us say that they receive these messages concurrently. With that background, my instructions to my Economic Counselor were: "Tell it the way you see it." I had a feeling that I knew where he was going to come out on this issue. That is, he would discuss all aspects of the Israeli economy, as well as our national objectives. His analysis would include the issue of liberalization of the highly statist Israeli economy, which had evolved over the years, under previous, Labour and Likud Governments.

In Israel the state owned or controlled, directly or indirectly, large segments of the Israeli economy. We felt that it was in the U.S. national interest and indeed that of the Israelis, that Israeli Governments should liberalize and privatize the economy. This certainly described our objectives in terms of the Israeli economy. Among other objectives, we also wanted to sell more of our goods to Israel. Of course, their economy was much smaller than ours. We had a free trade agreement with Israel, under which they could sell just about anything in the United States. There were a few minor exceptions to this. At least, they were minor to us. To the Israelis they were major exceptions, including tomatoes and orange juice. However, we were frustrated in our inability to crack the automotive and other markets in Israel, to which all kinds of restrictions and barriers pertained. We found that a large part of the Israeli economy was controlled by state organizations and featherbedding arrangements between management, which meant state management, and the trade unions, which had worked out all kinds of internal adjustments. They may have internal arguments over these arrangements, but, on the whole, they're happy with them.

Q: You might explain what featherbedding is.

BROWN: Labor and management have a good relationship.

Q: Essentially, it means overstaffing.

BROWN: Yes, overstaffing. Because many of these enterprises were state-owned, labor didn't have to worry about significant job cuts. If there was a threat of job cuts, labor would go out on strike and use the labor movement, the Histadrut, which was controlled by the labor unions, to bring the Israeli Government to a standstill. And even, in some cases, to bring the government down. The Histadrut was traditionally run by Labour Party people.

My Economic Counselor drafted a message...

Q: Who was that, by the way?

BROWN: Clark. I can't recall his first name at the moment. I'll add his name later.

Anyway, the thrust of the draft report which he prepared was that it was time to consider a modest cutback in certain areas. Briefly, Israel didn't need our money as much as it used to need it. The Israeli economy, despite all of its difficulties, had come along very nicely. The Israeli Government had the resources to do things easily which it couldn't do previously. The draft concluded that we ought to consider a gradual cut in the aid level. So I let this go through to Washington as drafted, as a LIMITED OFFICIAL USE [relatively low classification] or LOU report. Perhaps it was classified CONFIDENTIAL...

Q: Which is a relatively low classification.

BROWN: I let this report go in to the Department of State. Wow, was there a reaction! I quickly received a high level, AIPAC [American Israeli Public Affairs Committee] mission, led by Tom Dine, the AIPAC Executive Director. It was obvious that there had been a leak. They knew that I was considered an Ambassador who was sympathetic to Israel. I had good relations with AIPAC. They let me know that they had heard of some such cable, and they couldn't believe that I would have authorized submission of such a report.

I said, in essence: "Gentlemen, at the bottom of that cable is my name. I'm not going to go into the details of this report. I'm not going to discuss a report classified CONFIDENTIAL," and I left it at that. There were AIPAC people who said to me: "We know that it was somebody else in your Embassy who drafted the report." However, I was just noncommittal. I said that I was the Ambassador and I took responsibility for the message.

Little did I realize what was going to happen immediately thereafter. About this time the Soviet Union began to collapse to the point that great numbers of Soviet Jews started to come to Israel. That, in my view, lent an entirely different character to the situation and to

the analysis we had prepared.

At the very end of 1989, larger and larger numbers of Russian Jews began to come to Israel. This quickly produced a crisis. Israel was receiving 50,000-60,000 people a month, coming from Russia, the Ukraine and elsewhere in the USSR. Ben Gurion Airport was transformed.

Q: You're talking about Ben Gurion International Airport.

BROWN: Ben Gurion International Airport was transformed into a major staging area for receiving Jewish immigrants from Russia. They came mostly by air but they also came by ship. It was a real flood of immigrants. The all-embracing term used to describe these people was, "The Russian Jews." That's a generic term which went back to Czarist days, when the vast, Czarist Empire included the Baltic States and Poland as well. These people were all referred to as "Russians." In fact, many of these "Russians" came from the Ukraine. However, they were all labeled "Russians."

They came from the various, Soviet republics, predominantly the Ukraine and Belorussia, all of which were becoming increasingly chaotic. That movement of Russian refugees immediately put an enormous strain on the Israeli Government, and the cry went up for more help. At this stage I found myself in a situation where I was doing everything that I could to help the Israelis cope with hundreds of thousands of immigrants who had to be housed, fed, and taken care of.

Guess who the Minister of Housing was. None other than Ariel Sharon. So I had some very interesting conversations with Sharon. I had dealt with Sharon as Deputy Chief of Mission and as Charge d'Affaires. I had seen him as Minister of Agriculture when he was also Chairman of the Settlements Committee. Later on I had gone head to head with him on Lebanon, when he was Israeli Minister of Defense during the siege of Beirut.

Now we were faced with the attempt to engineer the collapse of the Shamir Government, which didn't work out the way that Shimon Peres had planned it. Peres had engineered a crisis, and a very reluctant Rabin had gone along with it. I remember an evening I spent with Rabin and his wife, Leah Rabin, at the home of a political friend of theirs who was an Orthodox Jew and a key man in their religious contacts. Every major politician in Israel has to work the religious circuit, whether he likes it or not. We were coming to a crunch because in their rivalry and tense relationship, Peres was insisting to Rabin that the time had now come for action.

In this context, Peres insisted that he had the votes of the Moroccan ultra-orthodox party known as "Shas," whose key, young, dynamic director was a well-known figure called Arie Deri. He is well known. The party leader was a Sephardic Jew, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef. The membership of Shas included a lot of people who would normally vote for the Likud Party on secular matters, but voted for Shas on religious issues. Since Shas was an ultra-orthodox, Moroccan based party, it was interested in getting money through its

control of the Ministry of the Interior for its schools, its yeshivas, its social institutions and hospitals, and its educational network, as well as its exemption from military service for its members. This was big politics.

Shas was a member of the coalition government. It was Peres's view that he had worked that circuit well enough that he could engineer a political coup d'etat, as it were, with the result that the Labour Party could take over the Israeli Government. He felt that Labour could form its own government, a national coalition if necessary. Peres assured Rabin that this operation was in the bag.

Rabin was very skeptical and reluctant to go along with this program. However, at this time the situation was finally coming to a crunch, and Mrs. Rabin was livid against Peres and not at all certain that this effort would succeed. They went along with this program, but it failed. Suddenly, there was an Israeli Government without the participation of the Labour Party in it.

Q: This was about when?

BROWN: It happened at the beginning of 1990. It coincided with the beginning of the large influx of "Russian Jews." It was a crisis situation as far as the national effort to accommodate these people was concerned. There was a reshuffling of the government portfolios, because now the Labour Party was out of the coalition. Rabin was out, and his special channel via my secure phone to Secretary of State Jim Baker through Dennis Ross was out. The new Defense Minister was, guess who? Moshe Arens.

The new Foreign Minister was David Levy, a Moroccan born, secular figure who had had only a rudimentary education. He had come up via the Likud Party ladder and now claimed his prize, the prestigious position of Foreign Minister of Israel. He had been heavily involved in settlement development during his previous tenure in the Ministry of Housing and Construction. He was proud of his contributions to the development of settlements outside Jerusalem and beyond. He didn't speak English, which created a language problem for him. I used my broken French and some Hebrew in talking to him.

The head of the U.S. desk in the Foreign Ministry was an old friend of mine. He assured me that David Levy was a man who could and should turn out to be an excellent Foreign Minister. His background in the construction of settlements and his record of making fiery, nationalistic statements notwithstanding, this was a man, I was told, with whom we should be able to work as the new Israeli Foreign Minister. I was assured by my friend that there was a possibility there which, if it were played right, could make David Levy a major player in a breakthrough in the peace process.

In the meantime other things were developing. Tens of thousands of Russian Jews were coming into Israel, day and night. This was an extraordinary development, and Israel needed major help. So a proposal was made for the development of housing loan guarantees. Now Secretary of State Baker was a former Secretary of the Treasury. He

knew his Treasury accounting procedures.

When the United States Government really wants to do something, there are all kinds of things that can be done which, to an ordinary Foreign Service Officer, are a little bizarre. A proposal arose whereby in addition to the \$3.0 billion a year in military and civilian aid, we would come up with hundreds of millions of dollars worth of loan guarantees, whereby the United States Government would guarantee loans entered into on the U.S. securities market. The Government of Israel would offer to make loans, with a U.S. Government guarantee behind them to make it possible for Israel to get the money at a cheap rate of interest. After all, if you're an investor, and the United States Government is going to guarantee your investment, for some institutions that can be attractive. For the Government of Israel it was a good deal, provided that the rate of interest on these bonds was pegged appropriately low.

Here Jim Baker, as the Secretary of State and a former Secretary of the Treasury, knew what he was about. He now had extra leverage on the Israelis. He could say, "Well, now, there are all kinds of concerns in Congress and elsewhere about our budget, which is getting exceedingly tight. Let's see. We could, perhaps, be accommodating if we had the right kind of accommodation from the Israeli Government." However, the Israeli Government had now been reshuffled, and the Labour Party was out.

We were now in 1990, and a new development came along. However, before I leave this subject, I want to refer to coping with the likes of Ariel Sharon in this situation. First of all, we were sympathetic to helping the Government of Israel with its new housing problem. There were thousands of Russian Jewish immigrants pouring into Israel. It was a crisis situation. Sharon was Minister of Housing. He asked me to call on him, so I went over to see him, accompanied by a couple of notetakers. The situation was so critical that he asked me for assistance from FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Agency]. He said that FEMA must have tents and emergency equipment of all kinds. Sharon said, "I need this. Can you get it for me?" He also said, "You've got construction companies in the United States which can build modular housing units. We need them. I also need the 'loan guarantees' and I need them right away so that I will have the resources to go out and buy this equipment and ship it to Israel. I need emergency shipment to Israel. I need to have it shipped directly to Israel. Let's do away with all of those protectionist maritime provisions, which refer to U.S. crews on ships and involve expensive shipping rates. Let's just get it here and get it here quickly!"

In making these remarks Sharon also referred to the settlements in the Occupied Territories. At this point I said to Sharon: "Mr. Minister, let's just break right here. I'd like to have a little, private discussion with you." So we left the notetakers and went to a different room. I went into Sharon's private office and I said, "Look, Arik," which is his Israeli nickname, "we have business to do here, and I'm willing to do business with you. We have a depression in the U.S. housing industry and those people are looking for new business. However, lay off remarks about Israeli settlements, because you're going to run into a buzzsaw if you do that. Let's keep the focus on resettling these Russian immigrants

within Israel proper. You're not going to have the United States Government getting into loan guarantees or any other money identified with moving immigrants into the Occupied Territories. So just 'lay off' that, and we can do business." So that's the way I handled it. Then we resumed the discussion with the notetakers present and went on.

Indeed, suddenly housing construction people were flying in from the United States, because there was money to be made. The housing construction people were looking for all kinds of business, and we began to put deals together. Modular housing units were a possibility but there was a high Israel tariff on foreign made units.

I then ran smack into the opposition of the new Minister of Finance, Moda'i, who was a very articulate man. He was a former businessman and was dead against the use of modular or any form of temporary housing. So I went to call on him. What I ran into was a form of an old Israeli attitude: "Our families came and lived in tents until they were resettled. Why the heck should we spend hundreds of millions of dollars and borrow money on the U.S. market to settle people in temporary, cheap, corrugated, modular housing which, in the end, is going to be dumped? That's a waste of money. They can live in tents the way that others did."

I found myself going back to Sharon and saying: "Moda'i is opposed to modular housing." Now I was involved in a fight between Israeli Government ministries. Finally, I went to Prime Minister Shamir and said to him: "Can you help me overcome this difficulty?" It was a fascinating business. I was going back and forth between these high-level Israeli cabinet ministers. Many of them were rivals within the Likud Party. We're talking now about rivalries which were genuine and personal and the issue involved large sums of money, much of which would have to be borrowed.

Here's a little insight into the complexities that I got into. This was now the spring of 1990. The old peace process using our special channels was gone. We were in a crisis situation where the U.S. Government was, for the record, very sympathetic. However, we had a President and a Secretary of State who were agitated and irritated over the issue of continuing construction of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Areas. They were also frustrated over the loss of the kind of dialogue we had going with Yitzhak Rabin. We were looking at the new Shamir Government and saw that it was even tougher in such attitudes than it had been. Now it was really focused on the new crisis of resettling hundreds of thousands of "Russian Jews." It was a very frustrating situation from the viewpoint of President Bush. Meanwhile, in the spring of 1990 with hundreds of thousands of immigrants into Israel, under the circumstances I have just described, my previous support for gradually reducing U.S. aid to Israel went out the window. I now said, "Israel needs more U.S. help, not less."

Now came a new phenomenon, the rumblings of tension between Saddam Hussein and his neighbors, particularly Kuwait. By the spring of 1990 these rumblings had reached the point that Saddam was talking fire and brimstone about Kuwait, which he considered, as I suppose most Iraqis do, essentially as a breakaway province or state of Iraq proper.

Kuwait has been a bone in the throats of the Iraqis for decades. In the view of the Iraqis, Kuwait was an artificial creation which had been sliced off from Iraq. They tended to consider it yet another British creation designed to consolidate British control of the oil [of the Persian Gulf].

Saddam Hussein made more and more threatening statements. As he did so, he began to indulge in a heightened form of anti-Israeli rhetoric, as well. On April 2, 1990, he made a statement that war might come in the Middle East, namely between Iraq and Kuwait, if his demands and challenges were not met. If war came, it could easily spread elsewhere. If this happened, he would liquidate half of Israel with chemical warfare. He said that he would use his missiles and chemical warfare. Life became even more exciting for the American Ambassador in Tel Aviv.

Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Arens asked me to call on him. He drew my attention to these threats which, of course, I had already focused on. He said, "I need to open a dialogue right away with U.S. Secretary of Defense Cheney." Here was Saddam Hussein openly threatening Israel while the U.S. was located a great distance away. Arens said that Israel had nothing to do with Kuwait, and this maniac [Saddam Hussein] was threatening to rain death and destruction by waging chemical warfare against Israel. Arens concluded: "What is the United States going to do in this situation?"

I would refer you, at this point, to Arens' book, called Broken Covenant, in which he detailed what it was to be Israeli Defense Minister, at and from this juncture, and what he considered to be the inadequate responses of the United States Government. Naturally, Washington was very much aware of Arens' unhappiness, but the momentum of the relationship continued.

Saddam Hussein was a military dictator who not only made bombastic statements, but who had also used chemical warfare against the Kurds of Northern Iraq. The Iraqis had some very good diplomats, and some of them were assuring us that this threat against Israel was merely one of those exuberant statements which Saddam Hussein was used to making. As the heat mounted, the Egyptians also tried to calm us down. My colleague in Tel Aviv, Egyptian Ambassador Mohammed Basyouni, met with me and told me: "Pay no attention to Saddam Hussein's statements. You see, we Egyptians know Saddam Hussein like nobody else because he went to school in Cairo. Mubarak has a special relationship with Saddam Hussein. Maybe he is a little rough at the edges, but this can be worked out. Don't get excited." I cite these conversations because they were to change rather dramatically only a few months later.

Q: Yes, this was very much the atmosphere of the time.

BROWN: Remember that we were selling food to Iraq under PL 480 [Public Law 480, covering surplus agricultural commodities] and we were interested in selling more to them. Iraq had a large, affluent economy in certain respects. It was buying many things, including military hardware. There were American businessmen who were looking

around Iraq and criticizing the United States Government for not getting enough of the action. The British and other Europeans were selling more to the Iraqis and we were losing market share.

I believe that it was in April, 1990, there was an American Chiefs of Mission Conference in Bonn. The new, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs was John Kelly. His Deputy Assistant Secretary was Jock Covey, with whom I had served previously. Jock had served in Israeli affairs for quite some time and had been DCM in Jerusalem. If you haven't interviewed him, you should do so.

Q: Where is he now?

BROWN: I don't know. His name is spelled C-o-v-e-y. He is a brilliant officer. We gathered in Bonn, and discussions flowed on area-wide problems. The American Ambassador to Iraq at the time was April Glaspie. As my colleagues at this conference commented, one of our concerns was that we were losing business to the British, French, and Germans throughout the Middle Eastern region because we were still applying artificial, outmoded, outdated approaches. These Arab regimes had money. Somehow, we were not responding, we were not adequately participating in the game. There were many new, economic opportunities which we were missing.

April Glaspie said in effect, "Sure, Saddam Hussein is a military dictator, but there are possibilities in Iraq which we are missing." A rear Admiral attended this conference as a representative from the Central Command of the U.S. Armed Forces. He made a little presentation of the situation in the Middle East from his point of view. He pointed to our budgetary problems, particularly as far as the U.S. Navy was concerned. He said that perhaps it was time to cut back on our naval presence in the Persian Gulf, because it was awfully expensive.

Q: We're talking about our presence in the Gulf.

BROWN: Yes, in the Gulf. Our Ambassadors stationed in the Gulf replied: "Wait a minute. That naval presence is important at this time." The Admiral said, "Well, that may be true, but the naval budget is tight. We are cutting back on our carrier forces, and we have to do something about it." In this atmosphere I made a presentation which I started by saying: "I guess I'm the skunk at your party because I've got a problem here in terms of the Israeli perception, particularly in the wake of these bellicose statements by Saddam Hussein."

I returned to Tel Aviv, and the situation involving Iraq and Kuwait grew more and more tense. As it did so there developed in Israel a palpable concern that war might break out and that Saddam Hussein might live up to his public threats to attack Israel. Indeed, we saw more activity in those portions of Iraq which abutted Jordan and Syria. There were Iraqi air bases in the area, which were beginning to sprout missile batteries. Of course, the Israelis became aware of these developments.

Within Israel and within my Embassy there arose a concern about what was going to happen. In other words, if war came and if Saddam Hussein carried out these threats, what would happen if he hit Israel with missiles? If these missiles had nuclear, bacteriological, or chemical warheads, what would happen?

A dialogue was taking place on the intelligence front and on the broader, defense front, between my Embassy and Washington. Within my Embassy my DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] was now Mark Peres, a wonderful DCM. We were faced increasingly with very concerned members of our Embassy staff. The more they learned about the situation, the more concerned they became about what we were going to do.

I began a dialogue with the Department noting: "On a contingency basis we need gas masks." The initial response from Washington was: "We are the best judges of whether you need gas masks and equipment like that. At this point we don't see the need for this material." I began holding town meetings within my Embassy. I found that the discussion was never ending as we got into hypothetical situations. For example, questions would be asked like: "Suppose they attack with chemical weapons? We heard Saddam Hussein say that he would liquidate half of Israel with chemical weapons. We don't have anything to protect ourselves at this point."

At one of these meetings an enlisted man in my Defense Attache Office said, "Well, I have my gas mask, but my wife doesn't have one." Everybody immediately turned toward him and said, "What? What do you mean that you have a gas mask?" "Yes," he said, "we've got them in the Defense Attache Office for the defense attaches and their immediate staff. My problem is that my wife out here in Herzeliya and our kids don't have gas masks." Well, I called up the State Department on the secure phone at a high level now. I was talking to the Deputy Assistant Secretary and to people above him. I was smartly told: "That's an impossibility. We control the distribution of gas masks, and there is no authorization to do so. If we ever had any intimation that there was a real threat, we would distribute them to you." I asked: "Do you want to know the serial numbers on the gas masks in the Defense Attache Office? My Defense Attaches have gas masks." They told me from Washington: "Well, that's unauthorized." I said, "Unauthorized or not, some members of my Embassy staff have gas masks, while the great majority of the other people in the Embassy do not have them. What are you going to do about it?" We got into a rather contentious, spirited discussion of this.

Meanwhile, we went to the Israelis who, we knew, had supplies of gas masks for issuance to every man, woman, and child in Israel. Gas masks were stored in warehouses in Israel. We negotiated with the Israelis and arranged with them that, unless and until I got the necessary equipment from Washington, my Embassy needs, top to bottom, would be met. We received assurances that we would get gas masks.

There were further town meetings, and Embassy staff members wanted to have gas masks. The Israelis were cautious and said, "Look, the gas masks are there in the

warehouses.” By stages our Defense Attaches, the professional military people, were allowed to go into these warehouses and see that the gas masks were there. Then my Embassy people wanted to know: “Is my size gas mask there? What about my kids? I have a 6-year-old, or a 3-year-old, or a 2-year old, or a baby three months old. What do you have for babies?” The Israelis progressively let us know that they had different sizes of gas masks. They even had...

Q: Cribs or bassinets?

BROWN: Yes. Well, the agitation was growing, and it was growing inside and outside the Embassy as well, to distribute the gas masks. As the crisis worsened that summer of 1990, eventually we began to receive the gas masks in cardboard boxes, duly labeled. Then people said, “Well, how do I know that it will work? I want to be instructed in their use. Shouldn't we have drills?” Of course, if you use these gas masks, the canister begins to deteriorate and will eventually become useless.

Meanwhile, Washington was coping with this and also with Saudi Arabia. Ambassador Chas Freeman...

Q: We interviewed Ambassador Chas Freeman, who was talking about his problems.

BROWN: Yes. So the discussion went on and on.

Q: I was wondering if this would be a good place to stop. If you would note, and I will note here, that we're talking now about the growing threat from Saddam Hussein during the summer of 1990. Also, you've already talked about the huge increase of Russian Jews...

BROWN: Who were coming through at all hours.

Q: Today is August 31, 1999. This is an interview with Ambassador Bill Brown. Bill, on this same topic that you were discussing before we broke off, did you find, as your officers were looking around, that there was unrest with the Russian Jews arriving in Israel at this time? Were these Russian Jewish immigrants saying: “What the hell is this? We're happy to be out of the Soviet Union, but here is a madman we never heard of before, Saddam Hussein, who is talking about attacking us with biological weapons.” I would have thought that the Russian Jews would not have had the same spirit about all of this.

BROWN: Well, perhaps they felt caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. However, the fact is that they kept coming. Later on, even during the Gulf War, they continued to come to Israel.

Now, later on, as the war developed, commercial air flights into Israel, except for EL AL airline [Israeli state-owned airline], were no longer flying into Israel. However, the means were found, and these immigrants kept on coming into Israel. It was quite a phenomenon.

Incidentally, I am certainly no expert on the details of Israeli history. However, there was the history of progressive waves of immigration, and there were the problems that inevitably emerge when large waves descend on a limited economy in a tiny country like that. In a way, there are certain parallels to our own waves of immigration. That is, those whose parents came to Israel don't necessarily take too kindly to those who are currently coming.

Q: Absolutely. Raise the ladder, Charley, I'm aboard!

BROWN: That's right. So, there were mixed feelings because tremendous resources had to be found and had to be concentrated on these immigrants. Tremendous resources had to be found, concentrated, and applied quickly. That inevitably led to discussion as to where to find the money. In other words, who was going to suffer from giving up these resources, and so forth. I mentioned evidence of a split within the Shamir Government on how to house these people. As Minister of Housing and Construction, Ariel Sharon wanted not only whatever he could get from FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Administration] in the United States, but he wanted large-scale shipments of mobile housing, whether made of metal, plastic, wood, or a combination thereof. He wanted this to be shipped expeditiously to Israel.

Moda'i, who, at the time, was Minister of Finance, was against this proposal, saying, in essence, that this would be wasting money because temporary housing of that kind would cost a lot. He felt that, in the end, it would eventually be discarded, and a lot of money would be wasted. He felt that it would be better to go more slowly and house these people in tents, while building something more secure, and so forth.

There were arguments within the Israeli Government as to where to put these people. Should they be housed in the cities, in new suburbs, in the desert, in areas where Moroccan Jews had been settled and were subsidized to live in desert towns? Or should they be left to shift for themselves? Should transient camps be built? Should they be given free food, housing, and language education for a certain period? Should they be given the choice to go out on their own to find housing?

These were subjects for legitimate debate, and compromises were made. Generally speaking, the arrangements were fine tuned to the point where, as these people arrived at Ben Gurion International Airport, the airport was progressively turned into a huge, initial transit station.

The typical immigrant family leader was offered a choice: would he and his family prefer to go into a camp, where they would be housed for six months with a roof over their heads and provided with three meals a day and language education? Or, would they prefer

simply to be given a check right away to start them off, with a monthly subsidy to follow, which had been calculated in advance. They could do whatever they wanted to do with this subsidy. A great number of the refugees said, "Give me the check." This was because, in traditional, European, Russian style, they hoped to get help from friends and relatives in Israel, and they figured that they could squeeze into an apartment of minimal size, save some of their money, look around, and try to make a new life for themselves.

It is fascinating to reflect on the contrast with the reaction of the Ethiopian Jews who were transported to Israel. Culturally, the Ethiopian Jews were far behind the significantly, Westernized society of Israel. We saw this later on, when another, new wave of immigrants came to Israel, under, for example, Operation Solomon, when the vast majority of the new immigrants went into special camps. Unfortunately, in many cases, these camps were isolated, and the refugees were provided with a total dole or subsidy by the Israeli Government.

Q: Well, really these settlements turned out to be kind of ghettos, weren't they?

BROWN: Well, "ghetto" is a term that I wouldn't accuse the Israelis of setting up, given their background and all of what that word implies. The Israelis found that the best way to handle this matter of resettling immigrants was to put these people together, in ethnic clumps. These ended up being totally subsidized dole arrangements.

When you have such an arrangement, your only real hope is with the young people. The older generation finds it so much more difficult to adjust and doesn't have the challenge of being forced to go out and find jobs and so forth. When you handle resettlement in that way, it really is the younger people that can adjust the most easily.

However, when the Israelis had to deal with "Russian" immigrants, there was a whole host of special problems. Remember, as I said before, a lot of the refugees were Ukrainians or came from elsewhere in the old Soviet Union, but they were very heavily from the Ukraine. Among these ex-Russian refugees, there were some highly talented people. They included scientists, technicians, and other people with great skills. Culturally speaking, they were a good group. The joke was often told that if a man wasn't carrying a violin, a flute, or a clarinet off the airplane with him, this meant that he was a pianist, and the piano was coming separately. The influx of talented, symphonic orchestra level musicians, or artists and painters was striking. Unfortunately, for a lot of them, there were simply no jobs for them, initially. The question then was how quickly they could adjust, learn the Hebrew language, and so forth.

Russian political parties developed. For example, Sharansky, who came to Israel from Russia in the late 1980s, became an articulate spokesman for these Russian immigrants in Israel. Russian language newspapers bloomed. Of course, Hebrew language classes were available. A lot of areas in Israel became significantly Russianized, and some tension developed in these areas as a result of this development.

Ashkelon and Ashdod on the Mediterranean coast of Israel were newly developed port cities which had been significantly populated by Moroccan or Sephardic, oriental Jews. Over time, as the Russians moved into Israel and took over these areas, some tensions developed. However, to come back to your main question, the Russians kept on coming to Israel, believe me.

Q: Before we move to another subject, I guess that everything will be predicated on the Gulf War and its aftermath. What about the economy of Israel, prior to all hell breaking loose with this influx of immigrants?

BROWN: As always, it was the subject of spirited commentary on the U.S. side. Remember that before I came back to Israel as ambassador, there had been an economic crisis in Israel in 1984-85. Inflation had gone way up, to 400 percent and then up to 1,000 percent. U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz stepped in and told the Israelis: "Okay, if you'll really tighten your belts and take draconian measures to curtail inflation, and if you undertake to reform your economy, we will extend you extra economic support." The Israeli economy is heavily socialized, if you will, or statist, with the government owning or controlling directly or indirectly great chunks of it. I recall that Moshe Arens [former Israeli ambassador to the United States and later Minister of Defense] used to call the Israeli economy a "Bolshevik economy."

A joint U.S.-Israeli economic committee was set up to meet semi-annually. A series of top level U.S. economists agreed to work on this aspect of the Israeli economy. Herbert Stein [former adviser to the President on economic affairs] is a good example. Meanwhile, under Shimon Peres as Israeli Prime Minister, draconian measures against inflation were taken. A general belt tightening program was undertaken. It was tough, but the Israelis did it. However, little progress was made under one Israeli Government or another on the structural, reform side of the Israeli economy.

By the time I arrived in Israel as ambassador, the U.S. side was beginning to get a little tired of meeting with the Israelis on a semiannual basis with little to show for it. Sessions of this joint economic group were slipped to an annual basis. I'll never forget Herb Stein coming over to Israel, meeting with the Israeli Minister of Finance and other top Israeli economists in various sectors, including the Bank of Israel, and finally meeting with Prime Minister Shamir at the Knesset [Israeli Parliament], because the Knesset was in session at the time.

As we started the meeting with Shamir, someone burst into the room and said that there was a vote coming up. Shamir said, "Oh, excuse me. You're doing a great job, but I've got to go now." That was the end of the meeting.

That conversation had begun with Herb Stein looking at Shamir and saying: "Nu?" [what's up]. In other words, what have you done and what are you going to do now? Shamir and his Government at the time were slipping and sliding because they weren't really willing to bite the bullet and face their problems through a basic, painful reform.

Now, within Shamir's Government there were people like Arens who had a liberal economic outlook and Moda'i who came from a business background. Moda'i was Minister of Finance under Shamir. Moda'i had gone out and made money selling various products and held certain patents. So there were people within Shamir's Likud Government who were dedicated to breaking this socialist, statist lock on the Israeli economy. This was a combination which, over time and the many years of Labour Party control of the Israeli Government and the economy, with the support of the Histadrut [trade union federation], resulted in the emergence of a kind of feather bed, sweetheart arrangement between the government as the owner of many economic enterprises and the Histadrut labor unions. You find that around the world there are those kinds of attitudes and structural arrangements which are very hard to break.

Then you get into lip service. As the Israelis heard criticism from their true friends, such as Secretary Shultz and others in the U.S. Government, they would often pay lip service to the idea of structural change in the Israeli economy. They would say, "Give us more resources and then we'll work this out." They were suggesting that this would enable them to carry out structural reform of the Israeli economy faster and further. From the U.S. viewpoint, that was a frustrating situation.

When you came down to a crisis, such as that involved in Russian Jewish immigration into Israel, you came pretty soon to the question of land. If you were going to settle these immigrants in Israel, under what circumstances could this be done? As I was saying, the question was whether you should settle the immigrants in camps or just let them go out and find housing and jobs on the economy. With the great influx of immigrants, the pressures on rents for apartments and so forth grew considerably. You found that the Government of Israel controlled about 90 percent of the land. The question was whether the government would give up this land. Would the government transfer it to the new arrivals and, if so, under what circumstances? These were very difficult questions. Then there was situation in the Knesset and all of the factionalism within any coalition government which would be relevant in this connection. So this created a form of gridlock which was very difficult to break.

Later on, jumping down to the period after my time as ambassador, Prime Minister "Bibi" Netanyahu was an outspoken proponent of breaking up this Bolshevik economy, privatizing and reforming it. However, he had his problems with his own coalition government. I remember a senior Israeli banker much later on, after I had left Israel, telling me that he had met with Netanyahu, when Bibi was in the final stages of his election campaign. They spent more than an hour discussing this situation. Bibi had said, "I am going to break the grip of those who have been stalling. We are going to liberalize this economy." Well, it didn't quite work out that way.

The point that I want to make is that you have to be careful of stereotypes because the Likud coalition, for instance, had and has its own stereotypes. Behind these stereotypes there are all kinds of factions and cross currents as you'll find in many political party coalition. They can shift and turn, depending on the circumstances. I'll give you an

example.

I mentioned, in passing, former Secretary of State Baker's attempts to promote the peace process prior to the Gulf War. I recall visits by [Minister of Defense] Arens in the coalition government which, at the time, had both Labour Party and Likud representatives in it. This coalition government was dominated by Likud, but Rabin was also Minister of Defense. We set up a special channel of communications with Rabin when we were frustrated over the lack of progress in promoting the peace process. Arens, as Defense Minister, privately expressed the need to do something about speeding up the peace process. Prime Minister Shamir, as always, was reticent and often hesitant about taking action. Finally, as a result of debate within the Likud coalition, between Arens, Shamir, and others, with Rabin and Shimon Peres chipping in, or just chipping away, in the case of Peres, an Israeli peace initiative emerged. This initiative was presented by Prime Minister Shamir. It was a subject of great debate. Shamir gave, shall we say, a cut down version of what Arens would have wanted.

Many Israelis, and certainly those on the Likud side, loathed the idea of being dragged into a peace process involving an international conference. They were opposed, in essence, to the idea that Israel might be brought into the docket before an international conference and faced with a consensus of European, Third World, and communist countries, with perhaps the U.S. vacillating. To head off such a conference, Shamir called for a meeting of the Camp David signatories, that is, Egypt and Israel, with the United States, which had been a key player and observer. The Shamir formulation also called for some form of a dialogue with local or native Palestinians. There was a big debate as to whether they should have elections within the [occupied] territories. There was a considerable split over that, bearing in mind that traditionally the Israelis had tried to deal with the established, conservative, Palestinian hierarchy. That is, with the mayors and senior leaders in the Palestinian communities, who came from established families.

However, the Intifada was going on. The Intifada could be described not only as a revolt against the Israelis but also a revolt against the established, Palestinian hierarchical clan leadership. There were those among the Israelis, particularly Arens, who thought that you could run free and fair elections in the occupied territories and could find people who were articulate and with whom you could deal. These people would not necessarily be supporters of the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization]. Of course, the Israelis had their own sources of information, and it was quite obvious that the PLO was dead against free, fair, democratic elections in the occupied territories at that stage, when much of the PLO leadership was in Tunis and had little control in the territories.

However, in all of this, as the Israeli finally came to articulate, through Prime Minister Shamir and Defense Minister Arens, a peace process initiative of their own, lo and behold, a split developed within the Likud. Ariel Sharon, David Levy, and Moda'i, three very different gentlemen, teamed together and declared that they were the Hishupkim, the constrainers. I think that Hishup means a "barrel hoop." These three broke off from the rest of the cabinet and announced that they disagreed with the Shamir initiative as giving

away too much.

Now this was obviously an intra-party play here, as they were jockeying for positions in a cabinet which was beginning to get a bit shaky. It was very strange indeed, an arcane kind of thing. You know, Prime Minister Shamir and Defense Minister Arens were being portrayed by people within their own party, Sharon, Levy and Moda'i, as being soft! Come on! [Laughter]

This is important background as we moved into the summer of tension which finally erupted into the Gulf War [in 1990 and 1991]. What had happened was that a rift had opened between Secretary of State Baker and President Bush, on the one hand, and Prime Minister Shamir and Defense Minister Arens, on the other. Remember that we had used a special channel. Rabin and Shamir knew about this. I expect that Arens knew about it, although this was never stated openly to me except in that midnight conversation I told you about, when Arens said, "I suppose that now you're going to tell Rabin," and I said, "Yes."

Secretary of State Baker had given a speech before AIPAC [American Israel Public Affairs Committee] in May, 1989. The speech contained some nice tips of the hat and so forth, but it also was a bit of a bombshell. Baker said in effect: "Give up your dreams of a greater Israel, stop building Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, and let's get on with business." I remember that I was standing against the back wall of the room where the speech was given. When Baker made this remark, there was a stunned silence.

I had already given Baker my initial assessment that, however tough he was and hesitant and resistant, Prime Minister Shamir could be brought to take part in a peace process. Having given Baker that appraisal, this was to be a continuing concern of mine. As time wore on, it was so frustrating and kind of maddening to see the way things dragged on. At the time Baker gave that speech, I wasn't particularly bothered about it. Nevertheless, what emerged was a growing lack of trust between Bush and Baker, on the one hand, and Shamir and Arens, on the other. In other words, the dominant Likud faction of the Israeli Government coalition.

I had mentors and worked hard at keeping up with things in Washington. However, no American official, especially one living overseas, can really measure the Washington scene in most instances as accurately as the Israelis. After a while I came to feeling that, they would conclude that the Baker speech meant, in effect: "No more Mr. Nice Guy," that Bush and Baker were out to get them and cut them down to size through an initiative that would amount somehow to putting Israel in the dock. This would mean a version of land for peace or a territorial compromise whereby, they feared, Israel would end up shorn of everything that it had taken from 1967 onwards. This would also amount to U.S. waffling on the whole question of Jerusalem. So, an important breakdown was taking place in terms of confidence in the dialogue between Israel and the U.S.

Q: Would you say that the Israeli attitude, as I have heard again and again in the

interviews in this oral history, was that, "If you're not 100 percent for us, you're against us." In other words, instead of seeing the nuances in the appraisal of the situation between Shamir and Arens, on the one hand, and Bush and Baker, on the other.

BROWN: The Israelis are very astute analysts. I think that at any given juncture I think that they have available to them some very sophisticated analysis of the situation in the U.S., backed by their own polling. They have a tremendous database, if I can use that expression, covering various portions of the spectrum of U.S. opinion. However, among some Israelis there has been a tendency over the years to err in portraying things that way. For historical reasons there was a certain paranoia among some Israelis and a suspicion of our motives. This is certainly understandable, given the enormous disparity between the U.S., as a super power, and a tiny country like Israel.

The Israelis also have their own historical recollections. The older generation of Israeli leaders is well aware that, notwithstanding all of the verbiage that had been expressed over the years in support of Israel, plus the money and very real resources given to Israel in war and peace, yet President Eisenhower had given Prime Minister Ben Gurion an ultimatum in 1956 to "get out of the Sinai, or else." Going further back, President Harry Truman, although he was the first to recognize Israel [in 1948], had at the same time imposed an arms embargo on all sides, including fledgling Israel. Through all of these U.S. administrations there had always been some people, including Arabists in the State Department and others who had been highly critical of Israel. So the Israelis were well aware of that. However, younger Americans who had the task of dealing with Israel were sometimes somewhat deficient in corporate memory, let us say, on this issue of Israeli suspicion.

Q: During your time as ambassador to Israel, how did you do your own political analysis of who was calling the shots in AIPAC? The American Israeli Political Action Committee was a very powerful lobby. It was called the "Israeli Lobby" in the United States. Somebody, or some entity in the U.S., must have been directing how to analyze the impact of AIPAC.

BROWN: Tom Dine was the Executive Director of the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. He and I had worked together many years previously in India, when he was one of Ambassador Chester Bowles' staff aides in New Delhi. He was one of Bowles' speechwriters and a real action man for the ambassador.

Q: However, behind this...

BROWN: I didn't really get into an analysis of the various factions of AIPAC. I was meeting all kinds of people, all of the time. I simply didn't have the time to get into that. When the AIPAC people came to us, they were pretty solid in their expressions of support. I didn't have many AIPAC people pulling me aside and saying: "What we really mean, or what I really feel," is this or that, as opposed to what the AIPAC leadership was saying. Naturally, in an organization that large you will have...

Q: It was pretty solid.

BROWN: Yes.

Q: Before we move on, I have a couple of questions. Going back to the Israeli economy, what was your own feeling, as well as that of the embassy, in addition to what Israeli leaders were saying, about the U.S. role in the Israeli economy? I would have thought that, in a way, it would almost have been pernicious. I mean that our government or Congress, almost at will, could bail out the Israelis and give them money. Then there were Israeli bonds and other forms of support from the United States. The problem is that if Israel ends up being almost a charity case, this will tend to limit our own ability to encourage the development of a self-sustaining, Israeli economy.

BROWN: There were those in economic and intellectual groups in Israel, particularly on the Right, who were coming to the conclusion, when I arrived in Israel as ambassador, that the time was overdue to reform the Israeli economy by privatizing it. These groups felt that there was a certain amount of risk in letting things go on the way they were, because the net result of this would be to perpetuate the status quo.

This was a delicate matter, whether the Israeli Government had been controlled by the Labour Party or the Likud coalition up to that point, including the time I spent in Israel. Any Israeli Government desired to maintain and, if possible, increase the flow of American resources to Israel. Of course, the Russian Jewish immigration flow into Israel provided yet another reason for maintaining or increasing American resources earmarked for Israel. The argument went: "Yes, yes, we should privatize and liberalize. However, in the meantime we need the money to do this or that." Meanwhile, that Israel's economy was already changing dramatically. The old stereotype of the agriculturally based kibbutznik economy was passe. Those living in the kibbutzes in Israel had declined in numbers and now amounted to about one or two percent of the total population. However, in terms of the elite group in the Israeli Defense Forces and in certain other areas the kibbutzniks exercised an influence far greater than that statistic would indicate.

There had emerged some interesting Israeli economic think tanks. A leader of one of them called on me and said that on the one hand, his group stood solidly behind the Likud version of security. That is, Israel should keep control of the Occupied Territories and watch out for security threats now and in the future. For example, if Saddam Hussein in Iraq were to take over Jordan, Israel would face a tremendous peril. Therefore, Israel could not just give away the Jordan Valley, and the Golan Heights. However, that same think tank, and I've forgotten the name of it, argued that the U.S. should apply pressure to privatize and liberalize the Israeli economy. Otherwise, nothing would get done.

There was another consideration. There was great disillusionment with Prime Minister Shamir in the Labour Party. This was particularly the case with those who had Leftish, academic backgrounds. Over time, some of these people became so distraught over the

Likud Government's position vis-a-vis the peace process and all of that, that one of them, in despair, said to me on one occasion: "You ought to cut off aid to Israel." I said, "What?" He said, "You ought to cut off aid because there is no other way in which Shamir will change his mind." What he meant was that the U.S. ought to topple the Shamir government by cutting off aid.

I immediately responded: "I am not going to get into that game. Forget it!" I could appreciate the despair of people who held those views, but we weren't going to engage in that kind of behavior.

Now this takes us to the issue of playing in the domestic politics of the other side. There's been a lot of sanctimonious comment on this issue over the years. For example, AIPAC is only one of many pressure groups. It is the largest, but there are many different types of Jewish-American lobbies. Their approaches to members of both Houses of Congress and their political activities on behalf of Israel are well reported. However, let's not kid ourselves; when we invest \$3.0 billion a year in the Israeli economy, we are bound to have an effect. When we opened up a special channel via the American ambassador's secure phone to the Israeli Minister of Defense, Rabin, in connection with the peace process, we were playing a role in the Israeli domestic political game. Of course, there are various degrees of involvement, and it is important to distinguish between them. In effect, the Israelis played a lot more in our backyard than we did in their back yard.

Shamir's followers felt threatened, particularly after the speech in May, 1989, by Secretary of State Baker to AIPAC which I mentioned previously. We had already opened a serious dialogue with the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization]. This speech was taken to mean that we were seriously moving ahead to put pressure on the Israelis on the basis of land for peace, and that we expected them to make territorial concessions to the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. On a worse case basis they could infer from the speech that they stood to lose much or all of the Golan Heights and to face the emergence in some form of a Palestinian entity. This was despite the fact that the official U.S. position, as earlier articulated by Secretary of State Shultz on behalf of the Reagan administration, had been that there should be no Palestinian state. We were opposed to a Palestinian state under the PLO, with its terrorist background.

Nevertheless, the Shamir supporters saw by various means what was going on under the Bush and Baker administration. This seriously concerned the Israelis, and they began to crank up a campaign with their friends in Congress. The State Department received letters from large numbers of members of Congress, expressing great support for Israel and concern that things should be done in the right way, and so forth.

I think that that contributed to the determination of President Bush and Secretary of State Baker to play things very close to the chest and to use a form of stealth in this area, as far as Israeli politics were concerned. So I think that this was a very important part of the political and economic background as we entered the summer of 1990.

Q: Before we discuss the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, I have two other questions. One of the things that has struck me, and please correct me if I am wrong, but I look at Germany before the rise of Hitler and I look at the United States, particularly after the influx of German Jews in the United States. I think what a wonderful boon we have had in terms of artistic growth and so forth. I am a movie fan. The movies owe so much, in particular, to the German Jews. The same thing applies to music, books, and other areas of cultural activity. I know that as a kid I learned so much about what was involved in growing up as a Jewish boy in New York, because I read so many books about it.

I have been struck by the underwhelming impact of Israel in the artistic world in the United States. I'm thinking of movies in particular. I don't know much about the impact of Israel on movies and literature. Compared to the artistic talent that is in Israel, for some reason it just doesn't seem to translate out to very much in the United States. Could you comment on that?

BROWN: That's interesting, Stuart. Let's put another spin on it. From the time I arrived in Israel as DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] in the embassy in Tel Aviv, and certainly later on, when I served as ambassador to Israel, I was profoundly struck by the enormous, cultural base within Israel. You could consider this as a base imported from outside Israel. I used to say, and I don't think that it would be much of an exaggeration, that, after serving in so many countries, I had never seen so much culture in the world, per capita, as I did in Israel. I'm speaking not only of the great Israel Museum up in Jerusalem, or the Tel Aviv Museum. My goodness! Down at the provincial or town level it was amazing to see the number of thriving museums. These were museums that not only had art to display, but offered interpretive classes in creative art appreciation and education, using their local art holdings as platforms.

The number of concerts and the range of musical activity was astounding. It seemed that most towns and cities of any size had symphony orchestras. By the time I returned to Israel as U.S. ambassador, apart from classical music, there was a full spectrum of jazz, rock music, and so forth available. When I first arrived in Israel, I was struck with what I would call an Ashkenazi Jewish culture, the kind of art that was prevalent in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s and so forth. When I returned to Israel, I could see that there had been a distinct evolution in which the Sephardic and Oriental Jewish traditions were growing. I felt that there was a great, cross-cultural development here. We also saw that there was more intermarriage between members of the Ashkenazi and Sephardic communities.

So, in my view, there was a cultural boom going on in Israel. And the Israelis became more high tech in their outlook, going into video and TV. When I was in Israel as ambassador, TV really took off. They turned to CD ROM [Compact Discs, Read Only Memory] software. The Israelis began to score very high in European TV song competitions. They have this split, where part of the reaction, if you will, to the U.S.-Israeli relationship is a desire by many people in Israel to continue to be recognized as a part of Europe. Indeed, many Israelis say, "There is where the bulk of our trade is, and

there is where so much of our cultural flow should be, back and forth.” However, they have one, major problem. That is, the attitude of many European governmental elites vis-a-vis Israel is very ambiguous, to use a rather charitable word. These Europeans are often perceived by Israelis as anti-Israeli and, in some cases, anti-Semitic. So, it's a mix of these attitudes.

Yours is an interesting observation, as far as Israeli impact on, let us say, U.S. culture. As the Israelis were highly nationalistic in their linguistic approach, they were putting out Hebrew language films, which very few American Jews could understand. I can understand more Hebrew than your average, American Jew. The emphasis on Hebrew as the national language also meant that Yiddish has suffered badly in Israel. So that posed a barrier for older American Jews who understood Yiddish. In sum, there is a major linguistic problem involved here. How many people in the U.S. are really interested in going to a movie theater and seeing a dubbed Israeli film? On the other hand, some of the Israeli vocalists are very impressive. In terms of classical, jazz, and Sephardic music, certainly on the Jewish circuit here in the United States they were making inroads. However, the reception has not been akin to what you have just described.

Q: What about the role of the orthodox [Jewish] establishment in Israel? Does that have much of an influence on Israeli artistic development?

BROWN: I think that there is a widening divide between secular and ultra-orthodox Jews. A large percentage of the artistic group in Israel would be over on the secular side of that divide. That is not to say that the ultra-orthodox, have no artists, musicians, and so forth. Actually, they have quite a few. As far as attitude is concerned, of course the ultra-orthodox are horrified by bare bodies, bikinis, or the portrayal in art of nubile creatures, and so forth. I assure you, however, that there is a lot of music played in the ultra-orthodox community. There is a lot of religious art, at least their form of art, as well. (End of tape)

I might make a further comment about Jerusalem, and particularly the American consulate general there. Let's do an historic tour, bearing in mind that long before the State of Israel was established, long before the existence of Tel Aviv, and long before the existence of an American embassy in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem was a holy city. In that holy city was an American consulate.

Q: In fact, the consulate was first opened in 1845.

BROWN: Yes, and for a long time that office was the site of the United States representation in Palestine. There were consulates there of other countries as well. The Spanish consulate was in Jerusalem prior to the establishment of the United States consulate general. It represented the Spanish King, one of whose many titles was, “Protector of the Faith,” the “Protector of Jerusalem,” and so forth.

Tel Aviv developed from the status of a tent city, and there was nothing there for many

years in terms of official U.S. representation. The American consulate in Jerusalem was the only U.S. office in Palestine. With the establishment of the State of Israel and the arrival of Ambassador McDonald as the head of the American Mission in Israel, it wasn't long before tension developed between the new American embassy [in Tel Aviv] and the consulate up in Jerusalem. Some of the staff of the consulate general in Jerusalem tended to look on the American embassy as pro-Israeli and pro-Jewish. This attitude was reciprocated in broad terms over the years by some of the staff of the American embassy in Tel Aviv, who looked at the consulate general in Jerusalem and its backers in the State Department as a bunch of Arabists.

The legal aspects of this situation were such that the United States officially viewed Jerusalem as an international city known as a “corpus separatum” [separate body] whose final status was still to be determined. As a result, the consulate general in Jerusalem never sought recognition, nor was it recognized officially, diplomatically, or in consular terms by the Government of Israel. Bear in mind that for years, as the Government of Israel began to move piecemeal up to Jerusalem, it was warned by most governments, including the United States Government, not to do this. These governments warned the Israeli Government that they would not do business with the Government of Israel in Jerusalem. The Government of Israel was advised that it should remain in Tel Aviv and conduct its affairs there.

However, as time went on, pieces of the Government of Israel moved up to Jerusalem, including pieces of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These pieces became larger and larger. Israeli Prime Ministers moved to Jerusalem, and I am speaking of Labour Party Prime Ministers in particular, long before the Likud Party's Prime Minister Menachem Begin moved his office and official residence to Jerusalem.

In all of this many Israelis had a stereotyped view of the American consulate general in Jerusalem as a pro-Arab outfit servicing Arab interests. That is a gross distortion of the reality, but it was a widely held Israeli perception.

Now, as a consular institution, the American consulate general in Jerusalem serviced the passport and visa needs of a growing population, many of whom were Jewish, including ultra-orthodox Jews. The Consular Section of the consulate general in Jerusalem was over on Arab side of the city.

I think that I may previously have touched on the sensitivity of the relationship between the embassy in Tel Aviv and the consulate general in Jerusalem when I spoke of my time as DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] in the embassy in Tel Aviv. That is, during the period from 1979 to 1982. Bear in mind that very senior and very capable Foreign Service officers were appointed to positions on the staff of the consulate general in Jerusalem.

Although the consulate general was relatively small, it was completely independent, so it did not have to clear with the embassy its correspondence to Washington. It had its own consular responsibilities and its own reporting goals and objectives assigned by the

Department of State. If the consul general in Jerusalem felt like it, he or she could send off a first person or whatever other kind of message to the Department, completely independently of the embassy in Tel Aviv.

The embassy, of course, was much larger than the consulate general. Given past firefights between the two posts in previous years, when Ambassador Sam Lewis and I were in Tel Aviv, and Brandon Grove was the Consul General in Jerusalem with Jock Covey as his Deputy, we did everything that we could to minimize friction and to establish cross cultural contacts between the two posts. In some cases we arranged for the rotation of officers back and forth between the two posts on a voluntary basis. Ambassador Sam Lewis made a pronounced effort in person, which I tried to emulate, to brief the consul general in times of crisis on developments in and around the consulate general. When Phil Habib [Deputy Undersecretary for Political Affairs] and Ambassador Morris Draper were engaged in shuttle diplomacy involving Lebanon in 1982, they stayed in the residence of the consul general in Jerusalem, rather than at the King David Hotel. Habib drafted and sent his cables from the consulate general, as necessary. Phil Habib talked to the Israeli Prime Minister on the consul general's telephone, went over to call on the Prime Minister from the consul general's residence, and so forth.

So Jerusalem was not an isolated post, and obviously both the consulate general in Jerusalem and the embassy in Tel Aviv had to exercise as much diplomacy as they could toward each other. However, there was a constant danger, in connection with one episode or another, that some American Foreign Service officer would inadvertently create friction through something he might say.

I don't recall whether I've already given you an account of the experience of a congressional delegation, led by then Congressman Lester Wolff, a Jewish Member of Congress from New York. I think this happened in 1982, when I was DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] and maybe Charge d'Affaires. I briefed CODEL Wolff and took them up to their hotel. We then handed them over to the consulate general for a further briefing. Unfortunately, an officer in the Consulate general, while briefing the Congressmen, was fiddling with Christian religious beads [a Rosary?]. This impressed Congressman Wolff and his associates as follows. Wolff referred to "That SOB [i.e., the officer from the consulate general whom I mentioned], "waving his Palestinian beads at us throughout the whole briefing." This officer's presentation, which was obviously designed to give them a consulate general perspective, deeply offended Wolff and other members of his CODEL and was seen by them as Anti-Israeli and pro-Palestinian. When he returned to Washington Congressman Wolff made a spectacular affair out of this incident. He wrote a letter to the Secretary of State, demanding that he "bring the consulate general into line with U.S. policy." He asked how this kind of thing could happen.

The Secretary of State was compelled to write a letter of reply, assuring Congressman Wolff and others that we had a unified policy in Israel and that the American ambassador and the consul general were reading from the same sheet of music.

That background made a deep impression upon me. Before I leave that period I might note that, in those days, the consulate general was a key link with and, within its sphere of responsibility, maintained liaison with the UN commander in Jerusalem, who was, at that time, a Finnish general. The UN commander supervised the bits and pieces of UN personnel assigned to UNTSO [United Nations Truce Supervisory Organization] and other organizations which had military observers in Lebanon and along the Israeli-Lebanese border.

All in all, the consulate general performed very important functions and was an important institution. None of the Foreign Service officers assigned to the consulate general in Jerusalem had an exequatur issued by the Israeli authorities and none had official standing in the eyes of the Israeli Government. It was often viewed with suspicion by many senior Israeli officials. In reporting terms its consular district nominally included the whole city of Jerusalem, as well as the West Bank of the Jordan River. As far as political access was concerned, it was constrained vis-a-vis the Jewish element of Jerusalem, which tended to stay aloof. Obviously, the consulate general was inundated by representations made by Palestinians over the years, in which they described what they regarded as the savagery, unfairness, and inequity of Israeli Government behavior.

When the Israeli settlement program really got under way, this involved the Israeli Government by a variety of means, some sophisticated and some less so, in expropriating land which the Palestinians considered as theirs. Often, these lands were wilderness areas, if you will. However, as the Israelis sequestered these lands, there would be Palestinian rural residents who would protest that "This was our land for generations." The Israelis would say, "Prove it." The Palestinians would usually be unable to prove it to the satisfaction of the Israeli authorities, who were tilted against the Palestinians anyway. When court cases on these matters were tried, and sometimes they were, with left-wing lawyers representing Arab clients, most often, in my recollection, the Arab plaintiff would lose, because he was up against the Government legal apparatus, which had done its homework.

Indeed, regarding the sequestering or expropriation, if you will, of land, the Israelis could and did cite British rules and precedents in administering the previous, League of Nations Palestinian Mandate. The British had been pretty adept at doing what they wanted to do and finding legal means to justify this.

Against this background, when I came back to Israel as ambassador, I felt that it was essential to establish and maintain good relations with the consulate general. I did what I could in this respect. I urged my DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] and senior officers of the embassy to do everything that they could to overcome this division between the two posts and minimize friction.

By now, of course, the settlement programs of the Israelis had reached a really high pitch. We're talking now about a big, organized approach to this matter. This activity might

involve Israeli groups making a sudden appearance in the middle of the night with earthmoving equipment. We're no longer talking of Israelis with just picks and shovels. We're talking about organized, fully funded, and sophisticated establishment of settlement outposts out on some knoll or hill and rapidly expanding from that point. It was the consulate general's responsibility to spot and pinpoint these developments and describe what was going on. As it did so, of course, consulate general officers were subjected to surveillance by Israeli authorities, who often came to regard these officers as poking their noses into places where they shouldn't, and so forth.

So this was a never-ending struggle. We just had to work at this problem all of the time. Fortunately, we had good leadership provided by our consuls general in Jerusalem and the deputy principal officers, who recognized this and worked with us. However, you could never relax. You just had to keep working at it.

Q: Who was consul general in Jerusalem when you arrived in Israel in 1979?

BROWN: It was Mike Newlin followed by Brandon Grove. When I returned later as Ambassador it was Phil Wilcox. These gentlemen had very impressive backgrounds and were outstanding, senior officers.

As I have said, this situation was, is, and will remain something which has to be worked on all the time. I think that the consulate general in Jerusalem is now the sole, independent consulate general in the Foreign Service.

Q: Yes. The formerly independent consulate general in Hong Kong is now under the embassy in Beijing.

BROWN: By the way, speaking of Hong Kong, when the return of Hong Kong to the motherland of China got under way, I remember warning those who were going to supervise our consulate general in Hong Kong, one of them a particular friend of mine, of this Jerusalem experience. This might sound totally removed from the situation in Hong Kong. However, in the nature of things I thought that this deserved watching, and I understand that they have their problems as well between the consulate general in Hong Kong and the embassy in Beijing.

Q: I'm sure, because this process has been going on since 1949...

BROWN: Furthermore, there is a natural tendency by American ambassadors to attempt to fold consulates general under their wing, so to speak. Remember, watch the money flow. For example, when I was in Singapore in 1962, this office was transformed from being an independent consulate general, with very substantial responsibilities, to being a constituent post of Embassy Kuala Lumpur. Kuala Lumpur had grown from being a tiny consular post to a full-fledged embassy. The American ambassador in Kuala Lumpur who, in his day, had been an independent consul general in Singapore, moved to cut Singapore to being a post with a Class 3 or Class C cashier. That is, money had to flow

through the embassy in Kuala Lumpur to the consulate general in Singapore and, with it, the power of decision. That's the nature of our business.

Much of the budget for the consulate general in Jerusalem was handled through the embassy in Tel Aviv, and much of the money flowed through us. I'm talking now, not just about State Department activity, but other U.S. Government services as well. It's a very complicated, delicate business. You have to be careful as an American ambassador not to let a cloud grow there, knowing that the funding flows through your embassy to this independent consulate general.

Q: Did the role of the Israeli Mayor of part of Jerusalem seem significant to you at that time?

BROWN: Well, Teddy Kollek had been Mayor of Jerusalem for many years. He was a very gregarious, significant figure. He was delighted to welcome the American consul general, but he was equally delighted to meet with the American ambassador. For our part the relationship with the Mayor was within the jurisdiction of the American consulate general.

Any Mayor of Jerusalem would naturally seek to have meetings with the American ambassador. However, we made sure that such meetings were arranged through the American consul general in Jerusalem, so that it remained clear that contacts with the Mayor of Jerusalem were within the purview of the consul general. Important elements of symbolism are involved here. You will find accounts of this symbolism and the related tensions over the handling of high level U. S. visitors in Ambassador Sam Lewis' memoirs of his tour of duty in Israel.

When we had senior level U.S. official visitors in those days, the Israelis tried to push such visitors to go to places in Jerusalem, including the Wall, which had been under Jordanian control until the 1967 war when the Israelis took control and declared Jerusalem to be forever undivided. Some people used to call it the Wailing Wall or the Western Wall. Some of these visits were especially delicate from the point of view of the consulate general, such as a visit by the Vice President or even by the President of the United States. The symbolism attached to visits to places which were outside the old West Jerusalem was very tricky given the official stance of the United States that the status of Jerusalem was to be determined later on, and its status as a *corpus separatum*.

During the period after 1967 Israeli power grew rapidly. The city had been forcibly unified under Israeli control and the Israelis unilaterally expanded its borders. Mayor Teddy Kollek did what he could to break down the barriers between East and West Jerusalem. He was frustrated, beyond a certain point, by the refusal of the Arab Palestinian leadership to go beyond accepting water and also money for their schools and hospitals. The Arab leaders balked at being incorporated through Kollek's rather liberal vision into a Jerusalem organized as a sort of London, with boroughs and free elections. Most Arab residents of Jerusalem boycotted the opportunity to vote in Jerusalem-wide

elections, even though they were not Israeli citizens.

During my time in Israel Teddy Kollek was succeeded as Mayor of Jerusalem by Olmert, who was a flashy political operator from a prominent Likud family. He had assiduously cultivated his own American contacts over time. He had, and still has, aspirations to become much more than the Mayor of Jerusalem. In his efforts to defeat Teddy Kollek, an old, established figure, as Mayor, Olmert wooed ultra-orthodox, Jewish voters. The ultra-orthodox, Jewish population of Jerusalem has grown by leaps and bounds over the years. Any Mayor of Jerusalem would have to have his lines out to the religious community, and certainly Olmert promised them enough to get their votes. So that continues as an ongoing saga.

The point I want to reiterate is that, even now, as times change, the American ambassador to Israel, and his staff, have to be extremely conscious of the delicacy of the situation and the role of the American consul general in Jerusalem. Of course, that concern has to be reciprocated.

Q: Now we turn to the summer [of 1990]. Saddam Hussein, the President of Iraq, had been making noises about war in the Middle East. There was a very sizeable, American community in Israel. In fact, many Israelis have two passports [American and Israeli], don't they?

BROWN: Oh, yes. By the way, if I may interject a comment at this point. In the 1940s and 1950s there was a very rigid U.S. approach to dual citizenship. The Department took the view that an American citizen could hold only one passport. However, over time, there was an erosion or liberalization of this position.

Q: The U.S. Supreme Court played a role in this.

BROWN: Yes. As a result, many Israelis, some of them senior senior figures, carried U.S. passports. I may have told this story, but one day after lunch, when I was DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission], I was coming into the embassy in Tel Aviv. I saw an Israeli soldier with an automatic weapon slung over his shoulder and a yarmulke on his head, coming into the embassy. I asked him: "Where are you going, young man?" He said, "To cast my ballot as an absentee voter." This was in the elections of 1980. That would have been unthinkable during our earlier careers in the Foreign Service. The fiction was that this young man had been drafted or conscripted into the Israeli Defense Forces and had no choice in the matter. Therefore, he didn't lose his American citizenship, and he could be a dual citizen. There were Israelis who not only had dual citizenship but had multiple passports.

Q: I was just thinking that war clouds were gathering. There was a distinct threat by Saddam Hussein, who was not somebody whom you could just dismiss. You had this large, quasi-American group there in Israel, whatever you want to call it. What did you do about getting ready for the possibility of hostilities, in terms of evacuation? I'm not

talking now about the embassy staff. I'm talking about ordinary Americans resident in Israel. What kinds of things were you doing about this?

BROWN: Let me come back to evacuation matters more specifically later. Like all Foreign Service posts, we had a monitoring system, broken down regionally within the country, to cope with possible disaster, whether earthquake, war, or other difficulties. Our embassy's Consular Section reported that as the tension grew, American residents of Israel began to check to make sure that their U.S. passports were up to date. We could see and feel that process going on.

Things began really to heat up after Saddam Hussein's remarks on April 2, 1990, that if war came, he would liquidate half of Israel by chemical warfare. Incidentally, as I read Charles Freeman's account of his time in the Middle East, during which time he learned Arabic, Chas says that Saddam recalled that Israel had attacked the Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1981. Saddam then said that, if Israel attacked Iraq again, the Iraqis would liquidate half of the Israelis by means of chemical warfare. That may be true, although it was certainly not my understanding of Saddam's remarks that he qualified his threat. I suppose that you would have to dig out FBIS [Foreign Broadcast Information Service] accounts of Saddam's speech. In my recollection, what came across was a relatively stark message that, if war came, he would liquidate half of Israel with chemical weapons. That's the way the Israelis read his speech.

I started to detail this in my previous remarks. The temperature of public opinion in Israel rose, particularly after August 2, 1990, when Iraq invaded Kuwait. We had meetings within the embassy with many American citizens who inquired about what was coming, what would happen, and so forth.

The Israeli gas mask distribution system was activated. The masks had not yet actually been distributed, but the word was going out that the Israeli Government had the necessary equipment on hand. Of course, we told American citizens of this announcement. Then we got into a difficult dialogue, with American citizens asking us whether Saddam Hussein would use conventional, nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons. They would ask us what we had to counter such attacks. American citizens would tell us: "You say that one of these gas masks is waiting for us in an Israeli warehouse. Will this gas mask be able to cope with VX, Sarin, or mustard gas? By the way, if the attack is with mustard gas, what about my skin? Do you have something beyond masks? Do you have rubber suits?" And on and on,

My conversations on these questions with people in the Department of State in Washington were largely over a secure phone. The information I obtained was not very satisfactory. Ambassador Charles Freeman, in Saudi Arabia, certainly had his problems dealing with similar inquiries.

My principal contacts in the State Department were with Jock Covey as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs under Assistant Secretary

John Kelly and, eventually, Ivan Selig, who was Under Secretary of State for Management. It was with one or both of these officers that I got into some pretty heated conversations when I reported that there was growing consternation among American citizens in Israel about gas masks. I learned at a meeting within the embassy that personnel in the Office of the Defense Attache had been issued gas masks, or at least that the officers had them, although their family members might not have had them. I was informed by these officers in the Department that this was impossible and was assured that: "We, in the State Department are the ones who authorize such distribution and we haven't authorized it." I said, "Would you like to have me read you the serial numbers on the gas masks?" So there was a jolt for those people in the State Department back in Washington. As I mentioned previously, Ambassador Chas Freeman had a similar problem with the Department.

As the tension grew and we sought specific information, we sometimes got what we felt was a pretty cavalier response in these telephone conversations. At one point I was told: "If we ever thought that Saddam Hussein would attack Israel with poison gas, we would have all of you out of Israel in no time." I remembered those remarks later on.

By August 2, 1990, Israeli Minister of Defense Arens was seeking to arrange a detailed dialogue with U.S. Secretary of Defense Cheney and the American establishment on preparations for war. Arens wasn't very happy with what he was getting. He was getting a pat on the back and was assured: "Don't worry, we're looking into this problem," and so forth. It is in the nature of Israelis in such circumstances to want to have the United States speaking to their needs. You can do that at a professional, technical level. That is, our attaches speaking with their Israeli military counterparts. However, the feeling that Minister of Defense Arens and his associates had was that they were being left behind and sort of left aside and being regarded as just another irritant by U.S. officials who were trying to manage these problems.

In previous remarks I mentioned a little sidelight here when Mohamad Bassiouni, the Egyptian ambassador in Tel Aviv, assured me, as late as August 2, 1990, that the Egyptians knew Saddam Hussein well, and that President Mubarak of Egypt had a special relationship with him. Mubarak had been assured by Saddam Hussein that Iraq was not going to invade or attack Kuwait. Ambassador Bassiouni said that President Mubarak knew Saddam Hussein well because he had been a student of Mubarak's of some kind in Cairo and that the Egyptians knew how to handle him.

That line changed 180 degrees overnight when on August 2, 1990 Saddam Hussein's army invaded Kuwait.. President Mubarak was livid, and Bassiouni, his ambassador to Israel, informed me that the Egyptians had known Saddam Hussein, this SOB, for a long time. He was nothing but a thug and prone to betray his friends and allies and so forth. I was barely able to keep myself from laughing out loud on this occasion.

Q: When Saddam Hussein and his forces invaded Kuwait, did the Israelis set up Defense Condition 3 or something like that?

BROWN: I can't remember what exactly they did, but the level of tension was palpably rising. At the professional, military level there were all kinds of talks going on. Of course, a lot of this had to do with gas masks and so forth.

We slowly got into a situation where the war clouds were gathering and it was clear that the United States Government, led by President George Bush, was preparing for the worst case. By late 1990 visits by American Jewish groups to Israel had declined. However, Russian Jewish immigration continued, right on through the crisis.

Q: Was this before we had started building up our forces in Saudi Arabia?

BROWN: I can't remember the specific details and I don't have any notes on this. However, as tensions mounted and the U.S. began to gear up in anticipation of combat, visits to Israel by large delegations of American Jews began to drop off very sharply. I remember, let us say, that by late October or November, 1990, these visits were down dramatically. I used to say that all was not lost in terms of Israeli-American friendship and that we had to continue to strengthen the bonds between us and prepare for the worst.

If I may, let me digress a bit here. As of about October, 1990, I would say, I tried to look ahead a bit. That is, I asked my political counselor, John Herbst [later consul general in Jerusalem and Ambassador in parts of the former Soviet Union], to look ahead to the possibility of war and what might happen after a war, in terms of renewing the peace process in the Middle East. This cable focused significantly on Syria. I assumed that war was likely and that there would be a series of political earthquakes that would come with such a war. I assumed that with such changes a unique opportunity might open up after the war for a revival of the peace process.

In this connection the Syrian dimension of the situation would be important. Now, as I mention this to you, I can't remember how far we had already gone in persuading President Assad of Syria to join the coalition we were trying to establish, if war came. I'm not clear on this in my memory. However, I mentioned that possibility in this cable. I sent off that message, repeating it to other posts. Ed Djerejian, later Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, was then ambassador to Syria.

Now, if I may jump ahead a bit, by February, 1991, I ordered another cable to be drafted, which I think was titled: "Road to Damascus." It referenced that earlier cable and said, "We are now at war, Syria has joined the coalition against Saddam Hussein, which is a remarkable feat."

Q: Absolutely!

BROWN: In this second cable I recommended that we look ahead to a peace process which would significantly focus on Syria. I said that I believed that the time would come to talk about territorial compromise on the Israeli-Syrian border on the Golan Heights. Of

course, there was the Lebanese aspect of the border that would have to be dealt with, but the crux of the negotiation would have to be with Syria regarding the Golan Heights. No Israeli Government that I could anticipate would be willing to give up control of all of the Golan Heights, but it might very well be possible for the U.S. to broker a deal under which a significant part of the Golan Heights area was turned back to Syria, along with a number of security guarantees for Israel. I said that this negotiation would be a major challenge for the U.S. Government.

I repeated this telegram to our embassy in Damascus. Ambassador Djerejian immediately weighed in, following up this cable and saying that, of course, that was the way he saw things. However, he pointed out that President Assad would demand the return of all of the Golan Heights area. One has to distinguish here about what the Golan Heights area comprises. When you refer to the Golan Heights, most of us think of the heights of the Golan, that great cliff that dominates the Sea of Galilee. However, the Syrians insist on the return of all the territory that they held before June, 1967. That would include territory approximately 10 yards from the Eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. That would be the Syrian version of the negotiating package.

So let's return to the war clouds gathering in the fall of 1990 and the determination that we were going to war and our build-up in Saudi Arabia. Do you want to save this for later?

Q: I think that this is probably the best way to do it, because I think that it is best to handle this narrative in segments. So we'll pick this up the next time where we're moving into Desert Shield. One of the questions that I want to ask would be early on in the process, when President Bush and Secretary of State Baker were putting together this remarkable coalition against Iraq. In other words, how to keep the fly in the ointment, namely Israel, out of the negotiations. I would like you to describe your instructions and how you dealt with this problem, because the Israelis were obviously unhappy about how this was handled.

BROWN: Okay. I don't particularly like the expression, "fly in the ointment" to describe Israel. However, we'll talk about this matter later on.

Q: Today is September 15, 1999. Bill, we're still talking about the period which led immediately up to the Gulf War in 1991. Many people had been telling you that they knew Saddam Hussein. I would like to ask about the early period of the crisis, when the initial threats came out. This would have been in the spring of 1990, I guess.

BROWN: Particularly the speech or remarks attributed to Saddam Hussein on April 2, 1990. Speaking of the growing tension in the region and about the possibility of war, Saddam Hussein said something like: "We now have binary, chemical weapons. By God, if the Israelis come at us, or attack us, we will liquidate half of Israel with chemical

weapons.” That’s the way Chas Freeman remembers Saddam’s remarks. My recollection was that Saddam didn’t qualify his threat by tying it to an Israeli attack, but even if he did, his remarks had a dramatic impact.

Q: Something which I didn’t ask concerns the period before anything else happened. You could almost assume that the Israelis would put a couple of nuclear weapons on a plane and take off on an attack against Iraq. Was this one of your assumptions?

BROWN: No, not at that time, although, later on during this crisis the Israelis let our satellites have a peek at some of their Jericho missiles. They knew that that message would get around, and it did.

I think that at this juncture perhaps it would be worthwhile for me to try to examine for the reader or listener to this interview the Israeli baggage as they went into this situation, in strategic, emotional, and other terms.

First of all, old timers in Israel with military backgrounds would tell me personally of their vivid memories of a battalion or so of Iraqi troops deployed in Haifa and on the perimeter of Tel Aviv in 1948. I remember one Israeli figure who later became a diplomat who said that he had actually exchanged words with an Iraqi battalion commander in Haifa during the Arab nations’ invasion which followed the proclamation of the State of Israel. So Iraqi forces were physically there on Israeli territory.

I remember another Israeli old-timer, Mordecai Zippori telling me that he had been involved in a counterattack in 1948 against Iraqi troops at Petach Tikva, a suburb of Tel Aviv. When the Israelis overran the Iraqi position, they found the Iraqi troops manacled together in a trench so that they wouldn’t run away. So for the old timers, it wasn’t just a symbolic thing, that Iraq was just another of the Arab countries, like the Saudis and so forth. Iraq had sent troops to attack Israel. This all happened long before Saddam Hussein was in power in Iraq.

Furthermore, you should remember that in those very early days of the hostilities against the Israelis in 1948, the Iraqis were so virulently anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli that thousands of Jews living in Iraq fled the country and many went to Israel. To this day there is a considerable number of Sephardic, or Oriental Jews from Iraq in Israel. Incidentally, there is a community of Iraqi Kurdish Jews in Israel today. The irony of one of Saddam Hussein’s SCUD missile attacks is that a SCUD landed in Ramat Gan, which was predominantly an Iraqi Jewish sector. I remember inspecting the crater left from the explosion of an Iraqi SCUD missile and the buildings demolished around it. It was remarkable that so few casualties were caused by it. Some people died of heart attacks, and there were other people wounded, but there was no large number of casualties.

By the way, Yitzhak Mordecai, a tough retired Israeli general, is a Kurdish Jew. When he retired, he then ran for the Knesset and became Minister of Defense. Initially, he was associated with Bibi Netanyahu. Later, he abandoned Netanyahu and formed his own

political party. The Kuridsh angle takes us to an interesting sidelight of which most foreign observers are ignorant.

Strategically, given the Israeli defense problem an important part of the Israeli counter to the Arabs over the years was their effort to keep the Arab world divided. That's a formidable task for tiny Israel, but they did what they could. They tried to form alliances with non-Arab, non-Muslim peoples in and around the area. So the Israelis were delighted to hook up with Iran under the Shah. They worked very hard to develop a relationship with Turkey, knowing that many Turks bitterly disliked the Arabs, considering them traitors who had broken away from the Ottoman Empire and cooperated with the British.

They also sought to work with Muslim minorities in the Middle East who were non-Arab in the conventional sense. For years, for example, the Israelis worked hand in glove with the Kurdish nationalists. Many an Israeli military or security type was in those hills of northern Iraq, with the Kurds, training, arming, and participating, if you will, in activities against the Iraqi regime of the time. For example, the former Israeli Defense Forces chief of staff, Rafoul Eyetan, was a very hard-nosed anti-Arab figure. In his memoirs he harks back to the good old days when he was stationed in Kurdish areas of Iraq, working with the Kurds. I could name several other, prominent Israelis who had been involved with the Kurds in their revolts against the Iraqis.

With this background, Iraq was viewed not only as anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli but also, as a particularly virulent threat to Israel. I think that that is important to bear in mind. The Israelis had a certain respect or even anxiety for many years about the Iraqis, much more than they felt about the Saudis. The Israelis tended to view the Saudis as weak and corrupt, although potentially dangerous because the Saudis had the money to fund Yasser Arafat and many other Arab radicals, like Assad of Syria. However, the Israelis did not consider the Saudis as a fighting, expansionist threat to Israel. Iraq was a different story.

Apart from the Iraqi nuclear threat, there remained, and still remains today, a strong, Israeli, strategic concern about the possibility that Iraq, under Saddam Hussein or anybody else, could easily overwhelm Jordan. From Baghdad it is an easy 500 kilometer distance to Amman, Jordan, and the Jordanian regime was, and remains, relatively weak. It has a nice little army, but it couldn't stand up against a massive, mechanized attack.

So the Israelis, both for political and propaganda purposes, as well as on the basis of their own, strategic analyses, were, and remain very concerned about the possibility of an Iraqi takeover of Jordan and of the possibility of the Iraqis appearing one day, in mechanized strength, at the edge of the Jordan Valley between Israel and Jordan.

Q: From your Israeli contacts, and particularly the military, and almost anybody that you would deal with in Israel had a military background, what were you getting about the Iraqi military forces? The Iraqis had just had this long war with Iran and come out relatively ahead, if you want to put it that way.

BROWN: It was a mixed view. First, strategically, the Israelis were satisfied, to put it mildly, to see this prolonged and bloody conflict between Iraq and Iran, over a period of seven or eight years. This conflict took a terrible toll on both sides. However, as we went into Desert Shield and Desert Storm, notwithstanding the Israeli propensity to hype the Iraqi threat to Israel as a whole and to Iraq's neighbors, the top Israeli military professionals had a rather poor regard for the Iraqi military in terms of their ability to fight a modern war. Having said that, of course, the Israelis had very good intelligence on the massive numbers of Iraqi tanks, artillery, aircraft, and so forth. So it was a mixed picture.

What they saw was the ability of the Iraqis to overrun Kuwait quickly. They also saw the ability of the Iraqis, if unopposed by a U.S. led intervention, to overrun critical parts of Saudi Arabia, all the way down to the oil fields around Dhahran. They considered this a distinct possibility and even a probability, in the absence of massive intervention of the kind which only the United States could mount.

Going back again to an Israeli perception of an Iraqi threat, one had to bear in mind that among the baggage that the Israelis carried was the nuclear, chemical, and more lately, the biological buildup of the Iraqi military establishment. This had so disturbed the Israelis already that this was the subject of intensive conversations between Prime Minister Begin and Ambassador Sam Lewis and the intelligence communities of both Israel and the United States. The Israelis saw what they regarded as our failure to cope adequately with the ongoing flow of German, French, Swiss, and other type high technology into Iraq. This technology was producing centrifuges nominally for power plants. However, the Israelis also interpreted these centrifuges as part of a massive drive toward achieving a nuclear weapons capability in Iraq.

In my earlier remarks, as you may recall, I mentioned the gap in handling this issue between the outgoing Carter administration in the U.S. and the incoming Reagan administration. The Israelis had repeatedly warned us at a very senior level after high level, intelligence exchanges with the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] on this subject. Considering that we were apparently inert on this matter and that the U.S. attitude had been limited to asking for more time to work on the Italians, the French, and the Germans on nuclear matters, the Israelis bombed the Iraqi nuclear reactor in June, 1981. This action produced a negative outcry at the time in the U.S. and a minicrisis in U.S.-Israeli relations. You may recall at the time that we temporarily cut off supplies of aircraft and aircraft support to Israel.

Q: As you look back on the Israeli bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor, what was your feeling on that? Was this a sort of tongue in cheek protest against the U.S., or did we see Iraq as a threat? Did we feel that: "Thank God that somebody did this, or..."

BROWN: Well, there was an outcry in Washington and some tough, critical statements by the some members of the Reagan administration. The Secretary of State at the time was Al Haig. If you look at remarks made about Al Haig's reactions to all of this, let alone

his later remarks, you get the impression that even then certain Americans felt that the attack on the Iraqi nuclear reactor was not all a bad thing. As time went on and we became increasingly aware of what was going on in Iraqi nuclear/chemical/bacteriological activities long after that bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor, this attack was subsequently viewed as a good thing.

During the Gulf War I heard Secretary of Defense Cheney bless the Israelis for having undertaken this attack. He also said, "Thank God that you did it when you did it." So we need to distinguish between our reaction to the Israeli attack on the Iraqi nuclear facility at the time, our subsequent views, and then our views during the Gulf War itself, as well as what we discovered when UN and predominantly U.S. inspection teams went into Iraq after the Gulf War and discovered the amount of progress which the Iraqis had made in terms of horrible weapons of mass destruction. As you look at Israeli-Iraqi relations during this period, they were marked by a technical state of war. Both Israelis and Iraqis have a very negative view of each other, to put it mildly.

On April 2, 1990, Saddam Hussein made the statement I have already referred to. Israeli Minister of Defense Moshe Arens, whom I considered a friend but who was known in Israel to be hawkish called me in and asked me what the U.S. was going to do about this statement. That began the Israeli push, well-articulated by Arens, for concrete assurances, for increased cooperation to face this common threat to the U.S. and Israel. You should remember that at the same time the political relationship between the Shamir Government, in which Arens was the Minister of Defense, and Secretary of State James Baker was not good. After a cut-down version of a Middle East peace process was articulated by Israeli Prime Minister Shamir, President Bush and Secretary Baker attempted to shape things in their own way. As a result, the peace process went nowhere, and there was bad feeling on both the Israeli and U.S. sides. The Arab Intifada [uprising] in the occupied territories was continuing and was applauded by Iraq.

Within the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] there are many factions, some of them very radical. One of those factions was in Damascus, which directed fire and brimstone not only against the Israelis but against Yasser Arafat [Chairman of the PLO] for being soft. Another one of these PLO factions, which is called "The Palestine Liberation Front," (PLF) is headquartered in Baghdad. It was a particularly virulent terrorist group. This is the group which seized the SS ACHILLE LAURO, an Italian cruise ship, in the Eastern Mediterranean, and executed one of the passengers on it, a handicapped American citizen, Klinghoffer, in a brutal manner.

At the end of May, 1990, on Shevut, a Jewish religious holiday, a couple of terrorist speedboats headed for the shore of Israel, when many thousands of Israelis were on the beaches. The terrorists from one boat managed to get ashore, there was a firefight, and they were hunted down and killed. The other speedboat ran out of fuel close to my residence! The Israelis picked up this speedboat there, armed to the teeth.

It turned out that these terrorists were members of the Palestinian Liberation Front, a

group headquartered in Baghdad, parts of which are now working out of Libya. Colonel Qadhafi had these people trained, they were put on a ship which somehow made its way through our satellite tracking system, and they were launched against the Israeli coast. However, these groups were launched too far out to sea. As a Palestinian terrorist of that time it was poorly coordinated and executed.

When the Israelis collected the survivors of this operation and interviewed them, they got a considerably detailed picture from them of what the terrorists were expected to do. It turned out that the plan was remarkably simplistic. That is, they were given a profile of the Tel Aviv skyline, as seen from the sea. They were told, "Here is the Hilton Hotel, here is the American embassy; go in and kill anybody that you can. Then somehow, after this, work out an escape route." According to the Israelis, The American embassy in Tel Aviv was specifically mentioned as a target. The Israelis asked me if we would like to have our intelligence people interview these terrorists. I declined.

Then I sat down and wrote a cable to Washington, summarizing what had happened. I noted that there was a dialogue going on with the PLO in Tunis. In view of what had happened, I recommended that, unless Arafat immediately dissociated himself from this faction of the PLO organization, denounced them and did whatever was necessary to make his opposition to this operation clear, we should break off further contacts with the PLO.

I knew that this cable would not necessarily attract great acclaim from the administration in Washington. [Laughter] The Bush administration had assiduously followed up the trail which the Reagan administration had blazed for a probing dialogue with the PLO in Tunis, to be conducted by Ambassador Bob Pelletreau. Understandably, a great hue and cry went up after terrorist incident. About three weeks later the Bush administration declared that it was ending the dialogue with the PLO. It did so in a way which left me and others convinced that this was a most reluctant move and that it was hoped that, somehow, this obstacle could be overcome. However, once again there was an Iraqi element in all of this, even though the operation itself was launched by Colonel Qadhafi.

Q: I don't want to get you off track, but I would like to set the scene. During this period before the Iraqis attacked and occupied Kuwait, were we doing anything with the Israelis about their occupation of a strip of Lebanon immediately North of the border with Israel?

BROWN: Throughout my entire time as DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] in Tel Aviv, and I am referring to the entire 1979-1982 period, as well as this period of my tour as ambassador, we were working under UN Resolution 425, which was unfulfilled in a key respect. The Resolution provided that all non-Lebanese forces were to withdraw from the region occupied by the Israelis and their ally, the South Lebanese Army under Major Haddad. This was a mix of not only Christian Lebanese Arabs but also Christian Druze and Shia Muslims. So whenever we had a dialogue with the Israelis on that particular subject, we were constrained by the need to implement UN Resolution 425, to which we

were a party. The Resolution meant in practical terms that the Israelis should pull out of Lebanon and let the UN monitor the situation. The Israelis weren't about to do that under the conditions which then prevailed.

You remember the Lebanese civil war of 1982 in the wake of the Sabra and Shatila scandal. There was a pull-back of Israeli forces orchestrated by then Israeli Minister of Defense Arens, followed by a further pull-back orchestrated by Israeli Prime Minister Rabin. Subsequently, there were periodic episodes of attack and counterattack in southern Lebanon. The Israelis continued air strikes against concentrations of what now had become known as Hezbollah forces. These areas were first held by Palestinian forces, and were later taken over by the Hezbollah brand of Shiite, Iranian backed forces, with the clear acquiescence of the Syrians. Syria was supposedly constrained by the consideration that Hezbollah forces should not go too far, but the Syrians, their assurances to the contrary notwithstanding, were allowing Iran to run weaponry and ammunition, agents, and so forth from Iran, through Damascus, into Lebanon, thereby building up this Hezbollah effort. At times the Israeli combat with Hezbollah paramilitary units was quite sharp. So our position, as conveyed to the Israelis, was that there should be moderation and restraint, as it always had been. Moreover, we were driven by support for UN Resolution 425. This meant that the Israelis should pull out of southern Lebanon.

Q: Did we protest from time to time about the continued presence of Israeli units in Lebanon?

BROWN: Sure, we protested, when we saw that an Israeli action or reaction seemed to have gone too far. My contacts in Israel on this issue included Uri Lubrani a senior civilian within the Israeli military security establishment. He was a highly experienced officer, an articulate gentleman who had great experience with Iranian and Arab issues. He could sit with you and lay out in the most detailed manner why the Israelis were in Lebanon and why they were doing what they were doing. He expressed his own, personal willingness to see things resolved in an equitable manner, if only he could get positive responses from the Arab side. Lubrani was involved in all kinds of quiet efforts to open dialogues with Hezbollah and Shiite representatives and, indeed, others in the Muslim world. These efforts generally came to nothing. At any given time he had all kinds of operations under way, many of which he would discuss with me in confidence.

The Hezbollah position was and is absolute rejection of Israel and a determination to push the Israelis, not only out of southern Lebanon, but out of Israel. They remained totally rejectionist in their expressed attitude toward Israel. In other words, they expressed commitment to the idea of the destruction of the Zionist entity and a return of Palestine to its Arab, Muslim owners.

Against this background, let's go back to April, 1990, and the American reaction to the developing crisis at that time. Shortly after the Saddam Hussein statement of April 2, 1990, to which I referred previously, a U.S. Senatorial delegation headed by then Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole visited the Middle East. It included Senator Dole, his wife

Libby Dole, and a few others. I think that it included four Republicans, Senator Howard Metzenbaum [Democrat, Ohio] was the Democratic member of this Delegation. He was included to make the delegation bipartisan. In their various meetings they saw President Mubarak of Egypt. Then they headed for Baghdad. At that time I received an urgent message from Senator Metzenbaum. I ended up talking with his staff member, over an open line, from the Delegation's plane.

If I recall correctly, Metzenbaum's staffer said, "We're headed for Baghdad, and Senator Metzenbaum wants your clearance." [Laughter] Looking on this as a kind of "cover your posterior" approach, I said, "Well, if you're going there, you're going there. Good luck!" They went to Baghdad. From there they came to Israel. I received a somewhat unusual request from Senator Dole that he wanted a big press conference shortly after his arrival at the Hilton Hotel in Jerusalem.

Now, prudent leaders of congressional delegations to Israel usually save their remarks until the end of their visit, after they've seen the Israel Prime Minister and other Israeli big wigs. They usually try to wrap up the visit and put their particular gloss on it. However, Senator Dole had something he wanted to say in public on arrival in Israel.

So it was that Senator Dole held a large, very well attended press conference. The thrust of his remarks was that they had seen President Saddam Hussein of Iraq, they had queried him about his remarks on liquidating Israel. Saddam Hussein had stressed that he had no intent to launch an unprovoked attack against Israel. As far as the lurid accounts of Saddam Hussein's use of chemical warfare against the Kurdish population, and you remember those pictures of ghastly, gas attacks against Kurdish population centers in Iraq, Senator Dole said that Saddam denied that there had been any such gas attacks and offered him a helicopter to go around Iraq and see how the positive the populace felt about Saddam. Senator Dole prudently declined the use of such a helicopter, but wanted to pass on Saddam Hussein's assurances that he meant no ill will against Iraq's neighbors. The general thrust of Senator Dole's extended press conference was that Saddam Hussein was a man who might have made some intemperate statements, but he was a man with whom one could do business. Therefore, hopefully, there was no major threat in the region.

I would say that, as a public relations exercise, it was a disaster at the time. Here we had a very respected Republican leader in the Senate who was later to become a Presidential candidate, reassuring the Israelis and the world on the basis of his discussions with Saddam Hussein. This did not go down well in Israel.

Q: When a U.S. Senator comes in like that, you were the American ambassador, and I can see people in the Israeli Government coming up to you and saying: "Nu?" [What's up?]. [Laughter] What do you do and how do you react to this?

BROWN: How do you respond? You say that the man has just been to Iraq. He tells you what he said in public. You have to weigh this statement. Certainly, his intentions were

good. You add that you don't have to point out that Senator Dole was the Senate Minority Leader. Let me add a vignette on Dole: during one of Shamir's visits to Washington he had a breakfast meeting with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Committee Chairman Senator Pell [Democrat, Rhode Island], Senator Jesse Helms [Republican, North Carolina] and Senator Dole were present at this meeting. There was a good turnout, of the kind that an Israeli Prime Minister usually gets. Shamir was given an opportunity to speak and then the Senators made remarks.

At this session, the Intifada came up. Some of the Senators present at the meeting expressed their concern over the handling of the Intifada and received a typical, Shamir response. In all of this, of course, Senator Jesse Helms was very supportive of Israel. At the same time Senator Dole was looking pretty sour. As this meeting ended, Senator Dole walked past me, looked at me, paused, and said, "Boy, if this guy [Shamir] had been from South Africa, we would have really raked him over the coals!" So, shall I say, Senator Dole displayed a manner that the Israelis considered unsympathetic, if not hostile, to Israel, at that particular stage.

However, one always has to temper these impressions because Senator Dole's viewpoint and that of many members of Congress, whatever they said publicly, were affected by the Israeli handling of the Intifada and of the peace process. Remember that the first peace initiative was portrayed as coming from Prime Minister Shamir. Shamir's reaction to the handling of that episode by President Bush and Secretary of State Baker in 1989 and 1990 left much to be desired, to put it mildly.

As tension in the Middle East mounted Israeli Minister of Defense Arens presented proposals for a cooperative effort to handle this threat to our respective national interests. As he did this, the American establishment was obviously getting antsy [disturbed]. It didn't want to jump into bed with the Israelis in handling the emerging crisis. It was working hard to contain the crisis in its own way. It didn't want to be seen to be coordinating with the Israelis.

Israeli Minister of Defense Arens was mounting these probes, these direct inquiries, to U.S. Secretary of Defense Cheney and others. Arens was making trips and was getting a polite but unmistakable stiff arm from the U.S. This was sort of cyclical. As he got the stiff arm, he continued on, and, of course, the Israelis were working through other channels, congressional and so forth, as the heat built up.

On August 2, 1990, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. Now, the fat was really in the fire and, with it, Israeli Defense Minister Arens intensified Israeli requests for a coordinated effort to deal with the situation. When you got down to the nitty gritty, what the Israelis wanted was better intelligence on the precise locations of Iraqi missiles which might be used to attack Israel. We had done some overflights of suspected missiles in northern Iraq. On their own, as well as through intelligence exchanges with the U.S., the Israelis knew that the Iraqis had moved SCUD missiles, some of them fixed and some of them mobile, to what were called the H2 and H3 airfields in northern Iraq. From these positions

a modified SCUD would have the range to hit Israel.

As time went on the Israelis, by one means or another, developed the intelligence that, not only were these missiles in northern Iraq but these missile deployments were increasing. These missiles were pointed at Tel Aviv or Haifa. So there was a lot of activity on the part of the Iraqis going on in northern Iraq, concurrently with other things. Arens' requests increased, and now what he wanted was very specific. He wanted live, real-time intelligence on what was going on there. He wanted photographs of the targets which would enable a sophisticated recipient of these photographs to pinpoint Iraqi targets.

The U.S. was not providing this target information to the Israelis. We were talking about intelligence exchanges in more generalized terms. We said that these Iraqi missiles were deployed in northern Iraq, but we were not providing the Israelis with specific, reconnaissance photographs of either the H2 and H3 SCUD missiles, both fixed and mobile, or anything else, out of fear that the Israelis might go overboard and resort to some preemptive action against these targets. Secretary of Defense Cheney was polite and friendly in response to these requests from Israeli Defense Minister Arens, but he continued to stiff arm these requests.

Within Israel itself, as we got into the latter part of 1990, the political position of the Shamir Government was weakening in domestic terms. This was almost a normal development for an Israeli coalition government. Remember that this was now the second Shamir cabinet. The Labour Party was excluded after Shimon Peres misplayed his hand in January, 1990. The new cabinet had growing, internal frictions as groups within Likud led by Ariel Sharon, Moda'i, and David Levy, three very different figures, wanted more power and more leverage on Prime Minister Shamir.

In an effort to strengthen his coalition government, Shamir began to try to attract small, extreme Right Wing parties such as that led by Rafoul Eytan, whom I mentioned previously. He was a former Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defense Forces and was a very hard, hawkish individual vis-a-vis all Arabs. Another retired general, Ze'evi, who was nicknamed "Gandhi," was the head of a two-man extremist political party named "Moledet," the Hebrew name for "the Hammer." Ze'evi was an advocate of transfer. That is, the expulsion of the Palestinian population from the occupied territories, in the absence of a major change in attitude on the part of the Palestinians. Moledet was a really hawkish party. That was the kind of internal development occurring within and around the Likud.

As the political tension mounted, the Constrainers, Sharon, Moda'i, and Levy, were critical of everything that Prime Minister Shamir and Minister of Defense Arens did. So this affected not only internal, domestic policy, but it produced a hardening among those whom I mentioned in Likud who were critical of the government. This had an extra-deleterious effect when the Gulf War finally came. Arens and company were pressing for target reconnaissance photography as part of a live, real time intelligence exchange. Trips were being made back and forth. The administration of President Bush was saying, in

effect: "Look, we'll manage this. We'll certainly keep Israeli interests in mind. However, don't muck things up, don't do anything pre-emptive. Let us go about our efforts to form a Grand Coalition against Iraq."

When President Bush committed troops to Saudi Arabia, we witnessed the extensive, continuing buildup called Desert Shield. When the Israelis looked at this enormous buildup, they continued their efforts by proposing a direct relationship with General Norman Schwarzkopf [Commander of Central Command and of the buildup of forces committed to Desert Shield, as well as of combat operations under Desert Storm]. This was turned down flat. We said that we would manage this relationship through Washington and that we would give the Israelis what was necessary. However, we made clear that we would manage it our own way.

Q: Were you in the position of trying to say to the Israelis: "Come on, fellows, you understand what the situation is." The Israelis had to know that they could screw things up if they got too close to what we were doing.

BROWN: I had my role and I had my scripts. I can remember situations when Arens was pressing me, along with Washington agencies, for a commitment to provide target photos of Iraq. As I knew what the Washington line was, I was saying: "Will you promise not to attack the Iraqis?" Of course, Arens wouldn't do so. I would then have to report his refusal to provide such a commitment.

Remember that the atmosphere at times was clouded by other, extraneous issues. For instance, as we had been for some time, we were upset about the Israeli relationship with South Africa. There was and had been developing in South Africa a missile program which had progressed so far that we could anticipate the deployment of missiles in South Africa which had a remarkable likeness to the Israeli developed nuclear capable Jericho missile. We were aware of big contracts involving large amounts of money. I had already previously broached this subject with Israeli Minister of Defense Rabin and, later, with Minister of Defense Arens. The Israelis did not take kindly to such approaches. They told us that they had no nuclear cooperation arrangements with the South Africans. They told us that these are well-paying contracts which have to do with conventional matters related to space exploration but not matters involving mass destruction or nuclear weapons.

Well, we were very concerned about this. From time to time I would make strong demarches on this subject. These were not appreciated, particularly when I made them at this time, as Desert Shield was going on. Either under instructions or not under instructions, I also raised with the Israelis their technological exchanges with the People's Republic of China, because I felt so strongly on the subject. We were aware, over time, that the Israelis had been providing the People's Republic of China with fairly sophisticated technology, for example, the PYTHON weapons system. The PYTHON was an Air to Air Missile developed by the Israelis which gave them a BVR [Beyond Visual Range] capability to acquire and hit an aerial target. This made it a deadly and very important advance in aerial warfare. I told Arens that this kind of equipment could

change the balance of forces over the Taiwan Strait. I told him that Israel should not be doing this. There were some spirited exchanges with Arens over that matter as well. Again, Arens was particularly irritated that we were raising this kind of subject, given the Iraqi problem. I guess that he felt that it was inappropriate.

We didn't think so. These were issues which came up concurrently, and I, as an old China hand, was particularly zeroed in on the PYTHON Air to Air missile and let this be known.

The enormous U.S. buildup in the Gulf area continued. Saddam Hussein showed no sign of backing down. The overall situation showed more and more the likelihood that war would break out. As the Israelis looked around, they were still getting complaints from the Europeans and others, including ourselves, about the Intifada and the situation in the occupied territories [of Palestine]. The Israelis saw us forming what they regarded as a very strange coalition of countries opposed to Saddam Hussein, and I give full marks to President Bush and Secretary of State Baker for having been able to do so.

This coalition against Saddam Hussein included, among others, Israel's hated enemy, President Assad of Syria. Just a word here. The long, protracted conflict between Syria and Israel was also marked, not only by the Arab-Israeli wars of 1948, 1967, and 1973, but also by the whole conflagration in Lebanon. In 1982 the fighting in Lebanon resulted in the Israelis shooting down considerable numbers of aircraft of the Syrian Air Force and the destruction of numbers of Syria's T-72, Soviet-furnished heavy tanks. The Israelis also destroyed a goodly proportion of Syria's radar and anti-aircraft defenses in Lebanon and also took on Syrian troops stationed in Lebanon and defeated them as necessary in 1982.

Armed conflict between Israel and Syria goes way back. There were all kinds of firefights which took place before 1967 on the Israeli-Syrian front. Once the Israelis took over the Golan Heights in 1973, President Assad was very careful not to precipitate conflict in the Golan area. Rather, he shifted his efforts into Lebanon and into housing and hosting all kinds of ultra-radical terrorist and PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] groups and then gradually, over time, supporting the Hezbollah, in Lebanon. Moreover, over time President Assad was developing his own missile and chemical warfare program, as well as the beginnings of a biological warfare capability. In terms of strike capability and time to target, missiles fired from Syria don't have to travel 500 kilometers, as a souped-up SCUD missile later did when it was fired from the H2 or H3 airfield areas in northern Iraq. Missiles fired from Syria can hit their targets in Israel in almost no time at all. In fact, Syrian aircraft, including the MiGs and so forth which they have, can take off from Syrian bases and can be over Israel in one minute or less. I remember that during my time in Israel a disaffected, Syrian pilot suddenly zoomed in and landed on an Israeli airfield. He was barely discovered in flight by Israeli radar when he was landing in Israel. Suddenly, he was on the ground in Israel.

So to see Syria included in the coalition built against Saddam Hussein did not exactly please the Israelis because with it came the glamor of being a member of such a coalition

and nice words being sent to President Assad. A meeting took place between Presidents Bush and Assad in Geneva or Vienna. Bush and Baker didn't come to Israel to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Shamir. So a new relationship was developing between the U.S. and Syria. From our viewpoint this was understandable because it was a remarkable achievement to get Syria into the coalition against Saddam Hussein, even if Assad did nothing but move some troops to the Iraqi border. The Israelis were none too happy about this, but they had to swallow it.

Q: While you were getting this, did the Israelis develop a new respect for the United States from the fact that, by God, when the chips were really down, the U.S. was putting our troops where our mouth was.

BROWN: Yes, the Israelis followed the U.S. scene very carefully, of course. However, the scene was somewhat muddled by the fact that the Democrats in Congress and some defense experts, including retired Admiral William Crowe, went along with the buildup against Saddam Hussein but were also looking for a non-violent, peaceful resolution of this crisis.

Q: The embargo on the shipment of U.S. food and other goods to Iraq was approved at about this time.

BROWN: The embargo was approved, but it didn't have much of an impact on Iraq. The closer we got to open conflict with Iraq, the more concern was articulated on the American scene. Arens and company followed this development very closely. I think that their analysis was that war would come, but there was a concern that the U.S. might just back down rather than go to war.

By December, 1990, the U.S. buildup was so enormous that I would say that Arens and the Israeli defense establishment had concluded that: a) Saddam Hussein, who was so stupid in so many ways, would probably not back down; and b) that the U.S. was now so publicly committed to combat by this massive, growing presence in the Middle East that we wouldn't back down, either. Indeed, we finally got a UN resolution approved which set January 15, 1991, as a deadline for an Iraqi pullout from Kuwait, or else.

I would like to pause at this point and describe a vignette which took place in early December, 1990. This involved a very painful experience for me and highlights the dilemma which I felt at the time. In the midst of this enormous U.S. buildup in the Gulf area, in the midst of all of these Iraqi actions, including the invasion of Kuwait and the butchery that Iraqi forces perpetrated, and their other actions and the revelations of what the Iraqis had done, one a weekend in December, 1990, I received information that the Iraqis had just launched what appeared to be two or three, SCUD missiles from the area around Basra, in southeastern Iraq, to the Northwest. They impacted at a range of around 500 kilometers from the point at which they had been fired. Had these missiles been fired from H2 or H3, their line of flight would have taken these missiles directly to the Tel Aviv/Haifa area. This information was obviously of enormous import to us and to Israel

as a likely target.

I immediately charged my Defense Attache and my CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] Chief of Station with getting clearance from Washington to pass this information to the Israelis. I tried to obtain clearance myself over the secure telephone available to me in the embassy in Tel Aviv. This happened on a Saturday or a Sunday, I can't remember which. Certainly, it was over a weekend. We could not get any action out of Washington. We tried repeatedly, through different channels, but, over and over again, we were stonewalled. I was really pressing my CIA Chief of Station and my Defense Attache for action. It was obvious that the necessary clearance from Washington had to come through one or both of those channels. My staff tried repeatedly to obtain clearance to pass this information but could not get it.

At this time a Senator visiting in Israel. Maybe it was Senator Oren Hatch [Republican, Utah]. He was due to see Israeli Minister of Defense Arens that evening at about 6:00 PM local time. I was scheduled to accompany the Senator on this call. I pressed all day long in anticipation of the meeting with the Defense Minister that evening. I hoped that I would receive authorization to pass on this vital intelligence information of deadly import to Israel. I thought of this problem in terms of our main objective of keeping the Israelis on the reservation and not doing anything, by commission or omission, which might prompt the Israelis to launch a pre-emptive strike against Iraq. That could have been disastrous at that stage to the coalition against Iraq and our more general objectives in the area.

All day, all afternoon this process went on of trying to obtain clearance to pass the information to the Israelis. No positive reply was obtained. Our Defense Attache was specifically prohibited from passing this information to the Israelis until clearance was obtained from Washington.

The meeting came between Israeli Defense Minister Arens with the Senator. Arens gave a very serious briefing on the overall situation and his desire for the right kind of U.S. help and so forth. As the meeting broke up, I asked for the opportunity to meet separately with Arens. We said good-bye to the Senator who left, accompanied by other embassy officers. Arens took me into his office, and we were there alone. I sat down and said, "Have you got a map of Iraq handy?" He picked up his phone and asked him to arrange to have someone bring a map of Iraq. It was remarkable how long it took, at least five minutes, before the map was brought. This was a rather strained period. Obviously, Arens was looking at me, wondering why the American ambassador was asking him for a map of Iraq. Finally, the map appeared. The officer who brought it left Arens' office. We spread the map out on his desk. I said to him words to the following effect. "Look, my friend, I am putting my testicles in your hands. There has been, I am sure, a misunderstanding. You are going to get this information. It's just that it's a weekend, and you know how it is on a weekend in Washington, so that formal clearance hasn't come, but I'm sure that it will come. Don't jump to the wrong conclusion." I pointed to Basra on the map and said that the Iraqis had just launched, that day, two or three missiles from about here to about

there (I pointed to the two places concerned.) on about a 500 kilometer trajectory.

Q: You mean that this was a test launch. This was not a real missile launch. I want to clarify this point.

BROWN: Yes. This was a launch within Iraqi territory of missiles on a trajectory of about 500 kilometers. I said that it was a launch on a Northwesterly trajectory from here to here (pointing to the map), impacting around there. It didn't take Arens long to figure out that that was the approximate distance from H2 or H3 to Tel Aviv. I emphasized that I was sure that Arens would get this information through regular, security channels anyway, but I just wanted him to know of this development.

As I said this, internally I was sweating bullets. I was very security conscious and very much aware of the clearances in process and all of that. However, I just felt that this had to be done if we were going to maintain a semblance of confidence and trust in achieving our main objective which, as I said, was to keep the Israelis away from launching a preemptive strike at Iraq and keeping them on the reservation.

I left Arens' office at about 6:30 or 7:00 PM. My Defense Attache called me and said, "You're clean, because the clearance has just come through." That episode is set forth in Arens' book, Broken Covenant. In it he said that I told him that I was putting my life in danger. No, I didn't say that. I said that I was putting my testicles in his hands. [Laughter] Secondly, he says in his book that the follow-up message didn't come through for a couple of days or weeks, in any case much later. That's not accurate. According to my Defense Attache, the clearance came through just as I was giving Defense Minister Arens the information on my own authority. This is the kind of problem that you can run into in crisis situations like this. You just have to exercise your judgment. As I look back on this episode, I can see that it was a reflection of how uptight Washington was on a weekend with this kind of information.

Later on, I raised this matter with Judge Webster, then Director of CIA [Central Intelligence Agency]. He gave me a peculiar response, to the effect that he had been at a Washington Redskins football game, and there was a communications problem. My own suspicion was that this was probably a decision made by General Brent Scowcroft [National Security Adviser to President Bush]. Scowcroft had a pretty hard view of how to handle such matters. However, I felt that it would have been most damaging to our interests in Israel had we not passed that information on.

Q: Oh, absolutely! Was it the type of thing that you could have reported to Washington: "Unless otherwise instructed..."

BROWN: No. I'd used up my bargaining chips and I'd pressed my Chief of Station and Defense Attache to the limit on this matter. So there you are. Occasionally, you run into that kind of dilemma. You hope that you won't, but if it does, you have to use your best judgment.

After Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz refused Secretary of State Baker's last approach and was asked, on camera, I think, "If it comes to war, does this mean war with Israel?" He replied: "Absolutely." I don't believe that he qualified that by conditioning it on an attack by Israel.

By now the internal demand within Israel for the distribution of gas masks was in full spate. The Defense Ministry did not have enough masks to provide them to the whole population of Israel and of the occupied territories. To minimize the possibility of panic, Arens resorted to partial distribution to the population of urban centers. For this he was heavily criticized by Ariel Sharon, Moda'i, and David Levy. Remember that Levy represented the Moroccan, Sephardic element of the population of Israel. Subsequently, Arens was forced to issue gas masks to all Israeli inhabitants of Jerusalem and to do the best he could.

Then came the cry: "What about chemical warfare?" It was a very difficult task for the Israeli political and military leadership to handle. However, by stages we were issued gas masks in cardboard boxes, which we carried around. Mothers with tiny infants were issued with portable, crib-like devices.

Remember, Saddam Hussein had claimed to have a binary chemical capability. In this context "binary" meant that you could take two chemical substances, shovel them into a SCUD missile nose cone, and they would react with each other on impact to turn the subsequent product into a weapon of mass destruction, whether it was Sarin, VX, mustard gas, or another exotic, terrible weapons system. Tensions were running higher all the time, and there was an increasingly shrill call by Arens and other Israeli leaders for photos of Iraqi missile emplacements.

Now that the U.S. ultimatum to withdraw from Kuwait had been given to the Iraqis and rejected, the pressure increased from Arens to let the Israelis know what our plans were. The Israelis wanted to have immediate, direct contact with the U.S. on the basis of a real time intelligence exchange basis. The Israelis wanted to be plugged in to General Schwarzkopf's command in Saudi Arabia. They wanted to know our plans. They said that we should know that, if Israel was hit, the Israelis had their own plans, and so forth.

Then began our effort to hold the Israelis on the line and keep them on the reservation. In this regard we set up a special, dedicated communications system called "HAMMER RICK." Using this system, Secretary of Defense Cheney and Israeli Minister of Defense Arens could communicate directly with each other on a radio telephone. Under this system, when one person speaks, the other person is cut off. Then the other person has his chance to speak, and the first person is cut off. And so it goes, back and forth. In response to obvious needs we also set up a special alert arrangement through the "HAMMER RICK" system whereby when our satellites spotted the launch of an Iraqi missile, the information would be immediately relayed to Tel Aviv so that the Israeli populace could be instantly warned.

In response to the Israeli request for real time photographs, the answer was that the U.S. would handle that question in our own way, bearing Israeli interests in mind. When that message was received, the decibels rose on the Israeli side because they wanted the real stuff in time and they wanted to be plugged into General Schwarzkopf's command. They let us know, in no uncertain terms, that they had their own contingency plans. The general tenor of their comments was: if the Iraqis strike us, we'll strike back. The Bush administration extracted from Israeli Prime Minister Shamir a commitment not to preempt without provocation. However, Shamir would not promise not to react if attacked by the Iraqis.

In this effort Paul Wolfowitz [Under Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs], for the Pentagon, and Larry Eagleburger, who was Deputy Secretary of State, both well and favorably known to the Israelis, were dispatched out to Israel, just before our first strikes against Iraq. Their task was to talk with Prime Minister Shamir and reach an agreement under which, not only would the Israelis not preempt but also would not react militarily if attacked. They also told the Israelis that on January 15, 1991, hostilities with Iraq would begin.

Now the request that the Israelis would not react militarily if attacked by the Iraqis was an extraordinary request, given Israeli history. We should recall that, in 1967, the Israelis were not first physically attacked by the Arabs, but the Arab buildup reached the point that the Israelis felt, for all intents and purposes, an Arab attack against Israel had already taken place. In effect, they launched on warning. They knew that an Arab attack against Israel was coming in a short time. So, in 1967, the Israelis launched a preemptive attack.

Now we were asking the Israelis to make a commitment not to react militarily, even if attacked by Iraq. In essence, Eagleburger and Wolfowitz assured Shamir that the U.S. would take care of the SCUD missiles at H2 and H3 in northern Iraq. We said that we would devote a major (by implication even a disproportionate) effort to that. If, in spite of our efforts the Iraqis managed to attack Israel with SCUD missiles launched from H2 and H3, Eagleburger and Wolfowitz called on the Israelis not to counterattack. They said that we would continue to devote great resources to take care of this threat against Israel. Furthermore, the U.S. didn't need Israeli forces to be involved in the attacks on Iraq. This could lead to disastrous results, and we could end up shooting each other down. Shamir told Eagleburger and Wolfowitz that while they would not attack Iraq preemptively, the Israelis were not going to commit themselves not to attack Iraq if attacked by Iraq. These conversations were now taking place at 2:00 or 3:00 AM. At one stage Eagleburger said that we could not give Israel the identification modems, or signals for our aircraft operating in the area, and Israeli air operations without those identification signals could be disastrous.

Q: Today is September 3, 1999. Bill, do you want to continue with your discussion of the

Eagleburger-Wolfowitz conversations with the Israelis?

BROWN: Fine. Let me again remind our readers or listeners that in this, as in all other instances, I have no notes. It is now nearly nine years after the event, so, in view of the frailties of my memory, this has to be checked. Various memoirs can be double-checked on this.

Just to pause a minute and review. Here we were on the eve of the Gulf War. The Israelis were very disturbed by Saddam Hussein's rhetoric and by their past war experience with the Iraqis. There was an additional factor here, the Jordanian factor. If I may deal briefly with this tangential matter...

Q: Yes.

BROWN: There had long been a relationship between various Israeli governments and King Hussein of Jordan. Over a protracted period, of time there had been clandestine meetings at the highest level. For example, Prime Minister Golda Meir, Moshe Dayan, or other Israeli figures would put on disguises and go to meet the Jordanians. There had been meetings on a yacht in the Gulf of Aqaba. I'm not saying that they took place very frequently, but there had been meetings with King Hussein of Jordan. Clandestine messages had also been passed through one channel or another.

However, the Israelis had also fought with the Jordanians who, in 1948, had seized what we call the "West Bank of the Jordan River," as well as the portion of Jerusalem inhabited by the Arabs. The Jordanians had stayed there, in armed force, as an occupying power. The Jordanians had formally, and unilaterally annexed the West Bank. I believe that this annexation was recognized only by Pakistan and one other country. The Jordanians were expelled from these occupied territories during the war of 1967 after Jordanian forces attacked Israel. There had been border incidents since then. There had been disputes and even minor firefights over water from the Yarmuk River where the Yarmuk River joins the Jordan River, when the Israelis found out that the Jordanians were illegally from the Israeli point of view, diverting that water. Formally, the two countries remained at war. At this stage, although Israel and Egypt had negotiated and signed a peace treaty, the Israelis were technically in an ongoing state of war with Jordan and with most other Arab countries.

In addition to this, during that fateful summer of 1990 the late King Hussein, under pressure, began to take some actions which were very disturbing, from the Israeli point of view. I can't recall them all, but there appeared in Jordan an Iraqi Air Force element. This unit began to exercise in Jordan, sometimes nominally in conjunction with Jordanian air units. Jordan was obviously under pressure. It was gravitating more and more toward Iraq, as the tension mounted in the Middle East. This made the Israelis very unhappy and, of course, it didn't make the U.S. happy at all.

By January, 1991, Jordanian units began to go on a reinforcement and alert basis along

their side of the Jordan River. The Israelis began to ask themselves what this portended. Was it just Jordanian nervousness or did it portend, perhaps, in the worst case, an invitation or pretext for the Iraqis to move into Jordan. Suddenly, this could pose a massive, mechanized threat to Israel. This was a very disturbing development as well.

There was a strong feeling on the streets of Amman. At least 60 percent of the population of Jordan was composed of Palestinians. The figure may be as high as 80 percent, but it is somewhere in that 60 to 80 percent range. The Palestinians, and certainly Yasser Arafat [Chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organization] were applauding Saddam Hussein throughout this whole crisis. During this period of heightened tension, the influence of the Iraqis and Palestinians on King Hussein was obvious, and there were several, other negative developments which I cannot recall. However, taken altogether, it was an unhappy, disturbing extra element of concern for the Israelis.

Q: Through our ambassador to Jordan or through the State Department, or through the Israelis, with their rather constant contact with the Jordanians in one place or another, were markers being put down, such as: "Don't do this, or that will happen," and so forth?

BROWN: I can't remember specifically, but I'm confident that such markers were being put down from the American side. We were leading the coalition against Saddam Hussein, and King Hussein's actions were undermining it. His rhetoric, that of the then Crown Prince of Jordan, his brother, and of the Jordanian media was subversive to our overall efforts.

As the embargo against Iraq in the Persian Gulf went into effect and was tightened, the Iraqis became more and more dependent on the overland supply line, which ran from Aqaba [at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba], which could accommodate fairly large ships, then by heavy truck up to Amman and over to Baghdad. The squeeze began there as well, in terms of a coalition maritime force. This was a subject of increasing tension, as the U.S. dominated force was out to stop war materials going into Iraq. There was constant squabbling as to the contents of these ships. Over a protracted period, representatives of the coalition maritime force were boarding ships which were moving through the Strait of Tiran into the Gulf of Aqaba and unloading their cargoes at Aqaba, [Jordan]. So there was further contention there.

Again, as time went on, there were questions of money, as the total, coalition squeeze tightened on Iraq. The status of Jordan remained a contentious issue throughout all of this. The Iraqis stepped up their presence in Jordan and exploited it. At times one felt that the checkpoint on the Iraqi-Jordanian border in fact was like a sieve, as goods which might have military value flowed around this point in the desert. We were pressing the Jordanians, and they were making excuses.

The second Eagleburger/Wolfowitz mission took place shortly after the outbreak of the Gulf War when in spite of our bombing of fixed Iraqi missile emplacements, and in spite

of our use of PATRIOT anti-missile batteries, Iraqi SCUDS fell on Tel Aviv and Haifa. Eagleburger and Wolfowitz urged the Israelis to maintain a low profile and stay put. They promised that we would devote even greater resources to the bombing of SCUD missiles, both static and mobile. The Israelis countered: "We have never, in our history, had to rely on anybody to defend us and, if we continue to be attacked, we can respond." Eagleburger refused repeated requests by the Israelis to prepare joint plans. Some Israelis then said that if we wouldn't prepare joint plans with them, then, if attacked, they could counterattack using their own plans. Given the geography, there is only one direct route to go from Israel to Iraq, and that's through Jordan or else through a small slice of Syria. However, the real answer is through Jordan. The Israelis said that it would be regrettable, but if the Jordanians sent up aircraft up to try to prevent the use of a corridor over and through Jordan, then they would have to take out the Jordanian air force.

That view, expressed by some Israelis below Shamir, created great consternation among the Americans. Eagleburger told Prime Minister Shamir that a refusal to accept our proposals followed by an Israel air attack against Iraq might create a situation where we could not provide Israel with the identification codes for our military aircraft, and a disaster could result. This very clearly meant that in the fog of war we might inadvertently end up shooting down Israeli aircraft or they Israelis might inadvertently shoot down ours.

When Eagleburger and Wolfowitz got back to the hotel from their conversation with Shamir, they reported by secure phone to National Security Adviser Scowcroft and Secretary of Defense Cheney. Eagleburger was talking to Scowcroft, and Wolfowitz was talking to Cheney, on secure phones out of our Control Room in the Hilton Hotel in Jerusalem. I think that Secretary of State Baker was in the Control Room over at the White House, although I am not sure of this. When the import of what Eagleburger had said to Shamir sank in, there was a bit of a flurry, and Eagleburger called back to Prime Minister Shamir in the middle of the night. Eagleburger said something like this, "Mr. Prime Minister, I'm afraid that I may have overstepped my instructions. What I meant was that, in extremis [in the last analysis], we will not cooperate with you on any joint operations. However, what we could do would be to stand down." That is, if after suffering heavy casualties Israel were to launch a counter attack on Iraq by air, and if we had adequate information of this, we could stand down or step aside.

Q: In other words, we could get out of Israel's way.

BROWN: Yes. Meanwhile the situation was a very dicey as the SCUD attacks continued. Within the embassy in Tel Aviv we had all been issued with gas masks. We had them at our side 24 hours a day. We also had put up plastic sheeting, as people did throughout Israel, in at least one room above ground in our homes and within the embassy. Until then Israel had been geared for conventional air attacks and had specially constructed shelters in hotels and municipal buildings. In houses people very often had their shelters for an explosive attack by conventional warheads. Now, we had to consider a chemical warfare attack and, therefore, you wouldn't want to go down below ground. You had to go up and get into an airtight, plasticized room, put on your gas mask, and try to survive. So that had

all been prepared. The embassy had had its drills and everybody had been inspected.

Q: Were you losing personnel at this time?

BROWN: Well, there is another, painful subject. As the crisis mounted, naturally enough, we began to develop embassy plans for reducing the size of our staff radically. In the wake of the Iranian disaster of 1979 [when the embassy in Tehran was seized by revolutionaries], I swore to myself that if I ever became a chief of mission or had any power of decision over the matter, I would devise a plan under which I could run an embassy with very few, say five people: the ambassador, a communicator, a consular officer, and an administrative officer or two.

Now, obviously the situation in Israel was not the same kind of situation we had faced in Iran. However, I developed a plan for progressive, staged reductions in staff. As I tried to obtain approval for this plan from the Department, over the secure phone, I ran into a stone wall of opposition in the State Department.

The debate was really aggravating me and to my Washington counterparts. To this day I still don't have the full picture but I concluded that General Brent Scowcroft [National Security Adviser to the President] and probably other people as well, including President Bush didn't want the image of Americans leaving Israel to be displayed. They didn't want it for a variety of reasons, primarily because they feared that a drawdown in Israel might affect the enormous, American presence working in the oilfields of Saudi Arabia.

Q: And in support facilities.

BROWN: And in support facilities in what was the crux of the operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. There were surely other, political considerations as well.

You can draw all kinds of lines, including voluntary departure and the guidelines for it, the departure of non-essential people, and, in the last analysis, the directed departure of personnel. I struggled over this problem. I don't think that at this stage it is useful to talk about the rhetoric of the matter. However, I say that we had a really, potentially serious situation in this regard. If Saddam Hussein used these weapons of terror, directed against civilian populations, and if we did not get unnecessary people out of here, including wives, babies, other dependents, and eventually non-essential officers, we would be leaving ourselves wide open to all kinds of severe criticism. People might say, "You had all of this time. Why didn't you send some of your personnel home?"

Remember, as we get to the period that I'm now discussing, civilian airlines, except El Al [Israeli state airline], were canceling flights and the insurance rates on shipping were enormously increased, as insurance brokers prudently covered those contingencies. We didn't have an independent airlift in Israel at that time. This was a subject that really worried me.

Q: Also, the available, American airlift was pretty well tied up with the buildup in Saudi Arabia.

BROWN: Oh, yes. Obviously, we had figured out that the Iraqi enhanced SCUD missiles clearly had enough range to reach Tel Aviv and Haifa. Their warheads could be chemical or biological.

There was also the whole question of casualties and hospitalization. The Israelis have long had very sophisticated and detailed plans for military disasters, including gas attack and so forth. Their hospitals are geared toward treatment of these various contingencies. However, we just didn't know at the time what would happen in the last analysis. Perhaps by the time we would get a casualty to the hospital, he or she might be permanently crippled or dead. So there was a contentious dialogue going on all the time, largely between myself and Jack Covey and Ivan Selin in the Department of State. Perhaps I had better just leave it at that.

Q: I would have thought that when you consider what borders need to be crossed, the best thing would be to get buses and take the evacuees to Egypt.

BROWN: Well, if I may jump ahead a bit, there were differences of opinion within our official, American community. My wife, Helen, being a gung ho Foreign Service spouse, said, "I'm not going anywhere." However, a little later, after the first Iraqi SCUD missiles fell, I said to her: "You're going to Eilat" [on the Gulf of Aqaba], because we had figured out that the SCUD's couldn't reach Eilat. I said, "You're going down there. You're going to be a role model and you're going to lead a bus convoy." She vigorously objected but, finally, agreed. She took our cat and led a convoy of Embassy dependents down to Eilat, where we had leased hotel space for the period of the conflict.

Q: As this situation was developing, and I'm not talking about the war but the period just before the war, did you find that regular line people from the Foreign Service also wanted to get the hell out of Tel Aviv?

BROWN: Rarely. There was a particular case in a particular Section of the Embassy. The chief of that Section was sorely disturbed to report to me that one of his officers, an analytical type, wanted to leave the post with his wife. In that agency's history, it was a very gung ho group, so his superior, the Section chief, was very disturbed to tell me this. This involved an individual officer who was well-trained in the Middle East and well-trained in analysis of the Iraqis and so forth. This individual had concluded that, indeed, the Iraqis *did* have chemical warheads available to them. He believed that the Iraqis would not necessarily be restricted to the use of conventional, high explosive warheads on their SCUD's. Indeed, in retrospect, he was right. They had that capability. Analytically, he was correct as far as Iraqi capabilities were concerned. Thank goodness that Saddam Hussein did not use that capability.

Meanwhile, many dual citizen, Israeli-Americans were swamping the airlines to get

reservations to leave Israel. There were strong opinions within Israel on this score. I certainly don't want to point the finger at anybody. These were highly emotional, personal decisions, but they certainly kept our Consular Section busy as people rushed to check their visas, get their passports renewed, and leave while they could do so.

Q: The same thing happened during the 1973 war, too.

BROWN: And Israeli Television occasionally would cover people with long beards and black hats, going up the ramp of an aircraft and into a plane. That was unfortunate in terms of the development of a possibly stereotype. That is, it was thereby suggested that not only ultra-religious Jews did not fight or contribute to defending Israel, but now were bugging out.

Let's move on, then. We were all geared up as an Embassy. We had special wardens, monitors, systems and radios tested. Everybody's houses had been checked. For this particular kind of very detailed planning, including reporting, we had things organized so that, if we were hit, some people within our Embassy could go out on the streets and reconnoiter a bit to contribute to our spot reporting.

So, early on the morning of January 17, 1991, the word came that the Gulf War had started. A massive bombardment of Iraq had begun. Not too long after that, I was on the telephone to Washington. I was operating out of my residence and had a very significant number of people with me, all with gas masks. My residence was sealed with plastic sheeting and so forth. I heard several loud explosions. As an old artilleryman, I picked up the phone and reported to Washington: "We're taking incoming fire from SCUDs," and said that our embassy teams were checking to see whether there were any American casualties. The Operations Center in the Department responded: "Yes, we're seeing it on CNN (Cable News Network)!" CNN and other networks couldn't identify where these explosions were occurring, for security reasons. However, they could give a pretty graphic account of what was happening. Israeli TV itself was on for 24 hours a day. We were off to war on TV.

The explosions were frightening to a people that hadn't previously experienced that. It turned out that, within the Israeli system there were some cases of minor panic. There were some false reports that someone could smell gas. They probably smelled cordite from the explosions.

Q: Or the explosions might have ruptured gas lines.

BROWN: Yes. We began to operate on a 24-hour basis. It turned out that Iraq launched, I believe, 39 SCUDs throughout the period of hostilities. Most of these were launched in the direction of Tel Aviv and some to Haifa. In all cases they were grossly inaccurate, but then they were a weapon aimed at spreading mass terror anyway.

The SCUD explosions had a shattering effect in residential areas. Groups of apartments

were damaged or destroyed. Israelis generally live in apartment houses. Most of these apartments had been built in the 1950s or 1960s. They were fairly frail and vulnerable to over pressure waves [which exceeded atmospheric pressure]. So there were a lot of caved in apartments, some of them dramatically so. When you would drive by the site of an explosion, you would see the side of a building sheared away, with beds and other furniture hanging out. A lot of the windows were blown out. However, the number of direct casualties was miraculously low. It was said afterwards that only one person was directly killed by a SCUD missile. Some people were wounded, and then you get into the question of whether they were directly wounded or were wounded by the debris from the explosion.

There were quite a few heart attacks among the elderly. There were some other cases which involved people and their protective kits. These not only contained their gas masks but also contained a syringe of serum against chemical attack. People were instructed that only in case of clear identification of the gas should people inject themselves in their thighs or buttocks. There were people who clutched these syringes, injected themselves in panic, and suffered the consequences thereof. The anger among the people at these SCUD missile attacks, of course, rose very high.

I've already related that when Larry Eagleburger and Paul Wolfowitz made their second visit to Israel, Arens was hinting that Israel might retaliate against the Iraqi SCUD attacks. [See above for the exchanges with Eagleburger and Wolfowitz during their second visit after the war had started.] I might just say that, although Israeli contingency plans were never revealed to us in detail, it didn't take a genius to figure out that the Israelis would go after the H2 and H3 airfield complexes and that they wouldn't necessarily rely on air attacks alone. The more common Israeli response would be to go in with commandos. They clearly had that capability with their C-130 transport aircraft.

By the time of the Iraqi SCUD attacks on Israel Arens reversed course in one sense. Just before the war began, we had been training Israelis to man and operate what were called PATRIOT anti-missile batteries made in the U.S. These were not really anti-missile batteries. They were anti-aircraft batteries, with the prospect or hope that the relevant software would be upgraded so that they could deal with incoming missiles.

Destroying a high-speed jet aircraft is one thing. Destroying an incoming SCUD traveling at missile speed is a different matter. The SCUD missiles would go up 100 miles or so in the atmosphere and then come down at you. This was a different matter, as we were to find out. To the initial offer of some second-hand F-15 fighters and a couple of batteries of U.S. manned PATRIOT missiles, Arens initially said, "No. We'll defend ourselves. Nobody has ever come in here to defend us." However, his own people were still in training on PATRIOT missiles in the United States. With the outbreak of war and the lack of any defense against incoming SCUD missiles, Arens reversed course. So in came several batteries of U.S. manned, PATRIOT missiles, carried on C-5 transport aircraft.

They were a sight to behold. The PATRIOT crews included some women, because

structure of our forces was such that women were also operating this weapons system. The women were mostly enlisted personnel, but I think that there were a couple of women officers as well. The PATRIOT missile batteries were deployed in various places. One of them was emplaced at the old, civilian airport at Sedeh Dov, near the Tel Aviv power station. Another battery was deployed in open fields between Tel Aviv and Ben Gurion International Airport. When it rained, these areas often turned into a sea of mud.

When Eagleburger and Wolfowitz came for their second visit, the Israelis pressed even harder for reconnaissance photographs of Iraqi SCUDs and for a direct line into General Schwarzkopf's headquarters. It was obvious that General Schwarzkopf didn't want any such thing, and Washington was certainly backing him in this regard. Finally, a promise was made that General Olson, from Schwarzkopf's command, would come over and would be stationed in Tel Aviv. After several days' delay he arrived, but it was obvious that General Olson had nothing new to give the Israelis.

The Israeli military were really getting angry, at this point. Therefore, we set up a special system whereby reconnaissance photos were first sent to Europe for processing. Then, from Europe they were sent into what had been my USIS [United States Information Service] Library, which had been converted into a Joint U.S.-Israeli Photo Intelligence Interpretation Center which was open 24 hours a day. If I may go off a bit on this tangent, I will tell you that I used the stereoscopic equipment myself. The Israelis would be given photos which showed tracks of mobile SCUD missile launchers. You would see holes in a highway or a large culvert made by U.S. bombs. However, never during this whole exercise was there ever produced a single photograph of a destroyed SCUD missile. You could see tracks that went down a highway and then into a culvert, and you could see a hole from an American bomb nearby. You could hope that, maybe, that bomb had destroyed a SCUD. However, there was never any proof of this.

Similarly, as the first PATRIOT missile batteries were fired in Israel, they were in an automatic release mode. There were whole barrages of PATRIOT missiles fired up into the sky against these incoming SCUDs. Cheers went up from myself and all of those present who watched them. The PATRIOTs went up, and then you'd hear thunderous explosions. Washington was reporting a fantastic kill capability by the PATRIOT missiles. President Bush himself went to the Raytheon factory in Massachusetts and claimed that we had had something like a 95 percent kill rate. Well, this turned out to be absolute rubbish! In fact, I leave the evaluation of the PATRIOT missiles in Saudi Arabia to Ambassador Chas. Freeman. It didn't take long before the Israelis at the professional level turned from cheering, to very serious skepticism, to outright disillusionment. As the Israelis were taking their own photos of the interface between our outgoing PATRIOTs and the incoming SCUDs, and then the aftermath, they determined that, at best, we might have hit one SCUD out of the 39 fired at Israel. Fortunately, the SCUDs were terribly inaccurate. Some of them landed in the Mediterranean Sea. My wife was once playing mah jong in Herzliya Petuach, a suburb of Tel Aviv, while wearing her gas mask during a SCUD attack. She heard a particularly loud explosion probably 500 yards away from her out on the Mediterranean. It really jolted her mah jong game!

We were awfully lucky. Moreover, there were a few humorous moments. Among these, I remember Larry Eagleburger, by now carrying a cane and wearing cold weather boots, slogging through a muddy field, going from PATRIOT launcher to another, then holding a press conference in the auditorium of the Hilton Hotel, his boots covered with mud up to his shins. This made great press copy. Of course, Larry Eagleburger is always great copy.

The spectacle of American troops in the SCUD batteries defending Israel was remarkable. People turned out from all over Israel to watch them. They brought cakes and entertained our troops, many of whom, both officers and the enlisted, were African-Americans or Hispanics. A lesser but still significant number of them were women. The Israelis were not used to women in a combat role. There are women in the Israeli Army, but they were not in line combat outfits. I suppose that one could have argued that PATRIOT missile batteries, as originally configured, were not considered line combat outfits. However, these were certainly line outfits. And here were American women operating these missiles. It was a remarkable display. The Israelis did all that they make our troops feel at home.

However, behind all the camaraderie, at the Israeli professional and leadership levels, there was a lot of heartburn and a lot of very heavy questioning going on as the U.S. military and political establishments were claiming great success for the PATRIOT missiles.

Frantic efforts were being made upgrade the PATRIOT fire direction software package. We would hear rumors that the American batteries of PATRIOT missiles in Saudi Arabia, which did intercept some SCUDs, had a better software package than those in Israel. We had to assure the Israelis, that our batteries assigned to Israel had the latest features. There was a lot of diplomacy conducted at the political-military level. There were Israeli military personnel stationed in all of our PATRIOT missile fire direction centers, so that they could absorb, first hand, exactly how we were handling the missiles. We had people in the Israeli fire direction centers, so there was a warm feeling between military personnel at the battery level.

As the defeat of Iraq became obvious there was an influx of Congressional and other visitors. American politicians wanted to be photographed with American troops, in action, defending Israel, in a common effort. We had to suit up each and every one of these visitors with gas masks and brief them, upon their arrival at Ben Gurion International Airport.

The pattern which emerged was that, over time, the Iraqis, now under attack and fearing daylight U.S. bombing raids, would wait until dark, launch their SCUDs missiles. That meant that we were vulnerable to SCUD missiles, beginning at about 6:00 PM.

I'll never forget the visit of Congressman Tom Lantos [Democrat, California], a survivor

of the World War II holocaust. You may remember that I handled the Taiwan-instigated Henry Liu murder case, which was in his constituency, back in my days in Washington under Wolfowitz. I took Congressman Lantos and his charming wife to the residence of the Deputy Mayor of Tel Aviv, which had been damaged by a SCUD missile. The whole house was askew. The building had been condemned for human habitation. The Deputy Mayor's family was trying to salvage what they could, after living there for decades. Congressman Lantos, charming wife, and I received permission to go upstairs in the house. There we found a collection of dolls scattered across a bedroom floor. The dolls had been knocked out of the closet by the SCUD explosion. The cheekbone of one of the dolls had been broken and was missing. Lantos reached down, picked up this doll, turned it over, and looked at the broken cheekbone. He just emotionally blurted out: "Budapest, 1944." He had undergone bombings there as a young boy. All around us apartment after apartment had badly damaged. Beds and other furnishings were hanging out of the buildings. It was a very moving experience. The SCUD missile had detonated about five feet above the street in downtown Tel Aviv. Thank God that a lot of people were not killed!

I remember another visit by Congressmen Solarz and Ackerman [Democrat, New York], a prominent, Jewish Members of Congress. It was a typical, Solarz itinerary. He wanted to see everybody and do everything. His program showed arrival at about 4:00 PM, a briefing by me, then a trip by car to the site of a missile explosion, then over to see a PATRIOT missile battery. Out came the TV cameras and interview after interview. I had a little surprise for Congressman Ackerman. I had previously learned that there was an ethnic Korean Second Lieutenant in a PATRIOT battery, who was a graduate of West Point. When I asked him where he came from, it turned out that he was from Congressman Ackerman's district. I had him brought in and trotted him out for the TV cameras. On camera, I said to Congressman Ackerman: "You may remember that you appointed him to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point." The Congressman said, "Oh, yes, I remember him very well!" He put his arm around the lieutenant's shoulder, and this was altogether a great, TV photo opportunity.

Finally, I said to Congressmen Solarz and Ackerman: "Gentlemen, it's now 5:45 PM. We have about 15 minutes left. It can soon really get hot around here. These soldiers will probably have to go into action. You've now been briefed, you've seen the missile battery site and you've seen the troops. Rather than go back to the Embassy for a further, extended briefing, I suggest that we send you up to Jerusalem." SCUDs were not hitting Jerusalem, probably because of the Arab population and the Muslim holy sites up there. Solarz said, "No, let's continue. Let's go to the Embassy." So we went to the Embassy and up to the conference room next door to my office, which had been turned into a sealed room. By now almost everybody in the Embassy had left, as it was wartime.

I started to continue the briefing. Suddenly, the air raid sirens went off. If I may pause here, the HAMMER RICK communications system, of which I have already spoken, gave us about three or four minutes' warning time from the time of launch of an Iraqi SCUD from H2 or H3. When the siren sounded, I said "Now, gentlemen, you will put on these

gas masks. I will notify Washington.” We got the gas masks on them, I went next door, called the Operations Center in the Department of State, and asked them to notify the offices of Congressmen Solarz and Ackerman, telling them that they were in the Ambassador's Conference Room. I said that we were under attack but were okay.

I went back to the Conference Room, and there were Solarz and Ackerman, mumbling with their gas masks on. Months later, when the war was over, Solarz said to me and to others that he had met many Ambassadors and in many situations. However, this was the only time in his 17 year career in Congress that an Ambassador resorted to shutting him up by putting a gas mask on him!

I mentioned that Jerusalem was never subjected to attack by SCUD missiles during the Gulf War. However, at the time, you never knew where they might hit. When those sirens went off, they sounded all over Israel and the occupied territories.

This takes us to another, unfortunate aspect of the whole situation. That is, the Palestinian reaction. Just as there was dancing in the streets of Amman, [Jordan], when the Iraqis launched their missiles against Israel, to the great consternation of Tel Aviv and also Washington, so there were also reports of Palestinians dancing on their roofs in the occupied territories. They were reported to be shouting, “Utrub, utrub,” meaning: “hit them (the Israelis) again, hit them again, harder, harder.”

One has to be careful here. I was told that in such places as the outskirts of Haifa and elsewhere, some Palestinian Israelis or, as the Israelis used to call them, “Israeli Arabs,” would offer an Israeli Jew shelter if he were passing by their home when the air raid alarm went off. There were some such cases. They did this on humanitarian grounds. However, the stereotype and the widely-shared, Israeli image was that Palestinians, in the occupied territories, were all cheering as these Iraqi missile attacks were going on. Jordanians were widely reported in Israel to be dancing in the streets, and Palestinians with them. Perhaps most of the “Jordanians” dancing in their streets were really “Palestinians.” I don't know. But that's the sort of unfortunate image which emerged, and for which the Palestinians were to pay a price.

Of course, Yasser Arafat's rhetoric throughout the whole Gulf War was supportive of Saddam Hussein. That was to be very significant later on, as we drove the Iraqi Army out of Kuwait. The Kuwaitis then turned on the Palestinians, who had performed very important functions in Kuwait. They were often the managers of services and can do kind of people. They were deported en masse from Kuwait, having been portrayed as collaborators with the Iraqis. A great number of them ended up, guess where? In Jordan, because nobody else would take them.

In the middle of all of this I got a call from Washington, asking me to go in and arrange for the release of a prominent, Palestinian academic who had arrested by Israeli security authorities. I met with Yusip Ben Aron, the Director General of the Israeli Prime Minister's office, and Eli Rubenstein, the Secretary of the Israeli Cabinet and said that

Washington has instructed me to request that this gentleman be released They were livid! In essence, they said, "Hell, no! This guy, with his cellular phone, was in contact with a PLO [Palestinian Liberation Organization] member in Tunis, during the SCUD attacks." They said that the Tunis contact, said, "Listen, I've got a friend here who'd like to have a word with you." That person then got on the phone and asked this Palestinian in Jerusalem where the SCUD missiles were hitting. This person was the Iraqi Ambassador in Tunis.

According to Rubenstein and Ben Aron, the Jerusalemite said, "Well, they hit here and there." Eli and Yusip then indulged in some strong language and said, "That SOB is under arrest and that's where he belongs." I said, "Gentlemen, first of all, you know and I know that he was talking hot air. He had no more idea than the Man in the Moon as to where, specifically, this or that SCUD hit. This guy was a resident of Jerusalem, and no SCUD missiles hit up here. So the guy was blowing gas, okay? From your viewpoint such conduct is atrocious. On the other hand, let's just say that it was foolish. I realize that this was most unfortunate behavior, but let him go." Well, the Israelis weren't about to let him go immediately, though eventually, they did.

Q: As you were talking about this, you mentioned, off-mike, the report that Arab Palestinians were cheering on the Iraqis. I assume that this kind of news was played up in the Israeli press.

BROWN: Yes. It was just another, very unfortunate episode which contributed to the worst kind of Israeli stereotype of Palestinians, and Arabs in general. According to this stereotype, the Arabs are an unremittingly brutal crowd. This is too bad when one considers that these Arabs are human beings. Many of them are honest, ordinary people. It is sad to see such stereotypes spread around.

I'll go on, since you've raised this issue. On the whole business of how Israel handled the Intifada over the years we made many demarches. During my time, I made them personally, and my officers did, too. Sometimes these were made by instructions from Washington and sometimes without instructions, when we saw what we considered to be overly harsh Israeli reactions to Palestinian Intifada incidents. The Palestinian arrested by the Israelis were routinely incarcerated and subjected to interrogation, under the old, British system of administrative detention in Palestine which avoided full, civilian court procedure. In various cases the Israelis destroyed the homes of the Palestinians suspected of terrorist activities. Their family residences were blown up or bulldozed, and the family members had no recourse.

On one occasion Richard Shifter, then Assistant Secretary of State for Humanitarian Affairs, visited Israel. Dick was Jewish himself, had a distinguished career as a lawyer, and oversaw the preparation of the annual State Department Human Rights Reports covering the whole world. For Dick's visit I had requested a meeting with the Israeli internal security service. This security service was commonly called the "Shin Beth," or the "Shabak." Traditionally, one never revealed the name of the incumbent directors of

that service. Now that he is retired, I can say that the name of the Director of Shin Beth at the time was Jacob Perry. Perry had taken over as director in the wake of a public relations disaster. Some Palestinian terrorists in Gaza had carried out a particularly heinous deed. They were captured by Shin Beth operatives and died immediately afterwards. This was covered up at first but then it was revealed.

Q: This was the bus incident, wasn't it?

BROWN: Yes. There was a great scandal, and the chief of the Shin Beth was forced to resign. Perry succeeded him. There was a prestigious commission appointed to investigate the matter, the Agronit Commission, which issued both a public report and then a classified report that wasn't given to us. The classified report went into the question of guidelines on how much pressure could be applied to prisoners under interrogation. This was a very delicate, complex subject.

When Shifter and I talked with Perry, some senior staff members of his service were present. We got into interrogation techniques and were told that the Israelis very frequently picked up the same person on multiple occasions because, once released, these individuals would frequently get into trouble again. They would also relate to their colleagues the details of Israeli interrogation techniques. Therefore, we were told, the Israelis had to resort to a variety of psychological gimmicks including placing a hood over the suspects' heads, using special sound effects, etc. to make the suspects feel uncomfortable and apprehensive without actually hurting them. There are all kinds of techniques in use all over the world for this. It's rather a grim kind of business.

On this occasion Perry took a pencil and lightly ran it over the thigh section of his trousers. Then he said to me: "No officer under my command is allowed to do more than that, or even that, without my permission." This was a rather dramatic statement to make in view of the reports of brutal interrogation. I leave it to the reader to draw his or her own conclusions, but it was a statement by which Perry accepted full responsibility for what was going on. He assured us that the application of pressure on detainees was all "controlled and within the limits."

During our interview with Perry a very thick album of color photos had been placed on the table for our perusal. One of Perry's senior officers asked, "Would you like to see in detail what Palestinians are doing to each other, as they skin each other alive and tear each other to bits?" He was referring to Palestinian attacks against those who had been suspected collaborators with the Israelis. We said, "No, thank you very much," because I knew that it was a very grisly collection. Professionally, you have to be very careful in such circumstances.

I'll give you another vignette, and I'm not making excuses of any sort for the Israeli military or security services. We flew down to the headquarters of the Commandant of the Gaza Sector, Major General Vilnai [later a cabinet minister]. He gave us an overall briefing and then summoned into his command bunker, a group consisting of both

officers and enlisted men. Some were from the infantry, and some from the Israeli Military Police. They were a mixed group all of whom spoke English. The general said, "You may ask them any question you want, anything whatsoever." So Assistant Secretary Shifter asked questions on the rules of engagement.

I fixed my attention on one of the officers among them, a lieutenant colonel who was a battalion commander. I asked him: "Why are you, a colonel, carrying a sniper scope on your rifle?" He said, "Because my command to the people in my unit is: 'If you see something which is aggravated and explosive, I want you to come to me, personally, as soon as possible. If possible, I want to deal with this problem myself.'" In other words, he said, he preferred to fire the first shot himself. I said, "But why the sniper scope?" He said, "That is to minimize the possibility of a lethal effect." Speaking of lethal effects, the Israelis were firing rubber bullets. A rubber bullet is a rubber cased, metallic object which can cause great pain if it hits the human body. If fired close enough to the targeted individual, it can actually kill him. It certainly can fracture a bone and cause significant damage.

I relate that incident for what it's worth. One last scene in that respect is that when we left that same bunker room and headed to another room, I spotted something to which nobody had called attention. It was a paper target reversed. It was in a corner, with a wooden stick behind it. It had obviously been used on a firing range.

So with my Marine Corps background I reached through a pile of trash and pulled the target out of the corner. I turned it around and was so struck by what I saw that I called Assistant Secretary Shifter over. I said, "I want you to look at this target. You'll notice that the shots on the target are all in the legs, hand drawn below the printed torso. From this I conclude that at least this target was used in an exercise in which people were being told: 'Shoot them in the legs,' as opposed to the torso." I said, "Dick, I have to tell you something. In terms of rules of engagement I'm an old Marine, and I shoot with the Marine Security Guards for practice wherever I've been stationed. The rules of engagement for a Marine Security Guard at an American Embassy are as follows: 'Hold your fire as long as you can, but if you're fired upon or otherwise seriously endangered and you have to respond, shoot to kill.' In all of our target practice for Marine Security Guard units, a hit off the torso is a "miss." We shoot for a 'head kill,' a 'heart kill,' or as close to them as we can get."

Well, as I said, I do not in any way wish to exonerate the Israelis. This was just a professional comment on...

Q: Also, the Israelis have been dealing with this problem for a long time. For us, when you can't kill too often, and you're dealing with something like the Intifada, or...

BROWN: The Palestinians were throwing heavy bricks or stones and using slingshots and various things which put out people's eyes and sometimes cause death. God help the Israeli soldier who make the wrong move and blunders alone into a Palestinian mob. If a

buddy of yours gets brutally killed by a mob, you are likely to react harshly, whether you are an Israeli or anyone else. This kind of experience tends to harden you. They may well have reacted overly harshly, but the Israelis were trying, in their own way, to cope professionally with a very difficult situation. While we felt that our criticism was warranted, the Israelis believed that their response was also warranted.

Q: A question on the same subject, but bringing it back to the same time line. You had Palestinians who were not friendly to the Israelis. The members of the Israeli security forces were undergoing a certain amount of hostile fire and suffering injuries. Were you getting reports from our Consulate General in Jerusalem, or from your own officers in the Embassy, including from the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency], that a crackdown on the Palestinians during this time of combat had been ordered by the Israelis?

BROWN: If you're asking about the time of the Gulf war, I frankly can't remember. My suspicion is that all eyes, Israeli and Palestinian, were glued to the TV set or to the sky in the evening for SCUDS, that the Israelis imposed a heavy curfew on the Palestinians and that Palestinian attacks on members of the Israeli security forces at this time probably diminished. That's just my impression, nine years after the fact. I don't have anything more precise than that to offer.

Q: If you don't have any memory of that, it probably shows that everybody was kind of waiting. Did the Israelis mobilize their forces at this point?

BROWN: Oh, yes. They were on a full alert. Israeli Defense Ministry officials were clearly implying, without giving specific details, that the Israeli forces had practiced and were rarin' to go against the airfields at H2 and H3 in Iraq. All that Arens was waiting for was the go ahead signal from Shamir.

I spoke with an Israeli general afterwards who volunteered to me that he had opposed Arens' approach. You'll find this subject dealt with in Arens' book, Broken Covenant. There were differences of view among professional Israeli military officers, let alone the division between Prime Minister Shamir and Arens. Arens was pressing Shamir to give him the green light to attack the airfields at H2 and H3, using a corridor through Jordan. This meant that, if the Jordanians tried to stand in the way, there was a strong likelihood of a conflict between the Israeli and Jordanian defense establishments.

President Bush was personally prevailing on Prime Minister Shamir not to do this. Meanwhile, Arens and company constantly pressed us to give them more information so that they could satisfy themselves that we were doing everything we could to destroy the Iraqi SCUDS. With this, over time, came mounting criticism from the Israelis of our efforts. The Israelis said to us: "If you're devoting all of this effort, why isn't it working? If you can't do the job, well, we can do it, one way or another." However, Arens was being thwarted by his own Prime Minister, who was much influenced by President Bush.

There were those within the Israeli Defense Forces who were answering Arens along the

following lines: “Look, the Americans are doing our job. The net effect of all of this effort is to severely damage Iraq's military capability. In a strategic sense the Americans are doing our work for us. They've been pounding Baghdad on a sustained basis, for 40 days and nights in a way that we can't do. So why do we have to intervene? If we go through the Jordanian corridor and into H2 and H3, we will encounter a high degree of risk, as far as Israeli casualties are concerned, and anger the Americans.”

Arens did not reveal to us that he was facing this dissent from at least some officers. However, this kind of professional debate was going on. His senior military officers were not completely united behind Arens, as he made very strong statements to us. He was an old time, patriotic Israeli, brought up in the tradition that: “We defend ourselves and we react instantly and decisively to an attack.” To sit there, as Israeli Minister of Defense and remain passive through SCUD attacks, was virtually intolerable. I suppose, from his viewpoint, this might also set a terrible precedent for the future. In some unforeseen, future contingency, Israel might be asked to do something similar.

Through it all, I felt that Prime Minister Shamir's reaction, in yielding to President Bush's requests, was surprising, given Shamir's background. However, had a SCUD missile hit an Israeli hospital, a school, or a major group of civilians, or a barracks - like the one in Saudi Arabia, where we lost some 20 Americans killed and, perhaps, 90 wounded - who knows how Shamir would have reacted? I don't think that in such a case Shamir could have restrained the Israeli military any longer. It was really a remarkable response by Shamir in overruling his own Defense Minister.

As I said, we had a Joint Photographic Interpretation Center at our Embassy, which I visited periodically. The U.S. side never produced photographic confirmation of a single kill of a SCUD missile. General Olson was replaced by General Armstrong who was articulate and made a far more convincing appearance of trying to respond to Israeli requests for more information, more photos, and so forth. However, like the rest of us, General Armstrong was working to keep the Israelis on the reservation. He gained the respect of the Israelis.

As time went on, the number of SCUD missile attacks diminished. They appeared to go more wildly off any conceivable target. In fact, I think that the last or the next to the last SCUD missile had a concrete warhead, instead of a high explosive warhead. It landed way out in the Negev desert. Baghdad announced that they had attacked the Israeli nuclear weapons plant at Dimona. The missile hit nowhere near there. It became obvious that, for whatever combination of reasons, the SCUD attacks against Israel no longer amounted to much. However, we never knew, right up to the very end, whether a SCUD missile would come down on Israel with terrible, lethal effect. [Addendum: I was happy to hear Secretary of the Air Force James Roche state in a speech at Palm Beach Florida on January 18, 2004 that during the Second Gulf War of 2003 we provided the Israelis with full, live coverage of our operations against Northern Iraqi military installations.]

After the SCUD missile attacks were over, the HAMMER RICK communications

arrangements remained in effect for quite a while. The Israelis joined in hailing President George Bush and General Norman Schwarzkopf as great heroes. Eventually, the American PATRIOT missiles were withdrawn from Israel.

The Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force, General McPeak, also visited Israel. When he came, he delivered a grand briefing to the Israeli military establishment. He had a surprise for me when he landed at Ben Gurion International Airport. Toward the end of the line of visiting U.S. generals, colonels, etc., a young captain with a moustache appeared before me. It took me a while to realize that he was my son, Alex! He had been a B-52 pilot and now was stationed in Saudi Arabia, flying a VIP [Very Important Person] aircraft. When the Air Force Chief of Staff learned that Alex was in Saudi Arabia, without my knowledge he had Alex join his party in Turkey, and they flew into Israel.

The Israelis were intensely interested in the professional briefing on how the air war had been conducted. It was magnificent. "Buster" Clausson and company were superbly equipped by experience, training, and background to manage the air campaign. Very few, if any Air Forces in the world could have done this sort of thing. Even the British Royal Air Force, who were perhaps the most professional air force after our own Air Force, would have had a hard time in launching this kind of complex sustained attack against Iraq. This was primarily a U.S. effort, but it was also an international effort, using British Tornados and French aircraft among others.

Of course, the Israelis were intensely interested. I would add that my own impression was that in retrospect, we had learned a lot from the Israelis' 1982 effort against the Syrians in Lebanon That combined attack, on or about June 8, 1982, which simultaneously took out the Syrians' Soviet-built MiGs, tanks, radar and anti-aircraft missiles, as well as other concentrations of weapons systems, all at the same time, was a magnificent victory, which was fully absorbed by our professionals, when the Israelis gave us their readout in 1982.

Q: Did you pick up from the Israeli professionals any form of disquiet, which must exist in all military forces, as they looked at the beginning of smart bombs, the logistics, and the ability to project force abroad, which seemed to be more and more exclusively an American achievement?

BROWN: No, but I'll come back in a special discussion of that. The Israelis themselves were developing these weapons and projection capabilities. Some of this was shared between the U.S. and Israel, some of it was a joint operation and some of it was unilateral. All kinds of subsequent squabbles emerged as to the perceived linkage of American technology. This is a very complex subject. Two sides decide to develop something jointly, or along dual tracks. They agree to share the results with each other. One side winds up turning out a product which it shares with the other side. The other side, let us say that in this case it is the Israeli side, takes this product and keeps working at it. They develop a further refinement of it, for their own use, and then turn around and market an intermediate version. The American side says: "Hey, that's our technology."

The Israelis say, "Wait a minute, no. We did this 'add on' and so it's our product." You get into all kinds of ongoing squabbles on matters like this, and it's still going on. You may remember that I mentioned at least one instance of heartburn over Israeli sales to the Chinese Communists, particularly of sophisticated air weapons.

By this time the Israelis had already developed some highly sophisticated smart bombs and used them on the Lebanese front. When they went after Hezbollah bunkers and so forth, in some cases they were using some pretty sophisticated equipment. This takes you into another area. We had this joint military, consultative committee which would meet semiannually. Americans, both civilians and military, and Israelis got together and talked in real, professional terms, looking at possible scenarios and so forth.

Over time, one side or the other would try to enhance the Israeli-American relationship, although we were not formal, treaty allies. However, as one side or the other tried to enhance the relationship, we got into questions like: "Couldn't we do some military exercises together?" It was almost always the American side that was disappointed at the Israeli response. Things would often work out: "Yes, you can come here to Israel and train." It was exceedingly important for the Marines and other units in the U.S. Sixth Fleet, for instance, to be able to come to Israel, get R&R [Rest and Relaxation], repair vessels, up to and including an aircraft carrier in Haifa, and go out and do some port visitations and so forth. By my time in Israel the arrangement had been made that Marines were quietly but effectively training in Israel. As an old Marine, I went out with U.S. Marine units into the boondocks [rural areas] of Israel and accompanied them on a couple of maneuvers. It happened during my time in Israel when the Israelis, in response to our request, said, "Okay, you can have this wide area in a desert canyon situation, you can employ and fire your artillery, if you want to use it in a joint exercise using only American forces. If you want to run some tanks and armored cars and use some air force units and your own form of joint operations, here are the limits of your range. Here's what you can do."

I would talk with U.S. Marine commanders, and ask, "How do you like this; is it useful?" They would say, "Absolutely! We can't do this anywhere else in the Mediterranean area. There's always one excuse or another from the host country. Israel may be a small country, but they're giving us some remarkable terrain in which to exercise. It's deeply appreciated because, as Marines, we really have to be up on our toes. You can't do this on board ship and you can't do it during an average visit to another country in the Mediterranean." So it was very useful.

I'll give you another example. In May, 1990, a U.S. Apache helicopter unit secretly arrived from Germany. Their Apache helicopters had been disassembled, moved to Israel, then reassembled at an Israeli air base in the Negev Desert area. I went down there to join them. I talked with the colonel and the other U.S. officers, who were very excited. I went up in an Apache helicopter. They put me up in the front of the aircraft, with that special, optic device set up for one eye. The pilot, a warrant officer, showed me what this aircraft could do. I'd be looking out at a range of 10,000 yards, and suddenly the object would

appear to be only 10 or 100 yards in front of me. He could pop up from behind a hill, shoot his ordnance, and pop back down, using periscopes. He showed me how they could do this at night, and so forth. It was very exciting.

We flew back to base and talked with the colonel commanding this unit. I asked him: "How does it go in Germany?" He said, "We can't do any of this. We can't do what we're doing in Israel today in California or Nevada, due to the environmentalists lobby; there are all kinds of range restrictions." Little did I realize that this unit, only months later, was one of the Apache units that went into Saudi Arabia. This was a magnificent, training opportunity for an outfit that was shortly to distinguish itself in combat.

Q: Yes, it dropped down on all of the Iraqi early warning radar on the first night of the air war.

BROWN: Yes. The Israelis would tell us: "That sort of thing is fine. You come here, you want to train, go ahead. We'll observe." However, when the Americans asked, "How about having our pilots dog fight with your pilots?" The answer was: "No." American forces have run exercises for foreign pilots out West. I forget what it's called. [Actually, "Top Gun"] Foreign pilots who undergo U.S. Air Force training programs often take foreign aircraft and run them against the American F-15 and the F-16 aircraft. Of course, the Israelis have their own F-15s and F-16s, which they have upgraded, using their own modifications. Naturally they're always asking for the best and latest U.S. equipment, and they would play with it. However, the Israelis steadfastly declined to do dog fight with us. This attitude sort of ticked off some of our Air Force officers.

Ben Noon, the commander of the Israeli Air Force, would tell me, in a more candid moment: "Look, we think the world of your pilots, and we're glad to offer them these training facilities. However, we have a problem. It's not intentional on your part, but as we see you training with Arab Air Forces, our intelligence indicates to us that your expertise rubs off on them. If we train with you, some of our tricks will rub off on you, and there is a distinct danger, from our viewpoint, that will somehow be conveyed to a potential, Arab adversary." It was as simple as that, from their viewpoint. This is a difficult problem. Of course, American pilots would say, "Well, I would never do such a thing."

Q: American pilots might say, "That's a good trick. Let me try that. Here is a trick I learned. Why don't you try it?"

BROWN: Perhaps that concern was exaggerated in the Israeli mind. That's not for me to say, but it was there.

Q: I would have thought that they would have welcomed this proposal to get closer to the U.S.

BROWN: They feel that the U.S. has a magnificent Air Force. However, they feel that

theirs, that is, the Israeli Air Force, is la creme de la creme. It's an Air Force which has to fly over a postage stamp. In flying terms, Israel is a postage stamp. Flying combat aircraft there requires taking unique risks. Highly sophisticated techniques are involved. The Israelis feel that they can't take risks by divulging everything to us. I think that that about summarizes the attitude. It's also an elitist attitude.

Q: Yes. The other side of it, as you know, is that, if you want to have a good Air Force, you have to train like hell. The other thing is that you need to choose your enemies. In that case, you should choose the Arabs.

BROWN: The Israeli Air Force is an elitist outfit. It has a competitive operating system, which is almost mind-boggling. Every flight that every pilot takes, no matter what it is, flying anything from the latest F-16 to the lowest Boxcar [transport aircraft], is rated competitively. It's a brutal system. The bottom 10 percent of the F-16 pilots are winnowed out and shunted down to F-15s, F-4s or, if necessary, to transport aircraft. It's a brutally competitive system designed to keep them on their toes.

Well, at this point we've reached the end of the Gulf War [1991].

Q: Why don't we pick this up the next time? There are some questions that I would like to ask about the situation at the end of the war. How does that seem to you? I think that for many of us who've looked at this period, we ended the war 24 hours too soon. What analysis were you getting on this matter? We can talk about this next time.

BROWN: Let me get in a brief word now. On the one hand the Israelis had tremendous admiration for the results we achieved, the way we did it, and so forth. Do we still have time on the tape?

Q: Yes.

BROWN: Secondly, from a professional, Israeli viewpoint, they never had, nor, from their viewpoint, will they ever have the luxury of the kind of huge, extended buildup of Desert Shield over a five or six month period. Nor will they ever have the opportunity to launch an extended massive aerial bombardment of 40 days and nights like the one which preceded the actual launch into combat of U.S. ground forces. From the Israeli viewpoint, that is just not in their capability. So the Israelis have a mixed reaction to our modus operandi. They study our techniques but they can never pass on to their students that this is the way to conduct operations. From their viewpoint, their operations have to be stealthy, very rapid and deadly in their initial impact.

Thirdly, as far as our handling of Saddam Hussein is concerned, Prime Minister Shamir was quoted as saying that he almost fell off his chair when he realized that we weren't going to capture Saddam Hussein, seize Baghdad, and so forth. This is not the Israeli style. The Israeli style is to go for the jugular vein, get a firm grasp on it, then squeeze it and bring your adversary not only to a military capitulation but a political settlement as

well. We saw that with the encirclement of the Egyptian Army East of the Suez Canal during the Yom Kippur War of 1973 and the chagrin of Henry Kissinger as the Israelis squeezed the thirsty, hungry Egyptian Army. We saw this also in Lebanon and the installation of a new government in 1982. We saw it in the way the Israelis handled the Syrians in that encounter, besieged Arafat in Beirut.

Now, I would imagine that the Israelis were agog, not so much at the military portion of the Gulf War, when General Schwarzkopf dictated the terms, but rather the political aspect, where, as Ambassador Chas. Freeman points out, we ended the war without any direct, political commitment by Saddam Hussein to treat with us. Ever afterwards, the decisions that followed were unilateral, UN Security Council Resolutions, which were terribly important but to which Saddam Hussein and his propaganda apparatus said, "We never agreed to this." They took the view that the war was over and what right did we have to punish them unilaterally on the basis of non-fulfillment of something that they never agreed to in the first place?

Imagine, before I end this portion, what would have been the situation if the Israelis had attacked H2 and H3, not only by air attacks but with ground troops consisting of a commando force. You can bet your bottom dollar that they would have had an extended stay. There would have been a tremendous commotion within the coalition and especially in Washington and a great deal of heartburn at the Israeli reluctance to leave the H2 and H3 area. If they had seized that area, perhaps with significant, Israeli casualties, they might very well, in Israeli style, have held on unless and until the Iraqi Government came to terms with them. That could have been excruciatingly painful and highly embarrassing for us, given the way that we handled the end of the Gulf War.

Q: Okay. We'll pick this up the next time with the postwar peace process. I would also like to ask about something we touched on before, Jonathan Pollard.

BROWN: Okay.

Q: Today is September 10, 1999. Bill, one thing I forgot to ask. During this time, when you were an Ambassador in the Middle East, I imagine that you were somewhat au courant of what was happening in the area. Was there any discussion with people from Washington who came to see you or who were on the circuit about how to end the Gulf War?

BROWN: No. I don't recall anybody asking me that.

Q: This is not surprising, since the Bush administration didn't tell General Schwarzkopf anything. However, the subject had to come up some time.

BROWN: Well, I do not recall anybody coming to me, among our many visitors, and

asking how we were going to end the war or should we discuss with the Israelis or others how we should do it. The war was just ended.

Incidentally, by sheer coincidence, I had lunch with someone yesterday who knows Bob Gates [former Acting Director of Central Intelligence]. During the Gulf War Gates was seconded, if you will, to the NSC [National Security Council] under General Scowcroft. My friend said that, shortly after the end of the Gulf War, when he and Gates got together on some other subject, Gates took great pride in saying that he had originated the idea of the Hundred Hours War. That is, bringing the war to an end quickly. Gates asked my friend what he thought of this. My friend replied that he thought that it was a stupid idea and contrary to U.S. interests, etc. Gates looked very unhappy about this because he had taken great pride in bringing the war to an end quickly.

In conversation with my friend yesterday, my response was: "My goodness. Bob Gates, a professional intelligence officer, who had gone all the way up to being Deputy Director of CIA..."

Q: He was appointed Director of CIA by the President but never really was confirmed in the job.

BROWN: Yes. That he should wander this far into a blatantly political spin doctor kind of suggestion. However, these things happen to some people as they rise in position and mix with others. So I pass that on for what it's worth.

Q: It's very interesting. I think that, whenever a discussion of the Gulf War comes up, many people feel that it ended prematurely.

BROWN: Well, the story I heard yesterday was that Gates took credit for the idea of the Hundred Hours War and that he sold it to General Scowcroft and his people. When this idea was put to General Colin Powell, Powell was reportedly non-responsive. However, once they had adopted the idea, Powell then contacted General Schwarzkopf. You have Ambassador Chas. Freeman's report that Schwarzkopf said, "Well, at least we achieved the main goal, which was to drive the Iraqis out of Kuwait. We achieved about half of my own, secondary goal, which was to cripple the Iraqi Republican Guard. If you all feel that way in Washington, so be it." And that is reportedly the way the Gulf War ended.

In our last conversation you asked me about Shamir. (End of tape)

If you recall, you asked me how the Israelis felt about how the Gulf War ended, and so forth. I do not recall any high level critique raised with me while I was Ambassador to Israel, although later, when Prime Minister Shamir was interviewed, he said that he had nearly fallen off his chair when he heard of the way the Gulf War was ending. That is, adopting a partial military solution and not fully crippling Iraq. And there was no political agreement by the Iraqis with us, by which they signed their name to a political settlement. However, there we are.

Now, before we go into anything else, I wonder whether I could do a side note, based on a reading of the New York Times the other day, and relating to remarks I made recently about the interrogation and handling of Palestinian prisoners back then. You will recall my account of Assistant Secretary Dick Shifter's trip to Israel to discuss the issue of human rights with Jacob Perry, the Director of Shin Beth, or Sha Bak. Perry told Shifter that none of his officers were permitted to apply significant, physical pressure on a prisoner without Perry's okay. I remarked on the findings by the Agronit Commission following a previous scandal involving a couple of Palestinian terrorists who had committed murders. These terrorists had been killed in situ while they were allegedly being brought back to headquarters. A great scandal resulted, the Director of the Shin Beth was ousted, and Perry was installed in office as his replacement. There was also a classified portion of the Agronit Commission's findings, which was not revealed to us, except for the fact that the classified portion concluded that "a moderate amount of physical pressure" could be routinely used. Then there was a great squabble about what is "a moderate measure of physical pressure."

The New York Times reported the other day that the Israeli Supreme Court admitted that this was a very difficult decision and one that will cause no small debate in Israel and in Israeli society. It would be illegal to continue applying that standard. That is, to apply a "moderate amount of physical pressure" on a routine basis because, whatever the Israeli Supreme Court felt about the merits of the need for Israeli security, the Court felt that this position was legally untenable. That doesn't completely eliminate the possibility of the use of physical pressure in special cases, but obviously the Israeli Supreme Court was speaking to sustained criticism, both international and domestic, against the interpretation of a "moderate measure of physical pressure," which included such things as violently shaking the prisoner.

Q: Violently shaking a prisoner could break bones, and so forth.

BROWN: As well as putting a hood over their head, putting a prisoner in specially uncomfortable positions, and so forth. On that subject I remember that, when we were talking about such matters, it was obvious from the Israeli account that they felt that they faced a dilemma, because so many of these people being interrogated were multiple offenders. When one of these people was released, he would give all of his friends an account of precisely what he could remember of the forms of interrogation to which he had been subjected. So when these friends of the former prisoner were picked up, they wouldn't be psychologically as vulnerable and so forth. As that school of Shin Beth thought runs, you have to keep coming up with new techniques of exercising pressure on prisoners. This is very difficult to do.

Throughout it all, there is a distinct element of humiliation for the prisoners. The Israelis would let their prisoners reach the point where they had to go to the toilet. However, they didn't let them go to the toilet, and the prisoners often would have to relieve themselves in their pants. There were all sorts of stratagems of this kind, which are used around the

world to humble or humiliate prisoners and therefore make them more vulnerable to interrogation.

At the end of our last session you asked me to touch on the Jonathan Pollard case.

Q: I thought that we had touched on it before, but maybe we didn't.

BROWN: I don't recall that we did, or at least not in any detail. I don't think so. Anyway, let me give you my own feelings then and now on the politics of the case.

I was always very hard line on the Pollard case. I was not in Washington when it happened. I think that it became public knowledge in 1985. I felt outraged at this dastardly behavior by Pollard. He passed on to the Israelis the equivalent of a large roomful of documents covering the most highly classified materials. At the time I was quite happy that the judge trying the case threw the book at him. This was a case of treason of the first order, in my view, and Pollard's behavior warranted the death penalty, a sentence to life imprisonment, or at least a very severe sentence.

I never believed the Israeli account that this was a rogue operation, a line to which they adhered during my tenure in Israel. It was supposedly a rogue operation under Rafi Eytan, who was a long time security intelligence specialist in a special unit of military intelligence. The Israelis, like ourselves, have several different arms of intelligence, and this was a particular cell within what I might call special operations within Israeli military intelligence.

By the way, in the Israeli system the head of military intelligence is the supreme intelligence officer. He wears two hats as the Director of their equivalent of the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] and also as the Director of Central Intelligence. The Director of Military Intelligence is an Israeli general, to whom that special unit reports, along with other intelligence organizations. I just couldn't believe and don't believe to this day that this was merely a rogue operation, unauthorized above the level of Rafi Eytan. Rafi was a long time intelligence operative.

When I was Ambassador to Israel, approaches would frequently be made to me, primarily by Eli Rubenstein, who was Israeli Cabinet Secretary, and who, at the time of the Pollard episode, was Deputy Chief of Mission [DCM] of the Israeli Embassy in Washington. I think that, at one time, Pollard tried to follow an automobile carrying Eli into the Israeli Embassy. Pollard was denied access to the Embassy by the guard. Eli is a good friend of mine to this day. I don't know whether Eli felt an extra sense of compassion or attachment to Pollard, given the fact that he was the DCM of the Israeli Embassy in Washington when this all took place. In any event, Eli mounted quite a campaign with various interlocutors or high level U.S. officials trying to get a pardon for Pollard.

I remained a hard liner on that score. It is now 1999. A lot of time has passed. Pollard has spent a significant stretch of time in prison. A lot of this time has involved very restrictive

confinement, solitary and so forth. My thoughts now tend toward some commutation of his sentence, if you will, notwithstanding the fact that Pollard was guilty of dastardly deeds. When you look at other cases, you realize that no two cases are exactly alike. However, I think that I would now tend toward some commutation of his sentence, but until now I have been very hard on this case.

Q: There's been a recent story about the Pollard case. I haven't read it, but I have seen reports about it. The article is by Seymour Hersh, an investigative reporter for the "New York Times." In the article it is stated that Pollard received instructions from his Israeli handler or case officer to get further information of the kind that he had been supplying concerning American submarine movements, which he had access to. According to Hersh, our knowledge of Soviet submarines was something that the Israeli intelligence people couldn't care less about. However, the knowledge of how we were dealing with Soviet subs would be a very good card to play in trying to get Soviet Jews out of the Soviet Union. Was that factor ever brought up while you were dealing with this case?

BROWN: No, and frankly I don't believe it.

Q: I understand that, supposedly, there were reports to this effect, but you say that you knew nothing about them.

BROWN: No.

Q: Some day we may know.

BROWN: Certainly, it never came up in my time.

Q: Were you ever called upon to make any representations to the Israeli Government on the Pollard case?

BROWN: By the American Government? No. I would report the fact that Eli Rubenstein approached me, but I really don't recall anything from Washington in this regard. Early on, there was another aspect to this case. Before my time, the U.S. Government slapped the wrists of certain, high-ranking Israelis, including Moshe Levi, Chief of Staff or Deputy Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defense Forces, who were in positions of great, military authority at the time. The Israelis were not completely forthcoming about letting some of the officials within the Israeli Government involved in the case be interviewed by U.S. authorities. In retaliation the U.S. denied visitor's visas to the Israeli officials most directly involved. This was taken as a great affront by them. Early during my tenure as Ambassador to Israel, I would get approaches from these officers, to use my good offices with Washington. As I say, I did not believe that this incident was a unique rogue operation carried out without the knowledge of the top Israeli military brass, including at least the Director of Israeli Military Intelligence. Therefore, I didn't have much sympathy for such approaches.

Q: Again, while we're on this subject, did any manifestation come up, while you were dealing with the Israelis on this case, of the Israeli attack on the USS LIBERTY? Was this...

BROWN: Let me say something about the attack on the USS LIBERTY. There was a strange, little vignette, or two sub-vignettes, if you will, involving it.

The first one was that in 1988, as word got around Embassy Bangkok that I was going to be Ambassador to Israel, my secretary told me one day that one of our communicators in the Embassy wanted to call on me. As I did not know the individual or at least did not know him well, I thought that it was to say goodbye, or something like that. Lo and behold, when the individual appeared in my office, he informed me that he had been a member of the crew of the USS LIBERTY. On behalf of his old crewmates, he presented me a copy of a book about the attack on the LIBERTY, written by one of the ship's officers. The communicator was very solemn, when he gave the book to me, and he said, "As a representative of the survivors of the LIBERTY, I would like you to read this book." I said, "Thank you," and he left. That's the first vignette.

I read the book and I must say that it is a remarkable account. The audience may recall that, during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, the USS LIBERTY, an American spy ship, positioned itself roughly off the coast of the Gaza strip. It was a signals eavesdropping ship. Israeli aircraft and torpedo boats attacked it over a period of many hours, with some interruptions, notwithstanding the fact that its officers and crew claimed that the ship was flying a large, American flag when the attacks occurred during broad daylight. The attacks involved strafing, bombing, and torpedo attacks. The ship almost sank, and, I think, between 20 and 30 lives were lost. Many members of the crew were wounded. The ship finally made it back, under tow, to an Italian port. There was a very considerable hue and cry over the incident. There was a great deal of understandable bitterness on the part of the survivors and the U.S. Navy.

The Israelis always maintained that this was a terrible accident. They finally offered some form of indemnification. As U.S. public opinion swung to the side of the Israelis in the wake of the 1967 War and, later on, as Israeli-American relations warmed up during the 1973 War, this episode faded into the background.

Q: But it would come up from time to time.

BROWN: Yes. Let me now give you another vignette which was a bit of a surprise to me. Rabin was Defense Minister in the Shamir Government until Labour Party was excluded from the Shamir Government in early 1990. Around this time Rabin and I left a social function at about the same time, and we were standing on the steps outside of the house where the function had taken place. Rabin turned to me and said, "By the way, I just want to emphasize something regarding the USS LIBERTY. That was a terrible accident. I was in the command bunker and I can tell you that it was a terrible mistake." To this day I do not know what occasioned Rabins' remark. Rabin was usually pretty tight-lipped, almost

always got straight down to business, and seldom went off on tangents. I think that that was characteristic of the man. There must have been something that impelled him to make that unexpected remark.

Q: This incident hasn't gone away. Well, let's go on. The Gulf War was now over [1991]. By the way, were you getting any reverberations from the war and how the United States had performed?

BROWN: Oh, yes. Of course, the Israelis were intensely interested in the war, from a professional viewpoint, in a sense all the more so because they had been deliberately cut out of the fighting. Then the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force, General McPeak flew into Israel with Buster Clausson.

I believe that I gave you an account of the heavily-attended, standing room only review of the air campaign. McPeak introduced Clausson, who gave, I thought, a fairly detailed account of how we conducted the air campaign. This was a very sophisticated operation, involving multinational forces, but with the U.S. Air Force playing the major role. The aircraft involved ran from B-52s to FB-111s, F-15s, and F-16s. Of course, Clausson, who was running the campaign, had to deal with many, conflicting demands from the various elements of the U.S. military. He had to make tough decisions but he stuck with his plan, after adjusting it as necessary.

In the course of that visit by General McPeak, a question came up which I alluded to in my earlier remarks. That is, it is a standard practice for U.S. Air Force officers to try to get the Israeli Air Force to conduct joint training, including dog fighting exercises. The Israelis had always been rather standoffish on this subject. Bin Nun, the commander of the Israeli Air Force, confided to me that the Israeli Air Force was afraid of leakage of tactics and techniques to the Arabs. Not necessarily deliberately by U.S. pilots, but these pilots later on might engage in similar, professional exercises with Arab pilots, Israel's adversaries. However, General McPeak's attitude was: "To hell with them. We're good enough. I'm not in any sense going to be a supplicant to the Israelis in that regard." When he was a fighter pilot, he had previously flown various exercises with the Israelis and he had appropriate regard for them. However, he didn't feel like asking for any favors.

Other things came up. The Israelis had a "Popeye," air to air missile, which they had developed to the point where it could do a u-turn if it missed a target which engaged in evasive tactics. The missile could double back and hit the target. The Israelis wanted to sell that missile system to us. If I remember correctly, General McPeak was interested in it but wasn't about to convey to the Israelis that we were going to fall all over ourselves, pricewise or otherwise, to get it. We had our own weapons systems.

That particular subject came up after I retired, following my service in Israel when Dick Cheney was Secretary of Defense. There was a question as to whether there was U.S. technology in the "Popeye" and, if so, were the Israelis selling this technology to other countries. This takes you into a field which is highly contentious. I may have mentioned

before that the U.S. and Israel did a lot of joint research work. A breakthrough might take place on a product which would then be jointly shared. Sales to a third party were to be by joint consent. Then there would be cases where the U.S. side would say, "You're selling our jointly developed technology." The Israelis would say, "No, we did an update, which made the new weapons system a strictly Israeli product. We're not violating any agreement." And you would get into a controversy.

It was not only the Israelis who did this. There were other countries with which we would get into such controversies.

A number of such issues were bubbling along during my time in Israel. I was aware of them and believe that I recounted to you that I made a demarche on instructions on the allegation that the Israelis were selling the PYTHON air to air missile, which was lethal beyond visual range, to the People's Republic of China [PRC]. I felt that this ran strongly against our national interests. That is, maintaining a balance in the Taiwan Straits area was in our national interest. If the PRC were to get these PYTHON missiles in significant numbers, particularly the more advanced PYTHONS, we would be faced with a problem. The earlier model PYTHON was rather big and heavy and was comparatively clumsy. However, over time, if it developed into the anti-missile missile that we had, it could have very deleterious effects on the Taiwan's Air Force as it was equipped at that time. Remember, at that time the most modern fighters that Taiwan had were Northrop F-5s (although they were developing their own Indigenous Defense Aircraft). That was the latest aircraft that we would sell them. They felt that this aircraft was very inadequate, so it was a very delicate subject to me, at the time.

Now, as to the feeling in Israel at the end of the Gulf War. On the one hand President Bush, Secretary of State Baker, and the American Government were flush with victory, and that glow certainly extended to popular opinion in Israel. We had badly crippled Iraq, a primary strategic enemy of Israel's. There were those among the Israelis who felt that we should have finished the job and really destroyed the Iraqi Republican Guard. There were those Israelis who felt that we should have gone into Baghdad and extracted a political settlement, that we should have dispatched Saddam Hussein to oblivion, and so forth. You would hear views like that expressed in Israel and elsewhere around the world, including in the United States.

A secondary and very important subject among all of those in the region was what they could extract immediately out of the situation. There was talk of reducing the debt of those who had participated in defeating Saddam Hussein, for example, the Egyptian debt owed to the United States. This debt ran very high. Well, the Israelis felt that their debt owed to the United States was no small amount, either. Couldn't more be done to forgive that debt? There had been an enormous buildup of equipment in the Gulf area during the period of Desert Shield and then under Desert Storm. It was clear that much of this equipment was not going to come back to the United States. Everybody had their hands out for that equipment, and the Israelis were interested in that, also.

There was a joint strategic war stockpile in Israel. The Israelis asked us to move smart bombs and the more sophisticated equipment assembled for Desert Storm into it. That would take us into a subject which later on would become contentious, because the host country for these stockpiles rapidly acquires a distinctly proprietary attitude toward them. The Israelis were no exception in this respect.

We accommodated the Israelis to a certain degree. It was never enough to satisfy their appetites fully, but there were adjustments made in those areas. The Israelis saw us extracting money from the Saudis for this or that operation. If the United States could get money from the Saudis, the Israelis hoped that they could also get money from the Saudis in the service of their interests. So there were a lot of issues of this kind under discussion.

U.S. Secretary of Defense Cheney made a visit to Israel and had very detailed and sensitive conversations with Israeli Minister of Defense Arens. They knew each other and had a good relationship. I would rather not go into the sensitive subjects which they discussed, at least at this stage. From my previous remarks you can gather some flavor of that. By the way, as Cheney was finishing up a visit to Israel and I was just putting him on his plane, I recall asking him whether he could help me break through a bureaucratic obstacle. The Marine Security Guards and Defense Attache personnel assigned to the Embassy in Tel Aviv, who had manned the HAMMER RICK communications system on a 24 hour a day basis, frequently under Iraqi bombardment, had been told that they were not eligible for the campaign ribbon for Desert Storm. I felt that their contributions were important enough that they ought to qualify for this ribbon. So I asked Secretary Cheney to break through this bureaucratic obstacle. He nodded, and some weeks or months later, the Marine Security Guards and the Defense Attache people were made eligible to receive the ribbon. This episode shows how things work out at times. The military has its bureaucracy and its definitions. Sometimes you have to shake the tree in that regard.

We were now in the period when the U.S. launched its peace initiative for the Middle East, following the Gulf War. On or about March 12, 1991, Secretary of State James Baker arrived in Israel for the first time. He had blocked any other Bush Cabinet member from visiting Israel, except, of course, Dick Cheney after the Gulf War. Baker wanted to manage our contacts with Israel out of the Department of State.

Baker's initial meetings during this visit were friendly. I have to pause here and remind you a little bit of Israeli political history. David Levy, a Moroccan born Israeli who had been unemployed and then was a manual laborer, had joined the Likud Party and had risen up over the years to be Minister of Housing. As Minister of Housing he had dealt with settlement housing outside Jerusalem and so forth. By the time that Prime Minister Shamir's peace initiative was announced in 1989, Levy had become an outspoken, vociferous critic of the peace process advocated by Shamir. He had joined Moda'i, Ze'evi, and Ariel Sharon in declaring the Shamir proposal a sell out of Israeli interests. As I said before, they declared that they were the "Constrainers." Levy did this in a highly opportunistic manner to get more power and position for himself. By the time that Baker arrived in Israel, Levy had been installed as Foreign Minister. So here you had a man who

both privately within the Likud Party had been through stormy party sessions, and publicly had criticized the peace process initiated by Prime Minister Shamir and Defense Minister Arens which had been endorsed by the United States.

However, now David Levy was Foreign Minister. His actions from then on reflected the ancient, political adage, "Where you stand depends on where you sit." One of Levy's key officers was Eytan Ben Tsour, who was head of the North American desk in the Foreign Ministry. Ironically, is again the Foreign Minister in 1999, and Eytan Ben Tsour is now the Director General of the Foreign Ministry. Back then Eytan and I were very good friends and professional counterparts. He had approached me and said, "Bill, forget all of the hawkish things that you have heard about David Levy. I know him. I was Consul General in Los Angeles when he visited L.A. a number of years ago. David Levy is ready to deal. Baker's host and first interlocutor should be Levy, the Foreign Minister of Israel." I dutifully passed on these views.

When we got down to the real nitty gritty details of who would meet Baker at the airport and accompany him up to Jerusalem and who should be the first to receive Baker in Jerusalem, Eytan's argument was compelling that it should be Levy, who was very sensitive. Apart from the obvious protocolary requirements, above all, Levy really wanted to play in the big leagues. He wanted the public spotlight on him as a dynamic Israeli Foreign Minister. In the Israeli pecking order the Foreign Minister is very important. Many an Israeli Prime Minister (including Shamir) had previously been Foreign Minister.

Well, Levi's desires were accommodated to the degree that on the first trip David Levy met Secretary Baker at the airport, and they drove up the hill together to the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem. Levy was thus able meet with Baker in his office, then come out to make a statement before a large press audience, introduce the Secretary of State, and bask in the glow of the ensuing publicity. However, everyone knew that we would then be going on to the Prime Minister's office and that Israeli Prime Ministers run the show as far as U.S.-Israeli relations are concerned.

Secretary of State Baker accommodated Levy on this initial leg of the visit. We then went from the Foreign Ministry to visit Yad Veshem, the Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem. Baker went through this exhibit and made the proper kind of remarks that a visitor makes after seeing that expose of Hitler's crimes and slaughter of the Jews during World War II. Then Baker went in to see the Prime Minister and had a relatively affable meeting.

At this point Secretary Baker had been on the road for over a week, so he could give graphic accounts of the Kurdish refugee problem, since he had visited the destitute Kurds in northern Iraq. He then proposed in general terms to reopen the peace process.

I won't go into all of the details. From March to October, 1991, Secretary Baker made nine or 10 trips and orchestrated a great campaign, which culminated in an international conference held in Madrid, Spain at the end of October, 1991. Getting from March, 1991, to October, 1991, became a grinding, really energy-focused process that went through

many iterations and caused a lot of heartburn en route.

On his first visit to Jerusalem, having met with Shamir, Secretary Baker also met Palestinians in the residence of the American Consul General in Jerusalem, which was just a couple of blocks from the King David Hotel, on the Western side of Jerusalem. These Palestinians were predominantly, although not exclusively, from the greater Jerusalem elite, if I can use that expression.

They included Faisal Husseini and Hannan Ashrawi, a Christian Arab who had an American Ph.D. and lived in Ramallah. Another one was Sari Nuseibah, of a prestigious, Jerusalem family. His father had been Governor of Jerusalem, and a minister in the Jordanian Government. There was also a scattering, which varied from meeting to meeting of such figures as the moderate Christian Mayor of Bethlehem, Elias Freij, others from, say, Nablus, Ramallah, and, occasionally, Al Agah from Gaza. It was obviously very difficult for them to agree among themselves who would should be their leader for such meetings. It became apparent that they were reporting to Yasser Arafat in Tunis, but they were largely without direction from him.

That relates to the way Arafat handles things. He didn't want to give any power to these people. What he wanted was an Israeli accommodation with the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization]. That was politically not possible at the time. The Shamir Government was adamantly against it. Our own position was not to deal with the PLO on this subject, but to try and find a means to get Palestinians from the occupied territories to be members of a delegation that would be acceptable to the Israelis. That was a matter requiring extreme delicacy, given the guidelines which Shamir laid down for acceptance of Palestinian interlocutors: nobody identified with the PLO, nobody from East Jerusalem, nobody who had been deported, and no outsiders from the Palestinian diaspora. Shamir and company wanted moderate, clean Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza who were not affiliated with the PLO.

Well, that was a very tall order under the circumstances. Those Palestinians who showed up were powerless, after years of Israeli occupation. As a result of a lack of direction by Yasser Arafat, they were essentially on their own, and they resorted to fairly sharp critiques of the whole peace process and demands that the U.S. negotiate with the PLO, which they said was the only true representative of the Palestinian people. Secretary Baker would say, "Come on, let's get over that. Let's talk about the nitty gritty details."

Then there would ensue all kinds of complaints about Israeli occupation practices, and their own difficulties in getting through checkpoints. (End of tape)

If they couldn't get substantive concessions from us and through us, then they wanted as much as they could get, symbolically. For example, they didn't want to meet Secretary Baker in the residence of the American Consul General on the West side of Jerusalem. They wanted to meet him in Arab Jerusalem, which they termed Al-Quds, and the "capital of the future Palestinian State." Baker wasn't about to give them that, yet.

As I said, the first round of meetings in Jerusalem was rather affable. Baker was well prepared. His team, including Dennis Ross and Dan Kurtzer and Aren Miller, had really done their homework. I would like to pause here and give due credit to Dan Kurtzer, because his name isn't mentioned nearly as often as it should be as a conceptualizer in all of this. He happens to be a religious Orthodox Jew. He had served in the American Embassy in Cairo, where he is now our Ambassador. He later came to serve in Tel Aviv just as I was completing my tour as DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] under Ambassador Sam Lewis. He could read, write, and speak Hebrew. He was extremely intelligent and well read. He was determined to get a peace process going and to do everything that he could to push it.

[Kurtzer later became U.S. Ambassador to Israel.]

Secretary Baker sometimes referred to his staff as his food processors. You know, people who grind out new formulae, draft speeches, and so forth. Kurtzer's contribution was really remarkable throughout all of this. Dennis Ross, of course, had a great background and was Baker's key advisor.

As time went on, U.S. pressure increased on all other parties involved in the Middle East peace process. Let's just pause here and ask what the different parties wanted.

The U.S. wanted a successful peace process, based on an exchange of territory for peace, in accordance with UN Resolutions 242 and 338. You will recall that my first approaches to the Shamir Government at the end of the Reagan administration I had posed the question: "Would the Shamir Government be willing to proceed under the terms of the concept of 'land for peace?'" On the one hand I was rebuffed but I had nevertheless concluded that this could be done and had so recommended to Secretary Baker during my first trip back to Washington in the early days of the Bush administration. Naturally, we wanted arrangements that would afford Israel proper security. UN Resolutions 242 and 338 meant that there would be some sort of territorial compromise. We left this to the parties concerned to negotiate. We wanted a permanent peace and the diplomatic recognition of Israel by its Arab neighbors, accompanied by trade, tourism, and so forth. This implied the diminution of security threats against Israel.

What did the Arabs want? Well, at this stage, if I could simplify it, Syria wanted all of the Golan Heights on its own terms. The Syrian definition is not merely the Heights as such, but the line that existed prior to June, 1967. In some cases, as I've mentioned, this would extend to within 10 yards of the Eastern shore of the northern portion of the Sea of Galilee. Syrian troops had reached that point, and a DMZ [Demilitarized Zone] curved around there until the 1973 War.

The Lebanese wanted the Israelis out of Lebanon, and so did the Syrians. They wanted a complete Israeli withdrawal from the so-called "Security Zone" in southern Lebanon just North of the Israeli-Lebanese border. The Syrians also wanted to get out from under the

cloud of being formally designated by the U.S. as a state supporting terrorist organizations. I think that this designation remains in effect today, although whether President Assad has managed finally to get out from under this cloud more recently, I don't recall.

Q: I don't recall, either.

BROWN: President Assad also wanted money in the form of aid to the very statist, stultified, calcified Syrian economy.

King Hussein of Jordan wanted to get out of the dog house. He had been openly identified with the Iraqi cause. All of his immediate explanations, and those of his brother, Crown Prince Hassan, fell on unsympathetic ears at the time. The Saudis had cut off the subsidies which they'd been giving Jordan for years, amounting to millions of dollars. The Saudis also cut off Jordan's supply of oil. The TAP [Trans Arabian Pipeline] was cut off because of a) non-payment of previous debts and b) Saudi anger at what Hussein had said and done during the Gulf War. The Saudis were not about to accommodate him at that stage at all. So Hussein wanted us to lean on the Saudis to loosen up. Hussein also wanted an accommodation with the Israelis at minimum expense. His great fear in all of this was akin to an Israeli concern. That is, the emergence of an independent, Palestinian state, sandwiched in between Jordan and Israel, bearing in mind that the population of Jordan is about 60 percent Palestinian. The Hashemites in Jordan had a fear that, a Palestinian state would foment a political movement which might endanger the Hussein regime in Jordan. So, Hussein wanted money, he wanted to get out of the dog house, and he wanted an arrangement which would preclude a Palestinian takeover of Jordan.

Hussein also wanted a settlement of another great concern of his, namely, Syria. Over the years President Assad of Syria had repeatedly threatened Jordan by word and by deed. Hussein also wanted water. By this time Jordan was very short of water. The Yarmuk River runs between northwestern Jordan and Syria and flows into the Jordan River at the southern end of the Sea of Galilee. Apart from the contentious water dispute between Jordan and Israel, there also was Jordanian concern because the Syrians were beginning to dam up the tributaries which flow into the Yarmuk. There had been a proposal for a dam, to be jointly financed by Jordan and Syria, with the water to be shared, but this hadn't gone anywhere.

The Saudis wanted everybody to get out of their pockets. Everybody, and especially the United States, was extracting billions of dollars from the Saudis to pay for Desert Storm and Desert Shield. We were coming at the Saudis on behalf of supplicants, both near and far.

The Egyptians wanted forgiveness of their debt and surplus U.S. military equipment. In the afterglow of Desert Storm they wanted an increased flow of U.S. military hardware, both surplus, as well as the latest form of equipment, to flow into their military establishment. They took pride in the noble Coalition effort in which they had

participated (although they hadn't done any fighting) and they wanted to share in the spoils.

The Kuwaitis wanted every last Palestinian out of their country as soon as possible. They viewed the Palestinians as collaborators of the Iraqis. By the time the Kuwaiti royal family moved back from exile in London, they had paid a significant part of the costs of Desert Storm. The Kuwaitis booted the Palestinians by the thousands or tens of thousands out of Kuwait. The Palestinians left Kuwait, essentially as refugees. Nobody else would receive them, so they flowed into Jordan. So the Jordanians had an extra problem with the influx into Jordan of thousands of more Palestinians.

Jordan also wanted the end of the embargo which had bottled up the Strait of Tiran [at the mouth of the Gulf of Aqaba]. There was Coalition inspection of shipping going into the Gulf of Aqaba, especially of all cargoes destined for Iraq. Jordan made a nice profit out of this trade with Iraq. Jordan wanted us to ease and lift the embargo on goods flowing into the Gulf of Aqaba, so that the Iraqis could sell them oil above board and all of that. The Jordanian economy was weak to begin with and was in a virtual state of wreckage by the end of the Gulf War.

What did Israel want? It wanted diplomatic recognition by its Arab neighbors; peace and security without giving up the West Bank of the Jordan and the Gaza Strip; and the end of the Arab embargo, which had had such deleterious effects on Israel on a worldwide basis. Among those countries which had succumbed to the Arab embargo against Israel was Japan. As Israel promoted exports of its newly-emergent, high tech products it wanted to break the remnants of the Arab embargo. It wanted the repeal of the UN Resolution which equated Zionism with racism. In the wake of the SCUD missile attacks against Israel, they wanted our PATRIOT missile hardware. We had provided Israel with PATRIOT missile batteries and PATRIOT missile training. However, after the Gulf War we pulled our PATRIOT missile batteries out of Israel. They would have preferred that we left them in Israel, but by now they had acquired some of their own PATRIOTs. They arranged to have the Germans pay for some of that.

A major Israeli priority was our aid in the development of the anti-missile ARROW missile. Before the Gulf War we had, among the joint projects under development with Israel, funded 80 percent of the costs of developing an anti-missile missile which the Israelis code named the ARROW. The ARROW was not the same thing as the PATRIOT. The PATRIOT was essentially a surface launched anti-aircraft missile which had been upgraded to cope with SCUD missiles. The Israelis were not very satisfied with what they had seen of the upgraded PATRIOT missile.

With our money and with our consent the Israelis had embarked on a joint project called the ARROW. The idea was that when you detected the lift-off of an enemy missile, you launched an ARROW high up into the atmosphere to catch the incoming missile at its apogee [highest point], at least. That was a highly sophisticated challenge. No other country had succeeded at this, but the Israelis had very good technicians and felt an urgent

need to acquire this weapons system. A sophisticated, warning system would go with the ARROW, so that they could identify the trajectory of an incoming missile as far out as possible, and then launch an ARROW in time to catch this incoming missile before its descent, at a terrific velocity, through the stratosphere. It would be awfully hard to intercept it from then on.

This produced an intensified effort. The Israelis wanted more money for it. They ran into an element within the U.S. missile community that said, "What we need is a theater-wide missile, a worldwide missile, or a Star Wars missile." There were lots of related U.S. plans, none of which had gone beyond the drawing board. These different plans were competing for development funds. So the U.S. military was split on this subject. Those who advocated the development of a missile which would deal with a regional problem advocated support for the ARROW missile. Others said, "This is mighty expensive stuff, and it comes at our expense." They advocated easing up on the ARROW and developing became known as the THAD, a much longer range weapons system.

Q: Theater range missile.

BROWN: It would be a high altitude weapon with theater coverage or, if you will, the rebirth of what we had renounced in our missile negotiations with the Soviet Union. That is, the Star Wars kind of weapons system. Senior U.S. military officials came through to discuss this with the Israelis, who wanted details about this program. However, the Israelis pushed the ARROW program as far and as fast as they could. This meant cutting corners, which then entailed some risk of failure. This weapons system was tried several times but, for one reason or another, it didn't work. However, eventually, it hit the target. Rather than hitting the incoming missile on a point to point basis, the ARROW missile relied on a buckshot or bucket effect. So, as it approached the incoming missile, it didn't have to hit it exactly, nose to nose. Rather, it relied on a kind of proximity fuse, if I may force this analogy. As the ARROW missile approached the incoming missile, the Arrow would fire a charge much like buckshot, and destroy the incoming missile or at least knock it off course.

Of course, there were those outsiders who would say, "This is essentially a missile system. You may call it an 'anti-missile missile,' but what you have is a new missile system."

Q: Then this involves the nuclear capability of the weapons system.

BROWN: Israel was in peril of being lumped with the likes of such countries as Iraq, Syria, and North Korea as we came up with our strategic missile regime. We considered a system under which we compel all of these, and other countries to adhere to our version of a missile regime as follows: 'Thou shalt not launch missiles capable of more than a certain range, say, either 300 or 500 kilometers. Thou shalt not launch a missile with super velocity.'" This concept later on caused a lot of heartburn in Israel when they saw themselves in risk of being named as being in violation of or not adhering to the missile

regime.

The first Baker visit was rather friendly, although the Secretary was beginning to drop markers on the Israelis and the Palestinians. In essence, he said to the Israelis: “We're not going to deal with the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] on this. However, you've got to deal realistically on this matter, you have to appreciate our limitations and you will have to make substantive and symbolic concessions.”

Shortly thereafter there was a U.S. request for a responsible Israeli to go and see Dennis Ross and Secretary of State Baker quietly. Dan Meridor was a brilliant young minister in the Shamir Government from a prestigious Likud-Herut family. Meridor nominally went to Washington for some other purpose but came back with a letter from Baker containing three, basic questions that were to set the scene for subsequent discussions. They were: 1) Was Israel willing to seek a permanent solution to Arab-Israeli problems, based on UN Resolutions 242 and 338, that is, embodying the concept of exchanging territory for peace? 2) Was Israel willing to attend a regional conference to be co-hosted by the U.S. and the Soviet Union? The Soviet Union was still nominally intact, but by now it was very much weakened. 3) Would the Israelis agree to a moderate-sized, Palestinian Delegation to consist of seven members or so which would not include people from East Jerusalem nor deportees? That harks back to the earlier 1989-90 debate on what kind of Palestinian the Israelis would be willing to deal with.

Those three questions were what the Israeli Government was now faced with. The answers were expected to be “Yes or No.” Understandably, the Israelis were divided among themselves. Remember that Prime Minister Shamir had now brought into the government some ultra-Right types, including representatives of Tsomet, headed by Rafal Eytan, former Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defense Forces, and “Moledet,” which had either two or three members in the Knesset [Israeli Parliament]. Moledet's leader was Ze'evi, whose solution for dealing with the Palestinian Arabs was to transfer them elsewhere. That is, send them to Jordan or wherever. Those groups vociferously denounced this whole idea, from the very beginning, as a sellout which would lead to perdition.

Within the Likud itself there were great divisions as to what they were after, what they would agree to, and so forth. I won't go into all of the details, because you could spend hours and hours on them. Prime Minister Shamir was typically himself. He was reticent, slow-moving, and tended to procrastinate. As such, he would drive people up the wall, including Secretary of State James Baker and some of Shamir's own people. As time went on, more and more pressure came from Baker, who developed a practice of visiting various capitals and giving the Israelis a general picture but not the real nitty gritty details of his discussions with President Assad of Syria or others.

In all of this, by the way, the Egyptian role would come into focus. The Israelis had long felt frustrated that their peace with Egypt was a cold peace. They had given up the Sinai Desert, including Taba, to the Egyptians. Taba was a tiny enclave on the Gulf of Aqaba

between Israel and Egypt. However, the Egyptians remained aloof and cold. The Israelis wanted the U.S. somehow to overcome this Egyptian attitude. We also wanted a positive, Egyptian role in implementing a peace process. The Egyptians wanted the positive benefits which would flow from being in the limelight, but they didn't prove to be too useful.

Back and forth went Secretary of State Baker. He developed a style in dealing with the Israelis which personally I considered quite bothersome. In any event, it was obvious to me that if I was going to play a role here, as a loyal Ambassador I would have to mix it up with the Israelis. I had no qualms about that and I gave Secretary Baker my best advice as to the problems and how to overcome them.

Baker rapidly became disillusioned with Israeli Foreign Minister Levy. He saw that Levy was principally interested in gaining the limelight. Levy had some utility to us by posing as being accommodating, but only if he could gain some control, and the control remained in the hands of Shamir. Baker didn't want to stop by Levy's office any longer and just listen to Levy, whom he labeled as a gas bag. (Baker used pejorative terms for his interlocutors, which I'd better not go into.) Instead, Baker preferred to go straight to Prime Minister Shamir's office. So I would have difficulties with Eytan Ben Tsour, who was working for Levy. Eytan would say, "Well, couldn't Baker stop by Levy's office for a minute or two?" with the press outside, and so forth.

Baker talked with Prime Minister Shamir, and he would see Defense Minister Arens occasionally on the side. When Baker saw Shamir, the key sessions would usually end up with Shamir using Eli Rubenstein and Yusip Ben Aron to do the heavy lifting on the Israeli side. They would come, as always, fully prepared and with all kinds of arguments, counter arguments, and proposals for the U.S. to obtain concessions from the Palestinians and other Arabs, in addition to venting criticism over the way things were going. Shamir would just sit there and let the conversation go back and forth. It would end up with Secretary Baker speaking sharply to Rubenstein and Yusip Ben Aron, with Dennis Ross and me really taking them on. We would get into rather heated exchanges, while Prime Minister Shamir just sat there, rather Sphinx-like in his manner, to Secretary Baker's frustration.

Then Baker would go and meet with the Palestinians. They were often, excuse the expression, sort of cry babies, whining and entreating him for help.

Q: What would they have to offer?

BROWN: They had nothing to offer, except the image of Palestinians meeting with the U.S. Secretary of State. They were always criticizing and requesting concessions. Through various channels it became obvious to us that they really had no clout and were sort of winging it as best they could figure, while trying to stay in the good graces of Yasser Arafat, 1,000 miles away in Tunis.

Q: I'm trying to get a feel for this. I would like to ask you about two things. First of all, you say that you were trying to give Secretary Baker the best advice and so forth. Did you feel that there was a mindset which had developed in Washington among Baker's group? They would sort of get their ducks in line in Washington and then almost feel that, once they had done that, they were sure that they had THE solution. Then they would come out to the Middle East and find themselves up against a different world. I know that we came up against this in connection with the Shultz Plan, when Secretary Shultz met with President Assad of Syria. Did you find that? And then I have another question.

BROWN: To a degree, yes, they were trying to apply a pre-determined solution. Now, they were not fools. We're talking about experienced people. Secretary of State Baker was a good leader. He came to the Middle East well-prepared. He brought a terrific team with him, which was up to speed and coming up with ideas and formulas and so forth. What about your second question?

Q: The second question is, was it implicit in everything that we were doing that we were talking to Palestinians who really had no clout or influence? Did we feel that we had to figure out what Arafat wanted? We already had talks going on with...

BROWN: At that stage things were so delicate that, whatever we thought on the side, the stance had to be, "Let's see if we can promote the formation of a native or, if you will, local Palestinian delegation and hope that Arafat would permit this delegation to go along with the game.

Q: Were you getting any input from Ambassador Pelletreau in Tunis? Was he part of the equation?

BROWN: He was doing his reporting, but I can't remember anything in particular of any note. Of course, the Palestinians would tell us, over and over again, that their real leader was Yasser Arafat. We would be in the position of saying: "Yes, but let's not get into that." We knew, of course, that the Israelis knew virtually everything that was going on. After a meeting with Secretary Baker, the Palestinians we were talking to would run out, pull out their cell phones, and start calling Tunis to report in to Arafat.

Q: You say that the Palestinians were going out and reporting to Arafat on their cell phones?

BROWN: Yes, they would immediately get out their cell phones and report to their colleagues who were working with Arafat in Tunis. Of course, the Israelis would intercept these reports and learn what the Palestinians said about their exchanges with Secretary Baker.

I think that it's worth a moment to pause here and speak of other atmospherics. First of all, the Israeli settlement activity continued. This was really angering Washington now. I've mentioned before how this kind of settlement activity had angered President Bush in

1989-90. Now, it made a very bad impression when Washington found out that Prime Minister Shamir was permitting settlement activity to continue. Remember that there had been a tremendous influx of Soviet Jews, and particularly Russians and Ukrainians, most of them coming from urban environments. Most of them wanted to settle in the belt around Tel Aviv, a small number went to settlements in the occupied territories. Remember that a number of these settlements were rather large. We're talking about communities of 10,000 to 20,000 people. These were virtually bedroom communities, from which you could be at a job in Tel Aviv or Jerusalem in 15 or 20 minutes. Considerable publicity ensued regarding both the construction and the extension of settlements, old and new. The Israelis had developed a tricky way of setting up a new settlement by labeling it an extension of an old settlement. I'd protested against this practice on many occasions.

Of course, it was an absolute demand of all Palestinians that this kind of settlement construction had to stop. From the Palestinian viewpoint, it even had to be reversed. Well, Prime Minister Shamir wasn't about to do anything like this. So this was a point of constant aggravation between ourselves and the Israelis.

Coincidentally, the Intifada was still going on, and there was a rash of ongoing, terrorist incidents against Israeli soldiers and civilians both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Some gruesome, murderous actions also occurred among Palestinians, chiefly against those suspected of collaborating with the Israelis.

As Defense Minister, was in charge of the occupied territories, Arens was in a bind. On the one hand, Arens had come to the conclusion that the Israelis had to deal with the Palestinians and that they could no longer hope somehow to solve this problem through the Jordanians or others. In conversations with me Arens was in effect advocating municipal elections. There were precedents for municipal elections in the occupied territories. This was a subject of contention because Arafat and company could see that the Israeli goal here was to circumvent any possibility of territorial concessions and, once again, go to the U.S. and the world and say in effect, "You see? We have found a local group of Palestinians who have chosen democratically elected village councils. We can do business with these people. They can control cleaning up their own streets, the water system, and that sort of thing. However, nothing more than that."

Prime Minister Shamir was also against elections in the occupied territories. He feared that this would lead to demands by the elected Palestinians for the establishment of an independent, Palestinian entity. Meanwhile, the Intifada and the rash of terrorist incidents continued. Arens proclaimed curfews in Gaza, which was then very heavily dependent on the Israeli economy for employment. 50,000 to 100,000 Gazans were coming across the border with Israel every day to work on farms and do the dirty work at construction sites. This was virtually their only means of earning an income for a very young population of 700,000 which was increasing at an extraordinary rate. Proclaiming a curfew and stopping them from working in Israel was a very serious move. However, Arens, like Rabin before him, on occasion felt that there was no other way to deal with the problem

of terrorism. The curfew would be proclaimed. It might be lifted a few days later, but as the terrorist incidents continued, this became a major problem. The situation in Gaza got so bad that the cry arose, particularly in the Likud camp led by Ariel Sharon, for tougher measures such as those which Sharon in the 1970s had imposed in brutally suppressing disturbances in Gaza.

So the atmosphere was by no means calm and cool. It was fractious. President Bush was angry with Prime Minister Shamir, and Secretary Baker developed the habit of stating to Shamir: "If you think what I'm saying is tough, Mr. Prime Minister, you ought to hear what my good friend of 30 years, President George Bush, is saying." The conversations between Baker and Shamir's entourage, myself included, at times became quite sharp.

Baker developed the technique of saying: "Look, I will try to accommodate your concerns here but I've got other concerns with the Syrians. If you will give me what is necessary to work with, I will accommodate you by a separate, side letter." The Israelis would say, "What are you promising the Syrians on this issue?" Baker would temporize in his answer. He would not reveal the nitty gritty details. Of course, the Israelis had their own means of trying to determine that.

Another technique of Baker's was to tell his Ambassadors, and that certainly included me, that there was to be no reporting of his conversations with either Israelis or anyone else. When he and I were alone, he would say to me: "I don't want that 'blankety-blank' AIPAC [American Israeli Public Affairs Committee] to know what's going on." So I prepared no cables or memoranda of conversations which Baker had. It all stayed with me. I had my notes of what was said at these meetings, which were subsequently destroyed. However, knowledge of what was said at these meetings all stayed in-house, that is, in Secretary Baker's entourage. We were instructed not to communicate, back and forth, with our other Ambassadors. I was not to let Ambassador Ed Djerejian [in Damascus] and other Ambassadors on the circuit know what was going on. That would all be handled by Secretary Baker's party. That was an interesting way to run a show...

Q: Yes, but in a way it was almost necessary because the leakage was so bad in the Department of State, considering the presence of friends of Israel in the political context that I can't think of any other way that you could handle this, over a period of time.

BROWN: Well, Stuart, you get into the question of professional, career Ambassadors doing their best to support a diplomatic campaign, and not just an individual visit by the Secretary of State. I feel, as a professional Ambassador, that it would have been useful to know a little bit more about what was going on elsewhere.

Q: I know. What I'm saying is that anything which came from the visits by Secretary Baker, if it went back to the desk in the Department of State, and God knows how this happens, but it's a truism that anything that you write about Israel, and this applies generally in the Foreign Service, is going to end up on a desk in AIPAC and with friends of Israel in the Senate and the House of Representatives. And probably before anybody

else could read it.

BROWN: Okay, Stuart, but you would have to reckon with the likelihood that those same addressees would get their own version via the Israelis, anyway. Of course, Secretary Baker and Margaret Tutwiler handled press briefings exclusively. The press was along on all or most of these visits. Baker, using his food processors such as Ross, Kurtzer and others in his traveling party, would let out dribbles to the press. The Palestinians, of course, were had their own circuit.

I completely adhered to Baker's overall goal and objectives. I was a loyal Ambassador and did my best to contribute creatively. Indeed, I engaged in this effort in a spirited manner, using Secretary Baker's arguments with Eli Rubenstein, Yosi Ben Aron, Israeli Defense Minister Arens, and the Israeli Foreign Ministry. However, the atmosphere in which I worked was somewhat shocking, and the image that emerged was that the Bush Government was tough and harsh, vis-a-vis Israel. In effect, we were playing a strong hand and a rough kind of ball with the Israelis.

If I may switch over to the Palestinian side at this point, they were in a very difficult position, as I look back at it. They were always asking for something. At one point Faisal Husseini said to Secretary Baker: "You're talking to a dead man! Threats have been made on my life. There's threatening graffiti on the wall of my house. I have young children," and so forth. Faisal Husseini said that the Israelis were behind all of this. Baker responded, do you need security protection? Maybe we can train some Palestinian security types to give you appropriate protection. We have specialists in this field."

I remember a side conversation in this regard with the head of the Israeli Security Service. The Israeli smiled and said to me, "Yes, Faisal Husseini has problems, but they're not problems with us. His problems are with the Palestinians." The thrust of those remarks was: "If you Americans want to go off and train some Palestinian security people, good luck, but that's not the problem."

I can remember Secretary Baker straining to convey to the Palestinians that he was doing his best. He would imply that if they would only give him more to work with, perhaps he could help them more. Baker was an outstanding negotiator. He made you feel that, by God, he had gone the extra mile for you, but you weren't coming up with enough to give him what he needed to work with. At one point the conversation with the Palestinians in the Consul General's house in Jerusalem went to the point where the Palestinians were asking for an expression of "self-determination." There was a long pause, and Secretary Baker turned to his entourage and asked, "Why can't I use that expression?" Neither Dennis Ross nor anybody else said anything. Finally, I said, "Because, Mr. Secretary, that's political dynamite." For years U.S. administrations had adamantly opposed the use of the expression, "self-determination" for the Palestinians. This was a code word for an independent, Palestinian state, run by the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization]. I felt that at that point and in that kind of conversation I had to say this.

Well, as you can imagine, the Palestinians glared at me, and my name, as the American Ambassador to Israel, which was probably muddled anyhow as far as they were concerned, was muddled even further. However, that's what you have to go through.

Q: We'll play this back and we'll pick this up where you are talking about Secretary Baker dealing with the Palestinians on the issue of self-determination.

Today is September 22, 1999. Bill, you were mentioning, while we were talking about these early negotiations with Secretary of State Baker on the Arab-Israeli problem, what the overall, strategic point of view was, as Baker saw it. Essentially, this was the American point of view.

BROWN: At the risk of some repetition, as I may not have covered this point adequately before, I would like to review the situation, from my viewpoint, at the end of the Gulf War in February-March, 1991. The main components of the situation, as I saw them, were as follows:

1) The Soviet Union had imploded. No longer were we dealing with the traditional, Cold War, balance of forces, play and counterplay, in the Middle East. Already, some time before, the Soviet presence in Syria and Soviet clout and support, in the sense of providing arms, subsidies, and personnel had declined. For many years the Soviets had had hundreds, if not thousands, of military personnel in the area. The Syrian armed forces, for example, were equipped with Soviet weapons. The Syrian Air Force had Soviet aircraft, trained along Soviet lines, and operated in terms of Soviet doctrine. All of this required a very hefty subsidy on the part of Moscow, using Syria to counter Israel and playing for the larger Arab vote as part and parcel of the Cold War struggle with the United States.

All of that was now gone. This meant that the efforts and past influence of Mr. Primakov and others in the Soviet Government, whether you were talking about the KGB [Soviet secret police], the Soviet military, and so forth, were very severely set back, if not wiped out. For all practical purposes, they were practically nil. For the sake of appearances, President Bush and Secretary of State Baker decided to continue going through the motions of having the Soviet Union co-sponsor activities in the Middle East, as we went along. However, that was just showmanship.

2) Secondly, although one can argue that Saddam Hussein and the elite, Iraqi Republican Guard should have been completely eliminated, a tremendous blow had been inflicted on Iraq, in terms of military clout and economic infrastructure. A series of restrictions continue to this. U.S. aircraft are still periodically bombing selected military targets in Iraq. One of the two great, strategic threats to Israel, that is, Iraq, had been knocked out for up to 10 years, depending on how the follow-up to the Gulf War went. The other threat remaining, of course, was Iran, which was farther removed from the scene but

which was of concern to the Israelis, in terms of Iran's nuclear and missile potential. In negotiating, whether with the Israelis or with anyone else in what became a multi-faceted process culminating in the Madrid Peace Conference in October, 1991, this was of enormous importance.

Meanwhile, Jordan and the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] were both in the dog house. By word and deed they had acted in a most foolish way, from my viewpoint. Particularly with regard to the Palestinians, one could argue that poor King Hussein, caught between a rock and a hard place, may have felt that he had little choice but to act and speak as he did. However, the Jordanian economy, which was already weak before the Gulf War, was dealt a very heavy blow. The Saudis cut off their subsidy to Jordan, cut off the flow of oil in the pipeline into Jordan, and simply would have nothing to do with the resuscitation of the Jordanian economy or the prestige of King Hussein in any form or manner. The same thing applied to the subsidies formerly paid by the Saudis to the PLO. For years the Saudis, through one means or another, whether private, public, or semi public, had allowed money to flow to Yasser Arafat and various factions in the PLO supporting him. That all stopped. As I mentioned before, Kuwait brutally expelled tens of thousands of Palestinians, charging that the Palestinians had collaborated with the Iraqi occupation forces in Kuwait. So this was a heavy, further blow to the Palestinians in general and to Jordan as well, because when the Palestinians were kicked out of Kuwait, no country would take them except Jordan.

Q: I might add that the Palestinians had publicly demonstrated support of Saddam Hussein on television, which was seen throughout the world.

BROWN: The image used in Israel at that time was that the Palestinians were dancing with joy on the roofs of their homes. Maybe this was an exaggeration, but it was a widely-held stereotype, as a result of which the Palestinians were in a really weak, negotiating position.

At the time there was a great rush to get the goodies in the form of equipment, etc, when the United States finished this major, overseas war effort. We spent a great amount of time and money transporting huge amounts of military equipment to the Middle East. Subsequently, much of this was then deemed surplus to our needs. Rather than ship this equipment back to the United States, U.S. logisticians began looking for ways to get rid of it in the Middle East itself. For the Egyptians, Saudis, the Israelis and others, these goodies were up for grabs. This was something that a negotiator like Secretary Baker could play with.

Inevitably, a cry came from the Egyptians for debt relief. The United States was in a position, if it wanted to, even though at the time our economy was not particularly prosperous, to reward countries which had supported the coalition effort against Saddam Hussein. We did so. The Egyptians' entreaties were answered by the forgiveness of \$7.0 billion in debt to the U.S., plus the flow of surplus military equipment and the maintenance of the annual, foreign aid flow to Egypt, which was roughly in the order of

nearly \$2.0 billion.

The United States had emerged as “El Supremo” as a result of the Gulf War. We were unchallenged. There was no Soviet Union to contend with. We had pulled off a tremendous victory, which was called “The 100 Hours War,” with great, added prestige accruing to us. As a result of the Gulf War President Bush was at his height in terms of popularity. Congress, whatever its earlier misgivings about getting into the war, was now, elated. The President's reception by Congress after the end of the war was tumultuous. He was given great acclaim for his achievement.

So, when Secretary Baker toured the Middle East, he had a tremendously favorable, negotiating position. I would add one other thing which was not commonly referred to at the time, and may still not be. Although, the Israelis had emerged relatively unscathed, and miraculously so, in view of 39 SCUD missiles launched against Israel, their economy had come to a grinding halt during the war.

Israel had been transformed in the years since I was there as DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission], 1979-82, into an increasingly, high tech economy. During the Gulf War, as I traveled around Israel on a sort of morale enhancing tour of Israeli industrial and scientific enterprises, I remember visiting a high class firm that made equipment for administering CAT scans. This is a big, highly complex piece of equipment.

Q: Perhaps you could explain what a CAT scan is.

BROWN: Okay. This equipment is built into a horizontal receptacle which measures your brain waves and whether you have cancer here or there, as well as other disorders. This equipment is large, extremely complex, and very expensive. One set of this equipment was selling then for at least \$500,000. The Israeli-made CAT scan was meeting and beating Japanese and U.S. CAT scans, which had heretofore been regarded as the best in the world. When I talked to the CEO [Chief Executive Officer] of this Israeli company at the time, he said that the market situation for this equipment was disastrous. News of the SCUD attacks on Israel had caused potential customers around the world to ask, “How can we be sure that equipment ordered from Israel will be delivered?” As a result, orders for this and other hi-tech equipment had taken a beating.

Former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who was then a private person, remarked to me at the time, as did Defense Minister Arens, that the Israeli economy was at a standstill. Factories had been closed. The Israeli people had been instructed to stay at home. So the Israeli economy came to a grinding halt. This revealed to me a unique Israeli vulnerability which I had not previously appreciated. When faced with conventional war previously, the Israelis had struck hard and fast struck across their borders. Until the SCUDs attacks of 1991, those wars had been fought elsewhere, outside of Israel or on its borders. The SCUD attacks set in train a new, extra dynamic: the quest for an anti-missile missile and a kind of brand new, radar system which could detect incoming missiles at supersonic speeds, launched from great distances.

This situation also must have set in mind for some Israelis the need for adequate settlements and turning Israel's diplomatic resources to cope with the emergent threats of the future. Not only from Iraq, but...

Q: When you mention settlements, you're not talking about housing on the West Bank of the Jordan, for example, where people lived.

BROWN: No, I'm talking about peace settlements to be negotiated to replace hostilities. Such peace settlements were needed to bring more order and predictability into the region.

These, then, were some of the main factors that Secretary Baker and his outstanding team in the State Department, including Dennis Ross, Dan Kurtzer, Aaron Miller and others, could bring into play. What I'm talking about now is a process involving eight trips to the Middle East between March 12, 1991, through mid-October, 1991, culminating in the Madrid Peace Conference, which started on October 30-31, 1991.

I have to give Secretary Baker and his entourage full marks for pulling off a diplomatic coup. They deserve great credit. I would also note, on the Israeli front, as former Secretary Kissinger and others have said, the Israeli negotiating style is little short of maddening. The Israelis often go into arcane arguments and attempt, over an excruciating length of time, day and night, to extract maximum advantage over as broad a spectrum as they can. That is a well-known pattern in the eyes of professional American negotiators. You find this pattern way back in the time of David Ben-Gurion, Golda Meir, and right on down to the present. Of course, individual Israeli negotiators have their particular traits. Much has been written about Menachem Begin and the negotiations which led to the Camp David agreements. On that score you should also consider Ambassador Sam Lewis' contributions.

In this particular case Prime Minister Shamir's personality and style included a pronounced reticence in front of a U.S. negotiator. Shamir had a distinct tendency to procrastinate in making decisions, particularly tough decisions. This tendency made it even more difficult to negotiate with him. Shamir's way of handling Secretary Baker presented its own problems. Shamir would receive Baker in the Prime Minister's office. Shamir would sit under a stern portrait of Jabotinsky, the revisionist right-wing Herut/Likud visionary, who was well known for his view that Israel should control "both banks of the Jordan River." Shamir would seat Secretary Baker to his immediate right, with myself and Dennis Ross, to Baker's right. To Shamir's left would be Yusip Ben Aron, the Director General of the Prime Minister's office, a former Israeli Foreign Service Officer of pro-Likud, hawkish sentiments, and Eli Rubenstein, who had served many different Israeli Prime Ministers and administrations and who had taken part in many negotiations.

Very often Shamir would just sit there and let Ben Aron and Rubenstein pick holes in any

presentation made and ask a whole series of penetrating, difficult questions, which would lead the conversation on and on. Shamir would often preside over such a meeting in relative silence, until it really boiled over. Then he might say a word or two to calm down the atmosphere.

Well, a process like that could be very frustrating for a man like Secretary Baker, who wanted to move on and had a lot on his mind. His itineraries were complex. He would be moving on from seeing Prime Minister Shamir to go to see President Assad up in Syria. Then he might be going to Saudi Arabia to see the Saudis. Baker had many other items on his platter, as well as the peace process itself. The fact that Shamir had his own splits within Likud also further complicated the process. Shamir's coalition government had been in office for some time, and like all Israeli coalitions which have been in office for a time, it was beginning to come apart at the seams. The Right Wing splinter parties in Shamir's Government, which provided him with a majority of five or six seats in the Knesset, were to the Right of the Likud. They were named: "Tsomet," headed by Raful Eytan, former hard line Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defense Forces and "Moledet," led by Ze'evi, another, former general who advocated the transfer of the Palestinians from the occupied territories to elsewhere...

Q: We call that process "ethnic cleansing" these days.

BROWN: Well, transfer was Ze'evi's expression, and he could cite historical precedents in other countries, including the United States...

Q: An example is the Cherokee Indians.

BROWN: Right. Another of the Right-Wing splinter parties was Tehiya, led by Yakub Neeman.

These splinter parties, and Ariel Sharon within the Likud, were harping away against Prime Minister Shamir's allegedly giving away the farm. They were calling for larger, not smaller settlements in the occupied territories. They were calling for much tougher measures against the Intifada, which, while it was showing some signs of fatigue, was nevertheless a very, very disconcerting phenomenon. They advocated stronger measures in Lebanon, where President Assad of Syria was squeezing the Christian Lebanese more and more tightly, thereby giving more play to what became known as the Hezbollah group [Muslim extremist group]. So Shamir's task was further complicated by this situation.

Having said all of that, I want to stress that, throughout this period, I remained loyal to Secretary Baker and President Bush. I was, after all, their Ambassador to Israel. I supported Bush in every way that I could. I often offered him tactical advice, as a professional Ambassador should do. This situation, where I had internal misgivings, was a very private thing for me. I couldn't go around sharing thoughts with others. I must say that, at times, inwardly and privately, I found Secretary Baker's style disturbing. It was

tougher than I thought necessary. From his personal and private remarks to me I felt that his attitude toward certain Israeli leaders, as well as others, bordered on the contemptuous. I remember Secretary Baker repeatedly referring to King Hussein, when we were alone, as the “P. L. K.” [Plucky Little King]. It was said in a tone of contempt.

Now, many negotiators, especially those going through a prolonged process of stress, will often lash out in private, so one should take my remarks as the listener or the reader wishes to do. However, this attitude of Secretary Baker's posed a professional dilemma for me. As I said, I was of the view, from the very beginning of my tenure as Ambassador to Israel, that a peace process could be put together. I had so recommended it to Secretary Baker and, by golly, here he was doing it! Baker had many balls in the air at the same time as he negotiated with the Israelis and the Palestinians.

In this context I mean the local Palestinians. Remember that our dialogue with the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] had ceased and remained closed at this stage, given the May 30, 1990, attack against the Israeli coast near Tel Aviv and PLO conduct during the Gulf War. So Secretary Baker had a great deal on his mind.

At times, Secretary Baker's attitude really bothered me. The dilemma is: what should he have done? He was moving ahead. The negotiations in which he was involved were leading to a peace conference, one way or another, which I could readily applaud. If it succeeded, it would give the Israelis a remarkable breakthrough in demolishing the long-standing Arab taboo against negotiating with the Israelis. However, I was disturbed. Nevertheless, what should I have done? Should I have resigned, should I have quit, should I have withdrawn? I felt: “No.” My strong, private reservations notwithstanding, I should put my shoulder to the wheel and do everything that I could. So that's the way I conducted myself.

Q: Could I interject something at this point? To me, one of the great problems Americans face in dealing with Israel has always been a tendency to say to ourselves: “Gosh, we're not anti-Semitic. Therefore, we've got to give the Israelis the benefit of this or that doubt. I think that the Israelis realize this and have played it to a fare-thee-well. This was particularly the case with the Bush-Baker administration. They did not seem to be as disturbed about how they treated Israel as most other American administrations had been. We can talk about King Hussein as the “Puffy, Little King.” We thought of the Israelis as the “brave Israelis.” We often feel that we have to show that we certainly don't have a trace of anti-Semitism in our attitude and therefore have to be more forthcoming to them than, say, we would be to the French. Did you find this a problem?

BROWN: I would say, Stuart, that you are not alone in this opinion and in expressing it. There are many Americans who felt the same way and who expressed this in one form or another.

Going way back to the time when I spoke with Larry Eagleburger before he was actually nominated as Secretary of State and called on General Scowcroft before he was taken on

at the National Security Council, Larry's remarks and my contacts with Scowcroft led me to realize that this was a new, or a new/old attitude, however you want to describe it. To put it mildly, this attitude might be summarized as: "No more Mr. Nice Guy." It ranged and was perceived by the successive Shamir cabinets as going much further than that. This was seen as coming from the White House and was not a creation of Secretary of State James Baker. From their various sources it didn't take the Shamir cabinets long to figure out that they had a major problem with the President of the United States and his attitude toward them.

All of that was to sharpen as time went on. I recalled previously how President Bush in my presence and in his office called me in and really pounded the air. He was furious at what he considered a betrayal of assurances he felt he had received from Shamir. Prime Minister Shamir had obviously put off President Bush with some such remark as: "The settlements need not be a problem." However this comment was worded I don't know. I wasn't present at that conversation. Bush took it to mean one thing. Obviously, Shamir intended it to mean something else. President Bush was really furious as time went on, and the new facts on the ground as Sharon and others loved to call them, kept sprouting up, our protestations notwithstanding.

By the time of the outbreak of the Gulf War in 1991, Shamir and company knew that they had a real problem. During the Gulf War itself the question of Soviet or Russian Jewish immigration and its implications had reached the point that the Israelis were asking for housing loan guarantees. What this meant was that they wanted to be able to go to the U.S. corporate bond market and float loans which would be, if you will, guaranteed by the United States Government. They had had enough support for this in a broad spectrum of Congress that they had reasonable hopes of getting it. Well, this wasn't happening.

In February, 1991, during the Gulf War, the then Israeli Ambassador to the United States was Shoval, whom I very much admire, vented some frustration about his inability to achieve movement on these resettlement loan guarantees. He was then and is now a good Ambassador, serving in Washington for the second time around. He may be nearing the end of his second term now. Anyhow, Shoval was a former member of the Israeli Parliament and a man of sophistication, education, and finesse. He had been successful in business and had considerable diplomatic experience. At one time he had helped found a new political party with Moshe Dayan. This man really had background.

Remarks were attributed to Ambassador Shoval by Reuters news agency, to the effect that the Israelis were getting the run around on these guarantees. Well, on the evening of Friday, February 14, 1991, as I was closing up my office in Tel Aviv and getting ready for possible launches of SCUD missiles by the Iraqis, I received a phone call on the secure telephone from Dennis Ross in Washington. Dennis Ross said, "You will go to Prime Minister Shamir immediately and convey the following message: 'Were it not wartime, and U.S.-Israeli relations being what they are, we would have asked for Ambassador Shoval's recall. His comments are outrageous'" and so forth. I urged Dennis to hold off and let things cool down a little bit before I went in with such a strong statement in the

middle of a war to a government that was being attacked by the Iraqis. Ross repeated: "Deliver the message." I said, knowing that Dennis was Jewish, "You are aware that it is Shabath [the Sabbath Day]. It's after sundown on Friday, and you are aware that there is a likelihood of SCUDs being fired at Israel. This is not the time to do it. Wait 24 hours, after Shabath." He said, "No, no, it has to be done now."

So I called Yusip Ben Aron and dictated that statement to him. It has subsequently been quoted in Secretary Baker's memoirs. This was a brutal revelation or insight into how strongly they felt in Washington. It was a "gotcha" [got you] mentality. They felt that Israeli Ambassador Shoval had stepped over the line. Sure, he may have deserved a tap on the wrist. I wasn't there at the time. I thought that it was a brutal response. So it was delivered, but it was not a casual thing.

I could talk for hours, giving the historical background and so forth. The main issues were: would the Israelis agree to a Middle Eastern conference based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338? This meant land for peace. Would the Israelis agree to an international conference? For good reason the Israelis had a well-founded dislike, having been pilloried, over and over again, particularly at the UN General Assembly and in various specialized agencies of the United Nations, where the Arab countries would gang up on them and use their clout with the Third World, and so forth. Of course, the Russians and other communist states would just pile on. The Israelis had a really strong feeling about getting into anything where they would end up in the dock, as it were. In that situation the rest of the world, including the U.S. as the presumptive convener of an international conference, in essence would put the Israelis under the spotlight, embarrassing and humiliating them and forcing them to submit to the alleged will of the international community.

So the question was: would the Israelis come to some kind of international conference and, if so, where would it be held? From the Israeli viewpoint they had always wanted the action to take place in and on their borders. That is, they wanted face to face negotiations on a bilateral, official basis with their neighbors. During all of those years, given the decisions made by the Arab League and the very strong anti-Semitic, anti-Israeli bias displayed by all of their neighbors, Israel had refused to agree with such negotiations. The Arab countries carried these biases into the peacemaking process. The Arab viewpoint would be: if we're going to have a conference, it should be an international meeting, held elsewhere than in the Middle East. Such a conference ought to be framed in such a way that the outcome is territory for peace. That is, Israel should vacate all of the lands, of any sort, that it has ever taken, if you want the fuller version of the Arab demands.

The Israelis were not about to accept that. The question then was: would the Israelis allow Palestinian participation in such a meeting under constraints? That is to say, no PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization], because the U.S. itself was in a further bind on the PLO, because Arafat had behaved so badly during Desert Storm and was in the dog house with many Arab countries. Would the Israelis accept a proper Palestinian delegation which was not controlled by the PLO, which did not include Palestinians from East

Jerusalem at this stage, and so forth? Well, examining these and other issues consumed hours and hours of time, with discussions, proposals, and counter-proposals being presented. Again, I reiterate, full marks should go to Secretary of State Baker for his patience, his tolerance, and his ability, as a deal maker, to set things up where he would lay out all of these Israeli objections and then work to demonstrate all that he had done and was going to do to try and meet them. He said that he would keep trying, but he would need more from the Israelis. He was a wily deal-maker.

Baker would meet with the Palestinians, criticize them for PLO conduct during the Gulf War, and tell them, flat-out, that the Palestinian Delegation to the forthcoming conference wasn't going to be controlled by the PLO. At the same time he would say in effect, "If you play along with me, if you'll go through the right motions and so forth, maybe we can get you more of what you want, if you know what I mean." You may remember my previous example, when the expression "self-determination" came up, he turned and said, rhetorically, "Why can't I use that?" The rest of the American team fell silent, and I finally spoke up and said that it would be political dynamite. (End of tape)

Meanwhile, Russian Jews continued to pour monthly into Israel by the tens of thousands, and the demands for feeding, housing, and employing these people grew. So the put down of Ambassador Shoval in February, 1991, notwithstanding, because the Israelis kept coming back to this issue, Baker, a former Secretary of the Treasury who had a certain knowledge of how things work and can work, began to intimate to the Israelis: "Well, you know, the way a loan guarantee works is that the United States Government guarantees it. However, these bonds are scored. That is, there's a charge pertaining to them, depending on risk assessment and so forth." Baker would say, "I have to tell you, Mr. Prime Minister, there are those who are recommending that the 'scoring' of these bonds should run at about 20 to 30 percent of their face value. There are people who would advocate that." In other words, if you want to borrow \$100, it could cost you \$20-30 in scoring fees. This, of course, would be a sky high figure. However, the clear implication was that if Baker had the wherewithal, he could throw his weight behind doing something about this. Baker noted that he was a former Secretary of the Treasury, and his best friend over the past 25-30 years was George Bush, who happened to be President of the United States. Then Baker would raise his voice and say to the Israelis: "Would you stop building settlements? Will you give me an ironclad guarantee that you will stop construction work on all settlements, including those in and around Jerusalem?" Of course, Prime Minister Shamir wasn't about to make such a commitment.

As that issue sharpened, so did the U.S. language and Secretary Baker's handling of this matter. That difference of view with Shamir's Government was to last through the whole peace-building process and afterwards.

Q: During the time that you were involved in this negotiation, were your people going out and checking on construction at these settlements?

BROWN: You can bet we were! In fact, the primary reporting responsibility here lay with

the Consulate General in Jerusalem. The Consulate General staff was assiduously reporting all of these developments...

Q: The charge was made later that many of these settlements were put up but weren't fully occupied. Was this happening?

BROWN: Oh, there was a whole technique involved in settlement building. All sorts of things were happening. The standard technique, especially when the people behind all of these settlements realized that the U.S. was increasingly focused on them, would be for a small group of people to appear on a distant knob, some distance from an existing settlement. They would set up some tents and bring in a caravan, a couple of trailers, and so forth. After a while, instead of three or four couples living there, there would be 10 or 15 couples and perhaps a couple of mobile homes. Then a road would be built, connecting with a nearby highway or settlement. When the U.S. protest came in, and we were using satellite and ground observation to learn what was happening, the dimensions of this problem grew.

Remember, when I first went to Israel in 1979, there were no more than several thousand Jewish settlers living on the West Bank. However, by this time we were talking about 100,000 Jewish residents on the West Bank. It was now beginning to take on some overtones such as, "Well, maybe some Russian Jews would like to go out there and live." After all, there were all of the incentives. They had a practically free mortgage for the housing, commuter bedroom facilities, good swimming pools, schools, high tech employment on some of these sites themselves, and so forth.

So this was a big issue, and it got sharper and sharper as time went on. Indeed, this continued, even after the peace process began. I'll get back to that in a moment.

Another problem that reared its head was the establishment of the Missile Technology Control Regime. Already U.S. Defense Secretary Dick Cheney had had words in my presence with Arens as Israeli Defense Minister about the alleged leakage of U.S. technology through the Israeli industrial and military complex to other countries. There had been sharp words exchanged, with Arens himself taking part in them. Arens resoundingly rejected these comments by Dick Cheney. As I indicated in previous remarks, it's a terribly complicated issue, not just between the U.S. and Israel but the U.S. and countries X, Y, and Z, such as France or anybody else.

As a result of the Gulf War and the discovery of how far Saddam Hussein's missile technology had advanced, apart from the junky SCUD missiles that were being fired at Israel and U.S. forces, we realized how close he had come to developing a nuclear missile delivery system. This was coupled with the increasingly disturbing news on and about Iran and the flows of technology into Iran from North Korea and from Russian scientific personnel and establishments. The Bush administration was advocating something called the Missile Technology Control Regime. Under this program lists were drawn up of countries that had missiles and missile programs which had not conformed to our version

of a control system which said, "Thou shalt not build something which can go more than 400-500 kilometers," and so forth.

Well, since Israel hadn't signed on to this control system, Israel began to appear on these lists. This caused the Israelis great heart-burn at the prospect of yet another, open split with the United States. Secretary Baker could play with this issue. On the one hand, he could say that this was a Department of Defense problem, and, on the other hand, he could say that it wasn't. It was not merely the Department of Defense which was involved in this. It was the State Department Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM) which handled the licensing. At this time Dick Clark was the relevant PM Assistant Secretary. Along with others, PM was putting out the preparatory guidelines which constituted a warning to the Israelis: "Hey, you either come to terms on this issue, or else..."

So issues like these were in the background of the negotiations which were under way. In the event, as time went on, Secretary Baker succeeded in successfully completing these negotiations. It was a grinding process. He made eight visits to Israel.

A great deal of showmanship was going on at the same time. I'll give you an example. Very often these trips by Secretary Baker were arranged on very short notice. There would be a brief announcement, we would get ready, and Baker's delegation would arrive in Israel. I remember that one of the trips was scheduled for Hanukkah, a major Jewish festival commemorating the rededication of the Temple of Solomon by Judas Maccabeus in 165 B.C. However, Baker's schedule was such that they had to come then, and Prime Minister Shamir met them.

On one of these occasions we had a truly great Consul General in Jerusalem, Molly Williamson. If you haven't heard of her...

Q: Has she retired?

BROWN: I don't know, but when she does, you will want to interview her. Molly had had some experience in Arab countries. She had also served in the Embassy in Tel Aviv. As I was coming in as the new Ambassador to Israel, she was in the latter part of her tour of duty in Jerusalem. I knew her very well and favorably. She was our first woman Consul General in Jerusalem.

In these negotiations with the Palestinians and in handling herself with Secretary Baker, Molly did a bang up job. There was one occasion when what Baker needed was a visible sign of movement, to the extent that one of the Palestinians was needed to travel to Amman, Jordan, while Baker was making his visit there. This meeting could be presented as evidence that progress was being made. The point could be made that a Palestinian was involved in the negotiations, and he or she had come over all the way from Israel, crossing the Allenby Bridge, and was in Amman.

I received a phone call from Dennis Ross in Washington at midnight or 1:00 AM, local

time in Tel Aviv. I was informed that Secretary Baker wanted Hannan Ashrawi to attend this meeting. Hannan was a Christian Arab who held a Ph.D. from a U.S. university. She was a very outspoken lady and very critical of the negotiations. She was one of the nearly constant contacts of Secretary Baker when he visited Jerusalem. She was also one of the major speakers when those groups met.

Q: She was almost constantly on TV.

BROWN: She was on TV very frequently on this occasion and was to be even more so, as the peace process went on. Anyway, the word came from Washington: "Get Hannan Ashrawi across the Allenby Bridge and into Amman, immediately." As I said, by now it was the middle of the night, local time. Secretary Baker needed her there in Amman by the opening of business on the following day.

Well, as you know, the Israelis closed the Allenby Bridge each night, the Intifada was going on, and there were road blocks all over the place. The bridge was closed at sundown and would not normally be opened until 8:00 or 9:00 AM on the following morning. Dennis Ross knew this, and that is why he made the phone call. He knew that he needed me to arrange for Hannan Ashrawi to cross the bridge.

We got in touch with Molly Williamson, the Consul General in Jerusalem. I also got in touch with either Israeli Defense Minister Arens or some other, senior official in the Defense Ministry and asked him to open up the road blocks and so forth. Now, Hannan Ashrawi was not particularly keen about getting up in the middle of the night on the basis of a phone call from Molly Williamson, get dressed, get into Molly's car, go through a whole bunch of tough, military road blocks, to be delivered down at the Allenby Bridge and then run up to Amman. She might well have regarded this as an affront to her dignity. In the event, Molly Williamson had quite a task, convincing Hannan Ashrawi to agree to this. I was on pins and needles as to whether this trip would actually work out. So I did a great deal of almost continuous work on the telephone during the night, to make sure that if Hannan Ashrawi did get up and got into Molly Williamson's car, she would be able to cross the Allenby Bridge and travel up to Amman.

Sure enough, Molly Williamson and Hannan Ashrawi appeared at the Allenby Bridge in the wee hours of the morning. An Israeli Army Colonel said, "Bavakesha" [Please], and waved them across the Allenby Bridge. Hannan Ashrawi was driven up to Amman, and Secretary Baker's public appearance needs were met. That shows you the kinds of things that we could get into.

Q: I was wondering whether you could tell me how you saw your role at these meetings which Secretary Baker had. You were the U.S. Ambassador to Israel. Supposedly, Baker's staff was making arrangements for these trips. You had to run the Embassy and everything else.

BROWN: My role in connection with these meetings was to keep in touch with Yosip

Ben Aron and Eli Rubenstein. Dennis Ross and I would hammer against their arguments. The exchanges would often get quite sharp. Prime Minister Shamir would sit there and, after a certain amount of acrimony and so forth, would say something like: "Well, let's move on," or something like that.

Secretary Baker himself would occasionally lash out, and sometimes he did this quite deliberately. He would get sick and tired of what he considered Yosip Ben Aron's and Eli Rubenstein's dilatory tactics. Baker had his own, if you will, Texas deal maker's way of emphasizing a point. I found that this pattern of Baker's was repeated later on in the context of a couple of other, really tense occasions. At the time we had no direct communications with Ambassador Ed Djerejian in Damascus. However, when I put things together later on and made comparative notes, I found that this pattern was not unique.

If frustrated enough or to drive home a point, Baker would snap together, very loudly, this folder he had with him, which had metallic edges, and Baker would then stand up. We were all seated in a tiny circle. Baker would step past a coffee table and go over and look at a map or wall exhibit of some kind. In Prime Minister Shamir's office there were always displays of this kind. He would convey a studied anger for a moment or two and then say, "If that's the way you feel, then there's really no point in going any further." Raising his voice, he would say: "Now, I've tried and I've done everything that I could, Yossi and Eli. I've met this and that request, but you keep on harping away" and so forth. As I say, Baker would deliver himself of a bit of a diatribe against them.

There would be a period of silence, and Shamir would then say, "Well, let's go on" or move the discussion onto a different tack. On more than one occasion Secretary Baker would say to me, and I felt that this was entirely gratuitous, because I was taking notes, along with Dennis Ross and others: "No cables or telegrams reporting this discussion, Ambassador!" Of course, he didn't need to say that. The Israelis were taking down every syllable that Baker was saying, and the Israelis were very good note takers. Several times he would make a similar remark when I was present in discussions with the Palestinians. He would say, "I don't want any cable reporting this!" I felt that this was a gratuitous slap at my expense. There was no need for it, all the more so because we all knew that, as soon as the meeting was over, the Palestinians would run out of the building, get on their cell phones, and phone Yasser Arafat's people at PLO headquarters in Tunis. Of course, the Israelis would be tuning in, so that a record was being made of the discussions.

Q: Was he saying that for some particular purpose?

BROWN: He obviously wanted things to be compartmentalized. I suppose that he wanted to let it be known that what he said to me in private, in the Cadillac, would remain private. In the car, he said to me: "I don't want the blankety-blank AIPAC [American Israeli Public Affairs Committee] and all of those Jewish organizations on my back." In other words, he was afraid of a leak on the way the conversations were going. Of course, I wouldn't have dreamt of sending a cable on these discussions unless it were a first person

message personally cleared by Baker on such things. To do otherwise would have been unthinkable. However, there we were.

Baker gradually put this negotiation together. There would be a great deal of acrimony and a great deal of sharpness, particularly on the loan guarantee and missile technology. There would be a lot of harsh words about the continued construction of Israeli settlements or settlement outposts in the occupied territories. He took an increasingly critical attitude toward Israeli operations against growing attacks against Israel by Hezbollah and ultra-radical Palestinians up on the Lebanese front. Baker repeated the old call for moderation and restraint and expressed increasing criticism about Israeli Defense Minister Arens' handling of Intifada incidents. Arens was doing what he could, but Israelis were being killed, and curfews were in effect. Palestinian employment in Israel was cut way back because of the curfew and the closure of the border. These incidents on the border were by no means an Arens invention. The same practices were used before and later on by Yitzhak Rabin.

So there was a lot of acrimony in the air. However, ultimately, an agreement was put together. Then the Baker party requested that a couple of crack DCMs [Deputy Chiefs of Mission] be detailed to Madrid to help complete the preparations for an international conference in Madrid. These included my DCM at the time, Mark Parris, an outstanding DCM [later our Ambassador to Turkey] and former specialist on the Soviet Union. I'd recruited him for the post of DCM in Tel Aviv at the suggestion of Charley Hill, and it was an excellent choice. By now Mark had such a reputation that Margaret Tutwiler and company lifted him out of Tel Aviv to prepare the choreography for the Madrid Conference.

Well, the great moment arrived, and at a critical juncture just before the Madrid Conference, Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy, who had been having his running battles within the Likud and with Prime Minister Shamir, was angered to find that Shamir had decided to lead the Israeli Delegation to the conference himself. In a snit, David Levy boycotted it, which was okay from Shamir's viewpoint. So Shamir led the Israeli Delegation.

I went out to take an El Al flight to Madrid. As I was just leaving my office, my secretary said there was an emergency call from the Director General of Hadassah Hospital. I took the call. He said, "Your Ambassador to Amman, Jordan, has just been very seriously injured in one of your Embassy automobiles on the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway. Since there are no communications allowed by the Jordanians between Israel and Jordan, and we can't communicate with his wife or family, I need your authority to operate on the Ambassador immediately. Otherwise, he will die." So I said, "Go ahead."

With that, I ran downstairs with my mobile phone, raced out to Ben Gurion International Airport, and, from the side of the plane, called the Director General of Hadassah Hospital. He said that it was touch and go but the Ambassador would survive.

Q: Who was it?

BROWN: What had happened was that, by arrangement, he had come from Amman to the Allenby Bridge. My driver, Yosi met him in an armored Cadillac from Embassy Tel Aviv, took him from Allenby Bridge to the highway going up to Jerusalem which climbs very precipitously. As my driver was wending his way down, a recently-arrived Russian immigrant lady, on her first and last trip as an Israeli driver, veered out and hit the Embassy Cadillac, head on. She was killed instantly, and her husband lost his legs. The American Ambassador to Jordan, who was in the traditional Ambassadorial position in the right rear seat, had a waist seatbelt. The seat belt saved his life but almost killed him because in the collision the belt dug into his intestines. My driver and the female Security Officer riding with him were badly injured in the accident.

On arrival in Madrid, I was given a briefing by Margaret Tutwiler. She had our places laid out. We were literally seated on a carpet as she went through the scenario with her Southern twang. She promptly and firmly told us exactly where we were going to sit as Ambassadors, what, when, how, and so forth. It was quite a show and, of course, she delighted in telling all of her interlocutors, not only American but especially Arab and all of the others, that the Royal Palace in Madrid [Palacio de Oriente] is: "The biggest palace in Europe!" She gave us the details as to how palace guards in their traditional uniforms would give their salutes to the arriving dignitaries and how the cameras of the world were all placed.

Well, the Madrid Conference was a great show, a great piece of choreography. Full marks to Margaret Tutwiler. President Bush came, with President Gorbachev, put in a brief appearance, and used an expression, "territorial compromise." This was fascinating to me because, like others, I suspected that what he perhaps meant to convey to his Arab audiences was, in essence: "We'll get you some land, but you're not going to get it all back." It would be a compromise. To Shamir's ears, nothing like that was good. He wasn't particularly interested in any more territorial compromise.

After months and months of negotiating, what we had in front of us was something beyond the wildest dreams of earlier, Israeli generations. That is, leading an Israeli Delegation, Prime Minister Shamir sat in a royal, palatial setting across the table not only from the Delegations of Egypt but also of Syria, led by Syrian Foreign Minister Al-Shara, whose vociferous anti-Israeli attitudes were well known. There was also a combined Jordanian-Palestinian Delegation. This was the subject of great controversy, acrimony, and negotiations, between Secretary Baker and the Palestinians, and the Palestinians and Jordanians and everybody else. The Palestinians wanted to be separate, but we wouldn't let them be separate. Once they were in place, they began acting as independently as they could, anyway. Hannan Ashrawi was now featured, along with Bibi Netanyahu, in the ongoing TV commentaries originating out of Madrid.

For almost the first time the Israelis were meeting formally with their neighbors, including the Egyptians, at an international conference. They already had a peace treaty

with Egypt, although it was a cold one. Then there were the Jordanians/Palestinians. There were the Syrians and a Lebanese Delegation which was under the thumb of the Syrians but was seated separately from them, as if it were independent. There, on the side in swirling robes, was a representative of the Gulf Cooperation Council, an Emirate Arab. There was Ambassador Bandar, in his fine robes, a representative of the Royal Family [of Saudi Arabia]. He was the Saudi Ambassador to the United States.

There were also European Community and United Nations observers. Many of these arrangements had been initially strenuously resisted by the Israelis and certain others. Finally, it all worked out. As Jimmy Durante [American comedian of the period 1930-1960] used to say, "Everybody wanted to get into the act," once the act had been put together. President Gorbachev of the Soviet Union put in an appearance with President Bush. It was a sweet, yet sorrowful sight because Gorbachev was already on the way down. I note, by the way, that his wife, Raisa Gorbachev, died yesterday of leukemia.

The arguments presented were standard on all sides. There was no great breakthrough, in substantive terms. However, a key element here came into play, in the sense that a major part of the choreography was that there would be bilateral agreements reached after the end of this conference, to be negotiated in Madrid. The Israelis argued vociferously that they should take place in and around Israel. The Arabs rejected this proposal, and a compromise was reached that bilateral agreements would be worked out in Madrid, at least with the Syrians, immediately after the close of the principal conference. Then, later on, multilateral negotiations would take place on such issues as water, regional and environmental, and economic questions. So there were many breakthroughs in terms of resolving long-standing taboos.

Israeli Prime Minister Shamir turned out reasonably well in comparison with El Shara, who was chief of the Syrian Delegation. Shamir appeared to be quite moderate, certainly for Israeli home consumption. The conference was a magnificent TV sight for the world, including Israel, to watch. There were the Arabs with the TV cameras panning around the conference table. There was Israeli Prime Minister Shamir holding forth, as well as Bibi Netanyahu speaking to a worldwide audience to the conference proceedings broadcast from Madrid TV.

Q: What was Netanyahu's position at the time?

BROWN: He was Deputy Foreign Minister of Israel and highly articulate spokesperson for the Israeli Delegation. He was very, very effective, as was Hannan Ashrawi in her own way, speaking for the Palestinian cause.

A particularly nasty development took place on the last day, a Friday. Prime Minister Shamir took his leave on grounds that, as Prime Minister, he had to be back home in time for the beginning of "Shabat" [Jewish Sabbath] that evening. He apologized for leaving the conference and expressed the hope that no one would take his departure amiss. Once he left the conference, El Shara, the chief of the Syrian Delegation, with whom he had

crossed swords during the meeting, made a particularly nasty set of comments and held up a “Wanted” poster published during the British Mandate over Palestine identifying Shamir by his traditional, Polish name. It announced a price on Shamir's head and said that he was wanted as a terrorist. El Shara said that this labeled him forever after as a terrorist. El Shara said that it was intolerable that this man, Shamir, should be lecturing the conference, given all of the horrible things he had done to Arabs during the years. He said that it was well known that Syrian and Arab hospitality had been extended to the Jews over the centuries. He said that Syrians and Arabs had been the most beneficial administrators of the territories under their control. Well, for anyone who had even a rough idea of the plight of the Jewish community in Syria, this was a bit difficult to swallow.

So there we were. The Madrid Conference was a great accomplishment in which the Israelis, including Prime Minister Shamir himself, could bask for some time. However, this atmosphere did not last long. By September, 1991, just before the Madrid peace conference, President Bush, with Secretary of State Baker at his side, had called for a 120 day delay in reaching a decision over the U.S. loan guarantees to Israel. Bush said that the extension of this loan guarantee was very controversial among the Arabs, who had the mistaken impression that U.S. money would flow immediately to Israel and would be used to build new settlements in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967. It was such a hot issue that Bush and Secretary Baker said, “Give peace a chance.” They suggested a cooling off period, a delay of 120 days.

Well, AIPAC [American Israeli Public Affairs Committee] and most, if not all of the Jewish organizations in the United States, denounced this linkage between the loan guarantee proposals and the settlement of Russian Jews in Israel. The arrangements for the Russian Jews were specifically designed to settle them in Israel proper, if you will, not the occupied territories. These Jewish organizations took affront. They rose up in protest and gathered their Congressional friends and supporters. President Bush responded, I believe, on September 12, 1991, at a press conference where he pounded the desk and spoke passionately of “powerful, political forces” arrayed against him. He clearly was referring to AIPAC. He characterized himself as “one lonely, little guy” against these forces, trying to resist them and do his job. He went so far as to employ language about how we had risked American lives in defending the Israelis from SCUD missiles.

The whole situation, taken together, was very, very disturbing to me. It was part of a trend. By now I was coming to the end of my tour as Ambassador to Israel. In conversations with me Secretary Baker had asked me what I was interested in doing next. I said that I was fully satisfied, careerwise. To me, being Ambassador in Tel Aviv was enough. I said that I would like to stay on till the end of 1991 and then would be ready to go home and retire. Baker sounded me out as to what might induce me to stay on in the Foreign Service. I mentioned an assignment as Ambassador to Beijing, given my China background. He said, “Well, that's already spoken for.” I may have mentioned the post of Ambassador to Russia. He said that Tom Pickering [then Ambassador to India] was going

to get that. Anyway, Baker said, “How would you like to be Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs in the State Department?” He said that there was a large number of buttons on his phone, and I would have instant access to him. I said, “Thank you very much for the offer, and I’ll think about it.” However, I had already made up my mind on the spot, “No way would I accept this position.” I did not want to work for Secretary Baker in the capacity of Assistant Secretary or, indeed, in any other capacity.

So I soldiered on as Ambassador in Tel Aviv through the end of 1991. The loan guarantee issue sharpened, the Intifada was significantly reduced as a controversy, but there were some horrible murders taking place of Israelis. One always has to emphasize that many, many more Palestinians lost their lives in the Intifada than did Israelis. The worst sufferers in this whole process were Palestinians.

I remember that in December, 1991, Israeli Defense Minister Arens called me in to discuss the Intifada. The situation had gotten so bad that he was considering the expulsion of some Palestinians, including some particularly notorious terrorists. Without even consulting Washington, I said flat out: “We are absolutely against that.” I made a telephone call to Washington as soon as this conversation with Arens was over. Lo and behold Larry Eagleburger, who was then Deputy Secretary of State, called Arens in the middle of the night to protest about reported Israeli plans to expel some of the Palestinians.

I would like to dwell here a minute on the position of Arens. He was a friend of mine. Professionally, I much admired him. There was a great deal of the American in him, by virtue of his upbringing in the United States. However, he was a 100 plus percent Israeli and he was hawkish. However, here was a man who I knew, throughout this whole process, was genuinely seeking solutions to the problems we were dealing with.

He never said this to me at the time, but he had privately decided, as I deduced from his body language and a particular initiative he was considering, to look for a way to arrange for an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. Gaza, in his view, was not part of the holy patrimony of Israel, in ideological terms, as were Judea and Samaria, on the West Bank of the Jordan River. Gaza was an overpopulated, underresourced quagmire of no strategic value. From an Israeli viewpoint, he considered Gaza a bottomless pit and just a general pain in the neck.

Arens had taken an initiative under which he had summoned a number of Western chiefs of mission, myself included, and the Japanese Ambassador to have his experts set out a proposal under which, if they could get further, international backing, in fact, money, the Israelis would vastly expand a program which they had already started. Under this program Gazans in the refugee camps who wanted land for apartments could get it. This program would provide mortgages as a financial vehicle with which to construct new apartments in new areas and make it possible to get out of these horrible refugee slum ghettos. Existing accommodations, for the most part, were filthy, dangerous, and unhealthy.

There were already some Gazans who had opted for this new, financial arrangement. The Israelis could show us actual sites where such new apartments would be built. My European and Japanese colleagues remained absolutely silent when Arens raised this initiative with them. I've forgotten when this was. Perhaps it was in 1991. The French representative made a statement in which he said that he wanted to make it clear that his attendance at this meeting with Arens in no way endorsed anything that was said and that France's position remained the same on the territories occupied by Israel.

On this occasion, I recall asking technical questions. That is, what would be the precise nature of the financial vehicle that would be set up to make this program possible? I asked, "Are you talking about 'soft loans'?" Arens said, "Yes." I asked, with regard to the process of selection of the new occupants of these apartments, when would title pass to the applicant, and so forth. I promptly reported this initiative to the State Department in Washington. However, Washington appeared concerned about anything which could be remotely taken as retreating from the traditional U.S. position on the occupied territories. The Department did nothing about this proposal, and Arens' initiative went nowhere. However, it stuck in my mind as to how far Arens was willing to go to arrange for a decent, Palestinian solution, including the holding of municipal elections. There was a precedent for municipal elections, and Arens wanted to get them going again.

On this matter Arens ran into opposition from Prime Minister Shamir, who didn't want any elections with the Palestinians taking part in them. This was now becoming an archaic position, in any case.

So I finished my tour as Ambassador to Israel on a sweet and sad note - sweet in the sense that I had taken part in a successful initiative toward a peace process. This had been brilliantly orchestrated by Secretary of State Baker and his entourage. We achieved major breakthroughs. We got the Israelis what they wanted in so many important, symbolic terms. We eventually got rid of the much hated United Nations resolutions that "Zionism is equal to racism." We effectively broke the Arab League boycott of Israeli goods. Not that Israel was going to get significant, trade benefits from its Arab neighbors. The Arab economies generally were so poor and weak that, even if they wanted to, which they didn't, there was very little there for the benefit of the Arabs. The Israelis already had a lockhold on the Palestinian economy. They had developed and then maintained that hammer lock for years.

The really key aspect of breaking the Arab boycott lay with Japan, the high tech sector of the international economy, and the great, multinational companies, which in the past had occasionally been caught, pandering to the Arab boycott of Israel. The Madrid Conference, and all that went with it, and the opening of multilateral and bilateral trade negotiations completed the smashing of the Arab trade boycott of Israel. The world was now open to the Israelis, and they went out and sold goods to their key markets.

I retired from the Foreign Service in January, 1992. I received very nice comments as I

left the service. Helen and I left the Foreign Service with a great sense of sweetness and considerable elements of sorrow over certain elements of the Bush administration's style and, if you will, its attitudinal problems, which I have just recounted. And off I went into retirement.

I went on the speaking circuit, which took me around the United States. It was a fascinating education for me. I received an offer to join the board of directors of the wholly-owned subsidiary of Bank Leumi in New York, known as the Bank Leumi New York. I was approached by a senior, CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] officer in the summer of 1992 to become a member of a unique organization. As a typical, Foreign Service Officer, I had no particular love of the CIA. But let me stop here. (End of tape)

As I said, I was approached by a senior, CIA officer, who recruited me for a unique organization. I had no desire whatever to join the CIA, but this particular body wasn't "The CIA." This organization was called the "Senior Review Panel," (SRP) which came directly under the Director of CIA, wearing his other hat as the Director of Central Intelligence. This small panel was composed of senior, prestigious people, including two retired Ambassadors, a retired general, and a senior economist with broad commercial and banking background. Our job was to critique the development and the drafts of National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs) as an independent body, reporting to the Director of Central Intelligence. These NIEs were put together by the NIC, the National Intelligence Council, which is itself technically also not part of the CIA. We critiqued these National Intelligence Estimates, with our final comments going to the Director of Central Intelligence [DCI], who then convened the NFIB, the National Foreign Intelligence Board.

The NFIB was chaired by the DCI and included other top, intelligence agency people, who were accompanied by their "spear carriers." I never before, during, or afterwards learned of any organization in the entire United States Government comparable to the SRP. Let's face it. Bureaucracy abhors an independent review group, especially one which has the authority to report directly to the "Boss." This just runs against the whole history of bureaucracy. I was engaged in this job, on a part-time contract basis, from 1992 until the spring of 1993 when, to my great surprise, I was approached by the Clinton administration to go back to Israel for what was described as, perhaps, two or three months, but which lasted several months longer.

Q: Well, Bill, we'll pick this up next time when you received this surprise call in 1993 to go back to Tel Aviv. We'll finish that off and then we'll talk about your time on the Board of Directors of the American Institute on Taiwan.

BROWN: I might also mention a side excursion when I was special negotiator for Myanmar, formerly known as Burma.

Q: Today is September 4, 1999. Bill, would you like to say how you would like to frame things?

BROWN: Yes. However, I would like to hark back to one fascinating episode in Israel which took place in the spring of 1991. In Hebrew it was called "Operation Shlomo," which translates into "Solomon." This involved the movement of Ethiopian Jews from Ethiopia to Israel.

Q: These are the people known as the "Falasha?"

BROWN: Yes, but be careful when you use this term, because in Ethiopian I believe that "Falasha" has a pejorative sense to it, although in Israel they were commonly referred to as the "Falasha." In this regard, if I may, let's back off further. That is, Israel's relations with Ethiopia, on which I'm no expert. This takes you into discussing relations between Israel and Africa. The Israelis had been vigorous over the years in cultivating relationships with all sorts of African nations. Unfortunately, as we found out, so many of these African countries rapidly wound up as dictatorships.

Nevertheless, the Israelis kept their hands in African affairs, as we did. This involved a quest for diplomatic recognition, sympathy, and leverage in the Third World vis-a-vis the Arab countries. I would say that, strategically speaking, and from an Israeli viewpoint, this was part of Israel's overall struggle against Arab and Muslim encirclement. In parts of Africa there was a certain play there, because some of the African countries also had their problems with their Arab/Muslim neighbors, minority or majority, and so forth. In all of this I think that Ethiopia occupied a very special position.

I would say that the long-term Israeli goal from the time of independence was to cultivate good relations with whoever was in power in Ethiopia. For many years it was Emperor Haile Selassie. Then, when he passed from the scene and turmoil ensued, Colonel Mengistu ultimately took power. He rapidly became known as a "bloody butcher," as seen by the manner in which he quelled rebellion, revolt, dissidence, and so forth. He led a brutal, military regime.

I'm sure that the Israelis, like others, were unhappy about Mengistu's taking power, but they sought to maintain decent relations with him. Why? For the reasons I just mentioned, plus the fact that Ethiopia is on the Red Sea and in the Horn of Africa. Bear in mind that the Israelis had seized, first Suez in 1956 and the Sinai Desert in 1956 and again in 1967. In strategic terms Ethiopia is very important territory for them to ensure the onward flow of trade into the Israeli port of Eilat on the Gulf of Aqaba. The Israelis also attached great value to their dominance of the Sinai and the waters around it. In Israeli strategic terms this concern extended down to the Horn of Africa. In this context, Ethiopia was a very important place. The fact that the majority of Ethiopians was non-Muslim and Christian had value to the Israelis.

Then there was the longstanding, emotional, religious, and spiritual tie with the Falasha

people of Ethiopia. There were thousands of these people in Ethiopia who considered themselves Jewish by historical, religious tradition. As far as a typical, ultra-orthodox rabbi in Israel is concerned, the Falasha people are not Jews in the normal sense of the word. However, politically, they were an important factor to some Israelis.

Q: There was the link between the Queen of Sheba and Solomon.

BROWN: Yes, there was that story from the Old Testament. There is a strong, Ethiopian tradition that the Ark of the Covenant is really in Ethiopia, having been taken down there. Anyway, Ethiopia was an important Israeli position in strategic and many other terms.

That gives some background why, when I arrived in Israel as U.S. Ambassador, the Israelis were still trying to maintain a decent relationship with Ethiopia, notwithstanding our embargo and our very strong stance against Colonel Mengistu. With that background, in 1990, when I was Ambassador to Israel, the head of Mossad [Israeli foreign intelligence service] called me on the phone and arranged to meet with me. I met with him periodically. In the room with him was none other than the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defense Forces, Ehud Barak, who now is Prime Minister of Israel.

After an exchange of pleasantries, what they put to me was, in essence, a proposal for an exemption from the embargo on the shipment of American arms to Ethiopia. This was a typical Israeli approach. They knew how strongly we felt. They outlined their own desire to maintain a relationship with Ethiopia. They wanted to avoid some sort of a collapse in Ethiopia, which might work to the detriment of both Israeli and U.S. interests, as they put it. As they continued, it became apparent that they had already shipped what they called a small quantity of old rifles to Ethiopia. This was often the Israeli way of doing business with you. On the one hand they requested an exemption from our embargo on the shipment of arms to Ethiopia. On the other hand halfway or three-quarters of the way through the conversation you would learn that the Israelis had already shaved their interpretation of the provisions of the U.S. embargo on the shipment of arms to Ethiopia mighty closely.

At the time I told them that I would report their request. However, I gave them an earful on the obvious. That is, we had a very strong policy against military sales to Mengistu, the butcher. I use that as an example of the kind of debate that went on within Israel at high levels on how to handle a problem like this.

Now, by 1991 Mengistu's position had deteriorated to the point that the well-known special operator, Uri Lubrani, was involved. Lubrani had been handling relations between Israel and Lebanon for years. He had once been an unofficial Ambassador to the Shah in Iran. He was a very sophisticated and highly educated and articulate negotiator.

Lubrani called me in to see him in his office at the Israeli Ministry of Defense. He outlined the situation and the fact that he was in touch and negotiating with Mengistu. He said that, at an appropriate point, he might require our assistance and wanted us to be

brought up to speed on this matter. As it worked out, Mengistu wanted arms, of course. He also wanted money and he wanted to survive. If he couldn't survive in Ethiopia, he wanted help in getting out of the country so that he could survive somewhere else.

So it was that Lubrani would fill me in on the latest aspects of the situation in Ethiopia. We would compare notes. On my side I had information from Houk, our Charge d'Affaires in Addis Ababa, an outstanding officer whom I met briefly only recently. You might want to interview him. Lubrani and I would compare notes on Mengistu's position and so forth. Finally, Lubrani came to the point. Funds were deposited in a New York bank for transfer to Mengistu when, and only when, Israeli planes began to take off transporting Falasha people from Ethiopia to Israel. The precise date when this would be done remained a secret.

One day in the spring of 1993, I received an urgent phone call to go quickly to Ben Gurion International Airport. I saw all kinds of Israeli planes which had recently landed, including a Boeing 747 a lot of C-130s. I watched the last C-130 which came in that day. The rear ramp came down, and one could see a sea of humanity in the aircraft. The Israelis had taken all of the equipment out of the aircraft and covered the deck and sides with sheets of black, polyethylene plastic. The aircraft was jam packed with Ethiopian men, women, and children. The smell that came out of the aircraft after that long, long flight with no toilets was rather overpowering. However, it was a tremendously emotional occasion for all who were there.

The last man to leave the plane was a very elderly gentleman in a white, flowing garment and wearing a white cap. He was what the Falasha community called a "Kais," one of their religious leaders. He had a long, flowing beard and a rod or scepter of some kind. Thinking that I was an Israeli liberator, he embraced me, and we did a little dance on the deck of this rather pungent C-130 aircraft. We got off the aircraft, and I was all choked up. I was the only American present. This operation had been pulled off by Israeli security operatives. Shahak, who was to emerge as Deputy Chief of Staff, then Chief of Staff, and is now a cabinet minister under Prime Minister Barak, had flown secretly to Addis Ababa, set up a headquarters there, and pulled this operation off. In 24 hours some 14,000 people were airlifted out of Addis Ababa and flown to safety in Tel Aviv.

Q: And this was "Operation Solomon."

BROWN: Yes. There had been previous flights of Falasha people to Israel some years previously, in which George Bush, then the Director of Central Intelligence, had been involved. This was called "Operation Moses."

Q: His name escapes me now, but I interviewed someone who was intimately concerned with this kind of movement in the Sudan. That is, sneaking people out of the Sudan to Israel.

BROWN: And the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] was involved in assisting the

Israelis in this effort. It was a very delicate business, given the attitude of the Sudanese Government at the time.

Operation Solomon was such an impressive job that I put in a phone call to my son Alex, who was then a career Air Force pilot flying B-52 bombers. I said, "Alex, you command a B-52 and are an expert on large aircraft. Let me ask you a question. In an emergency, how many people could you put in a Boeing 747?" My son thought a while and said, "Well, in a real emergency, I could cram some 700 people in it." I said, "How about 1,030 people, or thereabouts?" He said, "What?" I said, "A Boeing 747 has just landed at Ben Gurion International Airport with over 1,000 Ethiopian Falasha people aboard. Put that in your pipe and smoke it." [Laughter] It was really a remarkable achievement. Many of the Falasha's were very thin and emaciated, but just imagine what this involved logistically and in terms of planning and so forth.

The next subject I'd like to cover involves shifting briefly to Prime Minister Shamir, before I leave him and the peace process.

Q: Alright. After we finish that, I would like you to return to African and South American policy while you were in Israel. We haven't touched on that. I would like your comments on these matters. Maybe there are other policy matters, elsewhere in the world during this time, which you would like to discuss.

BROWN: All right. Before going farther down the road, I would like to pause a little bit and discuss Prime Minister Shamir and the peace process. I've covered Secretary of State Baker's eight trips to Israel for a series of grinding negotiations between March, 1991, and concluding with the Madrid Peace Conference in October, 1991.

Later on, perhaps after he had left office as Prime Minister of Israel, Shamir is reported to have said that he never intended to yield an inch of Israeli territory at the Madrid Conference. He said that he went to Madrid holding the position of a piece of territory for peace. He said that he would never have gone much further than that, nor would he have had to, since he had the ideological support of Likud and so forth. Later on, he was particularly critical of Yitzhak Rabin, when he took over the reins of Prime Minister of Israel and entered into negotiations with Yasser Arafat, the leader of the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization].

Shamir may have been correctly quoted along the lines that I have just cited. However, the fact is that Prime Minister Shamir had accepted an invitation to this conference, which was tendered to him specifically on the basis of UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which amount to an exchange of territory for peace. Shamir was sophisticated. He knew by various means, through intelligence and political reporting channels and so forth, what we were saying to others, including the Palestinians, the Syrians, the Jordanians, the Egyptians, and the Lebanese. Shamir not only agreed to Israel's participation in the Madrid Conference but decided to attend it as the chief of the Israeli Delegation.

The Madrid Peace Conference was the center of world attention at the time and represented a momentous decision on the part of Shamir. I think that any reasonable observer of Israeli political life would realize that the Israelis were now on the path of land for peace. In other words, Shamir had accepted an invitation to attend the Madrid Peace Conference and all that went with it. He pocketed the tremendous gains of the Madrid Conference in terms of breaking the long standing taboo on official contact between Arabs and Israelis. However, the Madrid Conference was permeated with a land for peace atmosphere.

The Madrid Peace Conference was followed by the difficulties involved in the establishment of bilateral relations which went on, first in Madrid and then were shifted to Washington. There were multilateral negotiations, with the U.S. further putting its shoulder to the wheel and overcoming the long standing UN resolution that "Zionism equals racism." The Arab League boycott against Israel was broken. All of these achievements represented wonderful breakthroughs for Israel, but there was a price tag that went with this. The remarks attributed to Shamir and the tough language that many of his associates in the Likud notwithstanding, the fact is that Shamir put his country and his government on a path which would inevitably lead to just about where we are today. I think that that should be mentioned.

Q: Was that implicit, was that something which all of you understood at the time?

BROWN: I can't say that it was something that was understood by all Israelis, but it certainly was understood on the U.S. side. Among the more sophisticated Israelis, it didn't take much to put two and two together. The liberal side of the Israeli political scene was elated that we had maneuvered Shamir to this point. Since some of them are still active now, I won't go into any names. They included professional Israeli diplomats, who were tough, political liberals by background. They confided to me, after the Madrid conference was over, that only the U.S. could have done this. They had tremendous admiration and regard for Secretary of State James Baker.

Q: Do you also think that it took Prime Minister Shamir to take this step, as it took President Nixon to go to China?

BROWN: Nixon initiated the approach to China after receiving a signal from the Chinese. It was his idea and that of Secretary of State Kissinger. He wasn't dragged into making the opening to China. So this is not a similar situation. However, Nixon and Kissinger didn't go to China just on a whim. They went because they had a strategic overview which was very heavily driven by their perception of the strategic threat posed to the United States by the Soviet Union. This was the driving force behind all of this, both for the Chinese Communists and ourselves.

However, underneath the Middle East peace process there was a fundamental Israeli yearning for diplomatic recognition, for breaking through the long-established Arab

taboos which I've mentioned. In one way or another the Israelis wanted to get their Arab neighbors to sit down with them, face to face, to negotiate with them, and to improve the Israeli strategic situation. Having essentially neutralized Egypt, through the Camp David Agreements, the Israelis undertook to deal with another powerful and increasingly dangerous neighbor, Syria. That is, Syria, with its newly acquired capabilities to engage in chemical warfare and to fire missiles, was not 600 kilometers away but was right next door to Israel. With all of its problems, and Syria had and has many problems, Syria was still in a position to inflict very heavy damage on Israel should, God forbid, a conflict break out between the two countries. So there was a combination of political, psychological, strategic, and economic considerations which influenced Israeli behavior. There were Israeli businessmen who thought that they could make money by trading with Syria.

Certainly, Israel's high tech industry was delighted with breaking through the Arab boycott and opening up new markets. The Peoples Republic of China opened up to the Israelis and recognized Tel Aviv diplomatically. Israel had long had a business presence in China. All of these were very important considerations.

Q: My question really went to Israeli politics, as compared to the political background of Nixon's policies toward China. A Democratic President would have had a very hard time opening up to China without having the Republicans pile on him.

BROWN: I see your point. An Israeli Labour Party leader would have been roundly criticized for opening up to the Arab countries on a land for peace basis, but Israel has a different, political system. A Labour Party leader like Yitzhak Rabin or, indeed, Peres, with a majority of the votes he needed in the Knesset, could have rammed this change through in Israeli style, as did Prime Minister Menachem Begin with the Camp David agreement. Some in Begin's own party, including Yitzhak Shamir, voted against the Camp David agreements. Arens and Shamir did not vote to approve the Camp David agreements. One of them abstained, and the other one voted against these agreements. I've forgotten which did which here. I'll come back to that later.

There is that difference. However, any Israeli leader on a major initiative like this will want it to carry the country. He is ultimately answerable to the Knesset and may face a revolt in his own party against such an agreement. Prime Minister Shamir had his problems in this respect. So the situation in Israel is not the same as the system in the United States. Yet the fact remains that Menachem Begin led Israel to adopt the Camp David agreements, and Shamir, of all people, led Israel to the Madrid Conference. The Labour Party then started with the fruits of this effort and carried them further.

Now let's shift a bit here. It's 1992. I've retired from the Foreign Service, and Yitzhak Rabin has become Prime Minister of Israel. The Labour Party's election posters said, "Elect Yitzhak Rabin" rather than just "Vote Labour." He was pictured as "Mr. Strong Man." He was pictured as the guy who would make tough decisions, in the economy and politically, and would carry the peace process forward on a realistic basis. He ran, of

course, as a Labour Party politician on the Labour ticket. However, the message said in effect, "Elect Rabin, and he'll put together a government," rather than, "Elect the Labour Party and we'll put together a government, and Rabin will probably be the Prime Minister." The Labour Party won this election, holding 44 seats, as opposed to Likud's 32 seats. With smaller, alliance partners, that allowed the Labour Party to maintain a firm grip for a while.

Yitzhak Rabin, was a Sabra, that is, Israeli born. His father had gone from his birthplace in Czarist Russia to Chicago and then he migrated to Israel. Young Yitzhak Rabin had an agricultural education. He was a Young Pioneer-type trained in the Palmach resistance movement. He was a battalion or brigade commander in the struggle during 1948 to take the Jerusalem Road and to keep it open. He was Chief of Staff of the Israel Defense Forces during the 1967 War and was later Ambassador to the United States during the Nixon administration, after the 1973 collapse of Golda Meir's Government. Rabin served in the United States during the Nixon administration, so he had a wide range of very important American contacts, across the board, including Republicans. He had reportedly come out, and this was very unusual, in favor of Nixon's reelection in 1972. This, of course, earned him criticism.

Rabin was Prime Minister during the tumultuous period between 1974 and 1977. The American bank account of Mrs. Rabin became a scandal. [Residents of Israel at this time were not supposed to have foreign bank accounts, but she kept her account from the time she was in the U.S. with Rabin, who was then Israeli Ambassador.] Over time, Rabin's Government weakened and, finally, the religious parties pulled the rug out from under him. He was surprisingly defeated by Menachem Begin in 1977.

Subsequently, Rabin re-emerged as Defense Minister in the later Peres-Shamir coalition governments. He handled the Intifada in a tough way. He was reported to have said, "Break their bones," a comment which he later denied. He was known as "Mr. Tough Guy." However, remember that at the same time he was using my secure telephone to negotiate with Dennis Ross on the composition of the Palestinian Delegation during the Shamir peace initiative, in 1989-1990.

After new elections in 1992 Rabin swept into power again and set up a government. Interestingly enough, he appointed a lot of his old Army buddies to important cabinet and other positions. Danny Yatom, Rabin's military secretary, in fact became chief of the Prime Minister's office. Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, nicknamed "Fuad" because he was born in Iraq and spoke Arabic, had become a general in the Israeli Army and had been in command of the West Bank or a portion thereof. He became Minister of Housing. Ephraim Sneh, also a former general, was another minister in the Rabin cabinet.

The Bush administration immediately reacted positively to Rabin's return to office as Prime Minister. It had been charged with making statements and using sign language very heavily favoring the election of Rabin and against Shamir. There was criticism of that. This interference was denied, but clearly the Bush administration was sick and tired of

Prime Minister Shamir and welcomed the prospect of Rabin's election.

Shortly after resuming office as Prime Minister, Rabin traveled to the United States and met President Bush at Kennebunkport, Maine. During this visit he obtained the long sought loan guarantees. In fact, it was reported at the time that Secretary of State Baker said, "For goodness sake, take more," when Rabin asked for either \$2.0 or \$4.0 billion in loan guarantees. This was said to be an indication that we hadn't been prejudiced against either Israel or the Israelis but that we had a problem with the Shamir approach to settlements in the occupied territories.

In this context I wrote a letter to the President of the United States. I was now a private person. I don't think that I can find a copy of the letter now, but I typed it up at home and mailed it to President Bush. (End of tape)

In this letter I said that Rabin's positive pronouncements came at a high, political price. By that I was referring to his remarks showing flexibility on the Golan Heights, on some territory for the Palestinians, on limiting Israeli settlements and on the kinds of things that we had previously and so assiduously pursued with various Israeli Governments. All of these developments came at what would have been a high, domestic price in Israel for any Prime Minister, including Rabin.

So when I wrote to President Bush, I remember saying, more or less: "Rabin has taken a courageous stance. I think that the time has come to move the American Embassy from Tel Aviv up to that site on which we have negotiated, on the Western side of Jerusalem. In my view we can do this at no cost to our traditional position on Jerusalem. By moving the Embassy to this site we can deal with the reality that the Government of Israel operates from Jerusalem, and that's the place to do business." I never expected a reply from President Bush and I certainly received none. As I said, that was written shortly after Rabin's election, let's say in the spring or early summer of 1992.

Now, I had just been approached by Ambassador Sam Lewis who, having become the Director of the U.S. Institute of Peace, felt that his pro bono position as Director of the Harry Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace, under the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, might present a conflict of interest. He persuaded me to agree to succeed him as the Director of the Truman Institute. I did this in the spring of 1992, so I was in Israel at the time when Rabin was elected. That would have been the end of May or early June, 1992.

Later in the summer of 1992, I was invited by Martin Indyk, who was the Executive Director of the Washington Institute for Near Eastern Policy, a think tank in Washington, DC, to make a policy trip to Israel. This was against the background that Rabin was now installed in office as Prime Minister of Israel and that an American election was coming up. Indyk gathered a prestigious panel of advisers for this institute, together with a group of senior figures who would go to Israel, engage in a dialogue with Israelis, and come up with policy recommendations. The visiting group included Madeline Albright

[later Secretary of State], Joe Sisco [former Under Secretary of State], and Mendelbaum of Johns Hopkins University. It was widely speculated that Mendelbaum would become a key member of the Clinton policy establishment, should Clinton be elected President.

We went over to Israel and met with Prime Minister Rabin, with Peres, and other Labour Party leaders. We also met with the Likud opposition leaders. We had a separate session with the new American Ambassador, William C. Harrop, whom I had notified that I was arriving with this group and who had succeeded me when I retired from the Foreign Service in January, 1992. Ambassador Harrop briefed us at a hotel in Jerusalem. I sat in the back row and kept my mouth shut, which I thought proper. I wanted an appropriate cooling off period before I took public positions. I didn't want to get in Ambassador Harrop's hair. I had notified him that I was coming with this group.

As Ambassador Harrop briefed us I was disturbed that the facial expressions and body language of several members of this group seemed unfavorable and even negative to him. Comments were made on this afterwards. I said, "For goodness sake, what Ambassador Harrop said was essentially correct. Give him a break! He's a brand new Ambassador and is just getting his feet on the ground."

Q: In the first place, had the members of this group been almost pre-conditioned to take this attitude?

BROWN: I don't know, Stuart. This was in August or September, 1992. I was upset that, somehow, a sophisticated group of this kind would include people who were reacting negatively. Little did I realize that Ambassador Harrop was to have an even deeper problem.

Q: Bill Harrop is a very experienced and senior Foreign Service Officer. However, his attitude is not warm or fuzzy or cuddly.

BROWN: Well, those are your words, Stuart. I am not really in a position to evaluate them. I hadn't known Bill Harrop before. He'd been Ambassador to either four or five African countries, including Zaire. He had also been Inspector General of the Foreign Service.

Q: In fact, he was Deputy Inspector General. He was President of the American Foreign Service Association. I have interviewed him in this Foreign Affairs Oral History Program.

BROWN: He is a highly professional, experienced gentleman. I thought that he would do a good job in Israel. So I told this group: "For goodness sake. Get off his back!"

Q: And I think that you made clear that this was not a group that was sort of sponsored by AIPAC. Or was it?

BROWN: They wanted to take a balanced look at the situation. The Washington Institute for Near Eastern Policy was not an AIPAC group. However, Dennis Ross and Martin Indyk had been somehow associated with AIPAC, though not directly so. The Institute was funded by a husband and wife [the Weinbergs] who are pro-Israeli. However, to this day the Washington Institute manages to attract senior, Arab leaders, Ambassadors, cabinet ministers, and journalists to its meetings. There's no question that this group sponsored by the Washington Institute was pro-Israeli. However, I would say that the members of this group were moderate, experienced, and able to attract and keep an elite establishment in and around their ranks. So, to me, it was bothersome that Bill Harrop was inadvertently making a negative impression among some of the members of this group.

Okay. I continued in my retirement. As I said, I was working part time as a contractor for the Senior Review Panel for the Director of Central Intelligence. I also traveled around on the lecture circuit, was on the Board of Directors of the Bank Leumi of New York, and was adjusting to retirement very nicely and having a good time.

Q: I have a question on that. I understand that you have to treat anything dealing with the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] and the Senior Review Panel with great caution. Did you get any overall impression about the CIA at that time?

BROWN: I'd better be careful in the sense that the gentleman who recruited me was a very senior CIA officer. Therefore, he had access to the Director of Central Intelligence and the top brass of the agency. He had a long background in this respect. He also had long served at top levels of the CIA, or had access to the top, through successive bosses. As I said, the Senior Review Panel reports to the Director of Central Intelligence. The CIA officer who recruited me to this panel had direct and unimpeded access to the Director. He was *primus inter pares*, [first among equals] if you will. On the Senior Review Panel we were all equal, but he was the regular, the salaried officer, so he could and did give us his views of inside stories. As in any large institution, there are always debates going on, and all of this was fascinating.

Remember that our job on the Senior Review Panel (SRP) was to critique that National Intelligence Estimates, which were approved by the National Intelligence Council (NIC). This council was also mostly regular CIA employees who were assigned to it. However, the NIC was not part of the CIA and its budget of the Council was not part of the regular, CIA budget. Its budget, like our budget, came out of funds available to the Director of Central Intelligence, wearing that second hat. We in the SRP were working in the CIA building as part-time contractors who had clearances and so forth. It was a fascinating experience.

Q: This was obviously a time of great change. The Soviet Union had just gone down the tubes.

BROWN: Yes. As I came on board, William Gates, was Acting Director of Central

Intelligence. Shortly afterwards, he left the agency and was succeeded by a series of Directors. First of all, Billy Inman [from the National Security Agency] was not confirmed. Then came Wollsey, Deutch [from the Defense Intelligence Agency], and George Tenet.

Q: It wasn't a happy situation. I don't want to lead you down this path.

BROWN: Well, I was enjoying retirement. Two of my daughters had remained in Thailand, working on refugee affairs. One of them married a Thai architect and had a couple of lovely little daughters. We had been going over annually to Thailand, at least for Christmas and New Year's, sailing and having a wonderful, family reunion. I might add that I love to sail.

As I said, with the election of Rabin in Israel, things improved dramatically for a while, as far as the Bush administration was concerned. Then came a sort of hiatus. Rabin had made his moves. The negotiations in Washington with the Palestinians and Jordanians were semi-comic in the sense that those negotiations ended up in a corridor, because the Palestinians, although they were nominally part of the Jordanian delegation, immediately split off and did everything that they could to ensure that they were dealt with directly. So Eli Rubinstein, who was the head of the Israeli delegation, often had to meet with the Palestinians in the corridor. The Palestinians wouldn't meet in the room with the Jordanians. Those old tensions between Jordanians and Palestinians kept coming out. The negotiations with the Syrians were going on. As I was on the outside now, I began to get a feeling of stasis, that is, there was not much progress being made in these discussions.

Meanwhile, Secretary of State Baker was asked to bear in mind the Jewish constituency and dealing properly with Israel. He was quoted in the press on this occasion as having said at some meeting, I think that it was with Jack Kemp [Secretary of Housing at the time] and perhaps at the White House, "Fuck the Jews. They don't vote for us anyway." This was a remark which caused quite a storm and which was promptly disavowed by Margaret Tutwiler [Baker's spokesperson], when asked for her thoughts on that particular subject. Anyway, this comment bounced around for quite a while. Whether Baker made this remark or didn't, it was reflected, shall we say, in the atmosphere of the time.

Then, lo and behold, Bill Clinton was elected President of the United States in the elections of 1992. Clinton relied very significantly, one read, on some of his friends who happened to be Jewish. With the inauguration of President Clinton came a new, foreign policy team. The Secretary of State was Warren Christopher. Sam Lewis, among many others, was named as the Director of Policy Planning in the State Department. Sam was a very old and dear friend of mine and my boss in Tel Aviv when he was Ambassador to Israel. If you will, he was my mentor. I was delighted for him, although I really wondered how he would function in this position, working under Warren Christopher.

Very early in the spring of 1993, as we were preparing a trip to Thailand and China, Sam Lewis called me and said, "Look, Bill Harrop is going to be replaced. The process of

confirming an ambassador often takes months. Would you be willing to go back to Israel for a couple of months to fill in?" By now I was very much enjoying retirement and making some money here and there as a contractor. However, I told Sam: "Absolutely. Yes." I was thrilled at the prospect of contributing to Israeli-American relations, even for a short period of time under a new President.

So my wife Helen and I made a short trip to Thailand, to visit our daughters. Then we flew from Thailand to Kunming, China, where, as I speak Chinese, we were on our own. I didn't use a Chinese guide. We flew up to Chungking and took the famous boat trip down the Yangtze River, which Helen had always wanted to do. That was a wonderful trip because, floating down the Yangtze in 1993, we found that we were the only pale faces on the boat. The entire complement of passengers were from Taiwan, of all places. These were not highly sophisticated people from Taipei. These were more rough-hewn, wealthy, nouveau riche people from the hinterland of Taiwan.

Q: These people were also of Taiwanese origin, as opposed to people from the Mainland who had gone to Taiwan.

BROWN: Yes. They were Taiwanese. They were good, solid, men of the earth who had made money. They brought their local family gods with them! They had a little, canopied, thronelike apparatus with Chinese gods in it. They would take the family gods up on deck in the morning or at noon, as the spirit moved them, and pay obeisance to them. When we stopped in the Chinese river ports, they would go out shopping. It wasn't long before I was in conversation with their guide, who had a police, security background. He was in his 40s and was rather surprised to find out my background. We nattered away in Mandarin. He would relay our conversation in Taiwanese to the other passengers, because they didn't speak Mandarin too well. However, one could get their spicy remarks on the quality of the goods in the local markets and so forth.

All in all, that was a great trip. As soon as it was over and we returned to the U.S., arrangements were made for me to go to Israel. I was ushered in to meet Secretary of State Warren Christopher and had a one on one cordial meeting with him. I said, "Mr. Secretary, you probably don't remember me, but we spent a night together which, I'm sure, neither of us will ever forget." He looked at me in some surprise, and I reminded him that I had been DCM when he, as Deputy Secretary of State, had led the mission to Taipei following President Carter's break in relations with Taiwan and the riots which broke out. His motorcade was mobbed by a howling crowd. The windows of our cars were smashed and some sticks were jabbed into the cars.

It was fascinating because this incident had taken place in December, 1978. Here we were in 1993, some 15 years later. The question popped out of his mouth: "Do you think that Fred Chien was responsible for arranging this incident or was he just part of it?" Fred had been the Chinese Nationalist Deputy Foreign Minister who had been chosen to go out to the airport and meet Christopher. He took Christopher and his party into a VIP [Very Important Person] room and delivered a harangue on how badly the United States had

conducted itself by this horrible deed of breaking relations with the Chinese Nationalists. This statement was obviously for domestic consumption in Taiwan. Then we got into the cars and were mobbed on our way out of the airport.

There were those who obviously had told Christopher that it was that “SOB, Fred Chien,” who they thought had been part and parcel of this spontaneous demonstration of anger against us. Obviously, this version of events had been so firmly implanted in Secretary Christopher's mind that that question just popped out fifteen years later. Incidentally, Fred Chien and his wife never recovered from the view held by many key Americans that he had been part of setting up this mob scene. He always stoutly denied this. His wife still gets tearful over that memory, by the way.

Anyway, Secretary Christopher wished me well, and off Helen and I went, back to Israel. On arrival in Israel, I was able to say in Hebrew, quoting from the Book of Genesis: “Pa Maim Ki Tov,” which means, if I may translate it a little freely, “And on the second day God said that it is good.” That means that when something nice happens twice it is good. Within hours I was in the office of Prime Minister Rabin because another, great Lebanese border crisis had broken, and the administration was in frantic negotiations, trying to restore things to normal. That night I went over to Prime Minister/Defense Minister Rabin's office in Tel Aviv and was back in business.

This was the beginning of a remarkable period. I knew Rabin from many meetings previously. We had what was to be perhaps the most favorably disposed, American administration in history, vis-a-vis Israel up to that time. President Clinton's advisers, including his foreign affairs team, were very well and favorably known to the Israelis. Yet, there had been some stagnation, and we were trying to move things along. Again, I must say that, in the midst of all the sweetness of coming back to Israel, there was a sadness due to the fact that Ambassador Harrop had been removed, as well as the manner in which it had been done. I never did get the full story of why this was done, and this was a very sad experience in my view.

Q: Obviously, I don't know the whole story, either. However, I very much got the impression that this was a new administration which was really very nervous on foreign policy issues, even though it included people who were experienced in the field of foreign affairs. However, the political leadership, and especially President Clinton, had never had much foreign experience.

I heard that Ambassador Harrop had made a remark in Israel to the effect: “You have to remember that America doesn't have unlimited pockets.”

BROWN: He's not the first American Ambassador to say that.

Q: No. But somehow this remark began to circulate. To me it sounded as if the Clinton administration caved in to the Israelis almost immediately. They didn't have much experience in how to handle some criticism. Perhaps this was a problem which occurred

somewhere in the White House, although I may be wrong in this respect. Does that ring any bells with you?

BROWN: Well, Bill Harrop was quoted as having made a remark during a briefing or some occasion in Israel to the effect that the Israeli handling of the Arab Israeli minority would be on the agenda. Whether he said it or not, he was attacked by The Jerusalem Post at the time for interfering in local, Israeli affairs.

There was another phenomenon, too, which Foreign Service Officers find in many administrations. A new administration often finds that it is uneasy about ambassadors inherited from a previous administration. The view circulates: "This Ambassador is a product of the old regime," notwithstanding the fact that he is a career officer doing a professional, career job. There may be a little cloud over his head as a result. That, certainly, can apply in such a key post as Israel, but not only in Israel, by any means. I saw this elsewhere.

Q: It also happened in Central America.

BROWN: This also feeds into the view that the Foreign Service has either favored the previous administration or has been "co-opted. Within a new administration, the view is often held that it's time to clean house, or, "let's get our own guy in there." Something like that. It's a combination of factors, and it's something that career, Foreign Service Officers have to be very much aware of. You find a nervousness that goes through the ranks when a new administration enters office. The word traditionally gets around, although it varies with different administrations. There was a tradition that when a new administration enters office, Ambassadors are expected to tender their resignations, allowing the new administration to decide whether or not to accept this resignation. In other cases Ambassadors are told: "No, hold fast, and we'll see how it turns out."

In any event, Ambassador Harrop was treated brusquely and, I thought, unfairly, by the incoming Clinton administration. I didn't know the full story, had nothing to do with it, and didn't want to get into it. He must have been bitter about the manner of his replacement. The whole thing had come as a surprise to me, and I really felt very sorry for him. So, there we are. However, back to the narrative.

A series of Lebanese border crises followed. There was a sort of spiral effect here. The Hezbollah [an extremist, Islamist terrorist organization] was now very active and much strengthened in terms of its grip on the population of southern Lebanon, particularly in the Shiite Muslim community. It was being supplied and supported in many ways by Iran, with the acquiescence of Syria. Flights were coming through Damascus into Beirut, with cargoes labeled as one thing but actually carrying arms and ammunition and God knows what else.

When asked about these flights, the Syrians, of course, pretended to know nothing about arms cargoes. President Assad of Syria had no love for the Iranians. I'm sure that he had

no love for the supporters of the Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran and what they stood for. Assad was a secular type of Muslim. He was particularly vulnerable as a member of the Alawite minority. The Alawites are considered by some of the Sunni Muslim majority in Syria as heretics. Not just different, but heretics. Yet, for his own purposes, President Assad has allowed these Iranian shipments to Hezbollah to continue. His obvious message to Israel is: "Come to terms or else we'll make it harder for you in southern Lebanon."

Prime Minister Rabin was a veteran of years and years of involvement in southern Lebanon, as Arens had been before him and as Rabin had before Arens. In all of this, by the way, I found Uri Lubrani working on various fronts. I spoke of him previously. He had a position in the Israeli Ministry of Defense. So as I saw Rabin in his capacity as Defense Minister, on the military side of things, I saw, as the occasion warranted, Lubrani on the delicate behind the scenes and probing side. Among many other things there was the case of Ron Arad. Ron Arad was the navigator on an Israeli aircraft that crashed in 1982. He was captured by Palestinians and was somehow conveyed into Hezbollah hands. Israeli efforts to negotiate his release through third parties, working through Hezbollah or the Iranians, were unsuccessful. As Lubrani informed me, the Iranians were a tough bunch of negotiators. They tended absolutely to deny that they were holding a given prisoner. Then one gets the very faint hint that it's really a silken carpet that we're talking about here and that there will be a very high price to obtain such a silken carpet. Well, I dealt with Lubrani on such delicate matters, as I had before on the Ethiopian front.

We entered a cycle of violence such that, by late 1992, it went off the edge of the table. Lubrani then gave me a taste of what was to come, unless there was a rapid "stand down" by Hezbollah. He informed me pretty clearly that in such circumstances the best Israeli technique was to make things very difficult for about a quarter of a million people in southern Lebanon, that is, for a very significant portion of the Shiite community. As a result, the Shiites would feel it necessary to move en masse toward Beirut, thus clogging the roads, choking the economic infrastructure, and making life miserable for everybody.

Indeed, that is what happened. The Israelis mounted an enormous bombardment by air and by artillery. They moved heavy artillery, including 175 millimeter guns and so forth, up onto the border and even across it into southern Lebanon. Night after night they answered the rockets of the Hezbollah that were falling into northern Israel in towns like Qiryat Shmona and Matula. The Israelis responded to these rockets by really pounding Hezbollah dominated villages and towns in southern Lebanon. A mass exodus ensued and, in this situation, Dennis Ross in Washington was on the phone to us. We were conducting all kinds of telephone negotiations. I was dealing with Prime Minister Rabin and Danny Yatom as his key military representative in all of this. The Israelis called their campaign "Operation Accountability." In other words, the Hezbollah would be held to account for what the Israelis regarded as their various attacks on Israeli targets.

This was a very difficult situation which suddenly came to me because, in the middle of it all, I found that Dennis Ross had a distinct tendency to bypass the American

Ambassadors in the area and negotiate directly by himself and over the telephone with the parties concerned. By rights, I should have been included in the picture and I was quite willing to do what I could.

I also encountered a certain tension between the Assistant Secretary of State and Dennis Ross in this regard. The Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, Ed Djerejian, was a key player in all of this. As such, he was in charge of American policy, made trips, and dealt with a wide variety of interlocutors, not all of them Israeli but also Arabs.

I received a call on the secure phone from a senior State Department officer. He said that the following information was for my ears only. He said that the Secretary of State had decided to replace Ed Djerejian as the Middle East negotiator. Ed would continue in office as the Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, but the negotiating part of it would now be given to Dennis Ross. That's the way things were handled. Ed was informed that Dennis Ross was willing to stay on under the new administration, but only if he was made the Special Coordinator of Policy.

Q: When you say "negotiator," what do you mean by that? Who was negotiating with whom? Who were the parties involved?

BROWN: Israel, Syria, Jordan, the Palestinians, and Lebanon.

Q: They were all talking to each other?

BROWN: They were talking with each other. Remember, this was the follow up to the Madrid Conference on the Middle East. By this time you had what I called "general stasis." That is, there were acrimonious negotiations, and they were not really leading anywhere in dealing with the problem. The new administration was already getting restive, and the Secretary of State decided to appoint a new negotiator, Dennis Ross. When Ed Djerejian, as I understand it, was informed of this change, he extracted his price. That is, he would become the next American Ambassador to Israel. Having been Ambassador to Syria and having had a distinguished career, he would now become Ambassador to Israel.

All of this was in somewhat characteristic style. None of it was recorded in the cable traffic. It was all handled over the secure phone. Some crockery was broken in the process. Eventually, the announcements were made, and there we were. I think that we might break off here.

Q: Good.

Today is October 1, 1999, and we are continuing with the interview of Bill Brown.

BROWN: It is also the 50th anniversary of Mao Zedong standing up in Tiananmen Square and proclaiming: "China has stood up." [Laughter]

Q: For what it's worth. When you arrived in Israel on this temporary assignment as Ambassador, did you feel that you were putting things together or did you think that you were just taking over on a short term basis?

BROWN: Remember that I had left Israel only a year previously. I had visited Israel as a member of this mission from the Washington Institute on Near East Policy. I was Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Harry Truman Institute for Peace. I had kept a respectful distance from Israeli affairs because we had a new Ambassador, Bill Harrop. However, I was pretty much up on developments, as an outsider, of course, but one who had recently been part of the action. I had an advantage in that I had had plenty of interaction with the key Israeli figures, including Prime Minister Rabin, Peres, and others.

In that regard I think that it might be worthwhile to pause a bit here and talk about the composition, if you will, of the Rabin Government.

Q: When did the Rabin Government come into office?

BROWN: It entered office in the spring of 1992.

Q: This was after you had left Israel?

BROWN: Yes, after I had left. The Labour Party had come in with something like 44 seats in the Knesset. The Likud Party had dropped to 32 seats. However, Labour had put together what was at the beginning a pretty solid coalition. Remember that the election campaign by Labour had been conducted as a "Rabin campaign," with very heavy emphasis on Rabin, as opposed to the more usual approach. That is, by tradition people voted for a given party, which was headed by X, Y, or Z. In this case Labour was headed by Rabin. Once again Peres had been, if you will, bumped aside within the Labour Party structure. He had to yield to an approach whereby Rabin, a tough man and former Defense Minister, a man of decision, and so forth, was very heavily played up during the campaign.

However, the initial government coalition was fascinating. The Rabin Government had a distinct, Left Wing, peacenik ally, "Meretz," as it was called. Meretz had a hard core of people associated with the "Peace Now" group. Their line was: "Let's do it, let's get it over with, and let's give the Palestinians a reasonable amount of territory." Even among hard core Meretz leaders, the view was: "There's going to be a Palestinian state. Let's negotiate on this reality." It was a minority ally of Rabin, but it was there. This group was very liberal-minded in domestic, social terms and especially on pressing ahead on peace, particularly with the Palestinians.

Another, very important component of the Rabin Government was "Shas." I've mentioned

this group several times. Shas is the acronym for an ultra-orthodox party based on Moroccan immigrants in Israel. This party was led by a spiritual leader, Ovadia Yosef, former Chief Rabbi of the Sephardic Jewish community. Remember, in Israel there are two “Chief Rabbis.” There is, if you will, the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi and the Sephardic Chief Rabbi.

Q: The Ashkenazi community is essentially composed of Jews of European origin.

BROWN: Yes. However, this is an intricate matter, and I don't want to go too much into detail, but Ovadia Yosef had a Moroccan base. He also had the benefit of having had Lithuanian, ultra-orthodox mentors as a younger man. There was some tension between them. On the one hand he was, if you will, a breakaway. On the other hand, he had had this mentor relationship with Lithuanian advisers. Therefore, not all of Shas could just be automatically pigeonholed under one rubric. Similarly, Shas' driving young leader was Ariele Deri. Deri was in his 30s. He paid total obedience, if you will, to the spiritual leader, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef. However, Deri was the day to day leader of Shas and a young man of great acuity and political dexterity.

I want to dwell on this a moment because there is a tendency on the part of many observers of the Israeli scene to pigeonhole and stereotype Israeli political parties. It is reasonable to do this to some extent, as you have to put tags on people and groups as you analyze the political situation in Israel. However, there was some fluidity within Shas, which ran along the following lines. Its rank and file members were basically conservative. It was a young party made up of young people. It was a growing party, with an increasingly growing element in Jerusalem. It was competitive vis-a-vis other, ultra-orthodox parties. It had managed to survive in different, coalition governments. In other words, it had had a taste of power and authority. Deri had come up very rapidly, nominally as a civil servant. (End of tape)

The Shas had gained control of the Ministry of the Interior, which was a crucial target in this party's political objectives. Through the Ministry of the Interior flow the funds for the “Yeshiva,” the religious schools, and other, cultural institutions that Shas was building and expanding. Here was their path into the Central Budget of Israel. This was the price which Shas extracted from various coalition governments and still does, even as we speak.

Now, the rank and file of Shas were conservative. The leaders were, at times willing to be part of the peace front. The rank and file were, I would say, pro-Likud, as far as a tough line vis-a-vis the Palestinians, especially, was concerned.

Ariele Deri himself was close to and could bring along Ovadia Yosef with him to the line that what was good for Israel was what counted. If Jewish lives could be saved by sacrificing some territory and coming to an equitable deal with the Palestinians, so be it. You have to be careful how you say this, but they were amenable and flexible in that sense. Yet they have to manage a rank and file membership which, on the peace issue,

was quite conservative and might vote for Likud.

Now, Deri didn't speak English. My knowledge of Hebrew was broken, but improving. As fate would have it, we came together on a very special, American issue. This was an issue which had bothered us for years. That was: the "Black Hebrew" issue. I can't remember whether I've touched on this previously.

Q: I can't recall, but let's go over it again, just to be sure.

BROWN: Many years ago a young man named Carter, from Chicago or Detroit, had a vision which, in very broad terms, was that there were the 12 tribes of Israel, and then there was the "lost tribe" of Israel. According to the tradition, the lost tribe consisted of people with dark complexions. Carter had a vision that he was the leader of the descendants of this lost tribe. According to this vision, they were to be gathered together and go back to the Holy Land and form a pure religious sect. Gradually, he took the name of "Ben Ami" Carter, I think it was. He went to Israel, nominally as a tourist. This began a pattern of American Blacks supporting him, often going to Palestine as tourists or visitors and then disappearing.

Q: What was the time scale? When did he first arrive in Israel?

BROWN: This would have been in the early 1970s, I think. Already, when I was DCM in Israel, 1979-1982, this group of Americans was a problem. As more and more of them infiltrated into Israel and went down into the desert area of the Negev, they began seeking odd jobs. This was against Israeli law. You can't get a job in Israel unless you're a citizen or registered alien, with working privileges. By the way, in Israel, which has a kind of statist socialist approach, once you're a qualified worker, then you're entitled to health benefits, so you're a burden on the Israeli Treasury. You're also entitled to education benefits, and this also is a burden on the Israeli Treasury.

Moreover, the Israeli authorities were disturbed by the character, as they saw it, of Ben Ami Carter's sect. These people said that they were the true Jews. When I first got to Israel, this sect was highly disciplined and very authoritarian in its leadership. They subjected their women, in particular, to very firm control. The net result of it was that, in consular terms, members of this sect, and especially the women, had to hand over their passports to the leadership. If they had any U.S. Social Security, railroad retirement, or any other benefits from the U.S. Government, they had to hand over their checks to the leadership. They were supposed to live an ascetic life.

For the leaders the concept was that an apocalyptic event would occur, fire and water would envelop the earth, and they would have to prepare themselves to enter an opening in the earth, which would then close temporarily behind them while the rest of the world was purged. They would have to fast, as there was no food. They would have to prepare themselves and subject themselves to the leader's discipline. Then, once the fire and water had subsided, they could come out and enjoy the millennium to follow.

In American consular terms, there were very disturbing reports that these American women were being subjected to a form of polygamy. It was also alleged that these women were forced to give birth to their children without access to hospitals. They were vegetarians and were very, very lean. They were making their living on a very fragile basis, producing handicraft items, doing odd jobs, and so forth.

Q: And of course the Jonestown example must have been hanging over them.

BROWN: Jonestown, at that time in 1979, was hanging over us. There was the implication that if they were mishandled, something like the Jonestown event would occur.

Q: Then the poisoned Kool Aid would come out. [A reference to the fact that the leaders at Jonestown used Kool Aid, a drink, to cover the taste of the poison being administered to the people who lived at Jonestown]

BROWN: So it was a real consular problem and also grew to be a political problem. In those days Ambassador Sam Lewis and I ended up dealing with a man who had a great, academic and political background, Yosef Burg, Minister of the Interior, who could, as I may have remarked, speak fluently and joke in six different languages. He was a very nice man but he never gave an inch on the question of the "Black Hebrews."

What we were trying to do was to have their status regularized and get some sort of recognition and stability for them, rather than face a situation where they could be hounded, rounded up, and deported from Israel.

Q: Why not?

BROWN: Among other things, I didn't particularly think that deporting these "Black Hebrews" from Israel would redound to the benefit of Israel in the Chicago, Detroit, or whatever other area they came from.

There were further ramifications. That is, African-Americans who had no connection with this group and might arrive at Ben Gurion International Airport would be subjected to extremely rigorous interrogation and body searches, out of fear that they might be "Black Hebrews" posing as visitors. There were several incidents involving upper middle class, African-Americans who were insulted and humiliated, leaving them furious with the treatment which they had received.

In any event, for several years we got nowhere with the Ministry of the Interior under Yosef Burg as Minister. He was a highly sophisticated gentleman of European origin who was well versed in dealing with Americans. Here I was, years later, as American ambassador to Israel, dealing with a Minister of the Interior who was 35 years old, or whatever his age was. He didn't speak a word of English and came from a Moroccan

Jewish background. Lo and behold, I did a deal with him in the Dan Hotel on the beach near Tel Aviv. Under this deal I got at least \$1.0 million from the U.S. Congress (thanks to Congressman Charles Rangel of New York) for an arrangement whereby a trust fund was set up so that these “Black Hebrews,” who had large, accumulated debts to the Municipality of Dimona, for example, and to hospital authorities over the years, could settle their accounts. They had accumulated these debts because they didn't have the money to pay what they owed for water supply, hospital services, city charges, and so forth. This would ease the political problems of the Israeli leaders in the Negev down there which asked the question: “What are we doing with all of these Blacks who are non-Jews and outsiders in our midst in a situation where there is considerable unemployment?”

The Ministry of the Interior, in turn, could create a category which would be the equivalent of a permanently resident alien, thereby granting them working status which would then trigger health and education benefits. So we stitched this arrangement all together.

Now, Deri was becoming the object of allegations of massive corruption, through the Ministry of the Interior. Indeed, after some time, he was indicted. He then fought that indictment by various means, both legal, of course, and also political. The rank and file members of Shas felt impelled, shall we say, to charge that Deri was the subject of a political smear in order to put down the Moroccan Sephardic community. This case has gone on and is with us, even now. During this last election campaign, Deri, who had been convicted of the charge, which he had appealed to a higher court, finally, and as part of another deal, had stepped down as a candidate for the Knesset. However, Shas now has more seats than ever in terms of its representation in the Knesset and is part of the new government of Prime Minister Ehud Barak.

I am going into this tangent in some detail to inform the reader or the listener of this interview that things can get very complicated in Israel, as they do elsewhere. As I have said, you have to be very careful about pigeon holing a given political party and personality as once and forever this or that. I find that domestic politics and personalities can take you on strange pathways.

Remember, it was Peres' conviction at the end of 1989 or early 1990 that he had Shas in the position that he could bring down the very government of which he was Deputy Prime Minister and which was led by Prime Minister Shamir. He thought that he had a deal with Ovadia Yosef, and so did most observers. He and they were wrong. At the last moment, after ferocious negotiations, in which Ovadia Yosef was receiving Peres and Rabin on the one hand, and somebody else from Likud was on their heels, Shas stayed with Likud, the Labour Party was left completely outside the government, and Rabin was a very bitter man after having been ousted as Minister of Defense. He was extremely bitter about Peres for having constructed this disaster. In any case, Rabin had had a long rivalry with Peres.

All right, now it was 1992. Peres was pushed aside. The Labour Party won, and Rabin

came in as Prime Minister, and Peres was back as Minister of Foreign Affairs. I would like to make a rough characterization of the Rabin Government election program, which was essentially as follows: “Look, we're going to have a reordering of the priorities around here. First of all, we're going to take better care of our domestic front, as far as employment and education are concerned.” In other words, the secular program. Secondly, “We're going to have a reordering of the priorities as far as the peace process is concerned. We want peace. An equitable and a fair peace, and we are willing to make sacrifices for it, but we're not going to give the farm away.”

The new Rabin government's attitude toward Syria was as follows. In effect, it said to President Assad of Syria: “If you want to do business with us, here is a new negotiator named Rabinowitz. He is our ambassador to the United States now. He speaks, reads, and writes Arabic and is an expert on the Syrian scene, among other things. We mean business.” This meant “territory for peace.” Regarding the Palestinian negotiators, the new government said, “We're not dealing with you as the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] but we're willing to go some distance here if you're really serious about negotiating with us. Of course, we are always ready for negotiations on the Lebanese front, in the knowledge that the Lebanese are in the pockets of the Syrians.”

Q: How about Jordan?

BROWN: Regarding Jordan, the same thing. The new government was quite willing to do a deal with them. They made pronouncements that went along these lines. However, ongoing negotiations in Washington bogged down. Notwithstanding what I would call a very forward leaning position of the Israelis, Assad's negotiators remained obdurate. In short, they didn't reach a final agreement.

As far as the Palestinians were concerned, these were nominally local people. There was nobody from East Jerusalem, nobody who was a deportee, and nobody who was openly a supporter of the PLO, even though they were reporting, in one way or another, to Yasser Arafat. These Palestinians wanted to get rid of the Jordanians. They wanted to be treated as an independent group, the arrangement reached at the Madrid Conference notwithstanding.

So this negotiating process dragged on and on. There was growing frustration in Washington on this, as the new Clinton administration took hold. That is the background to this situation.

Now, in the meantime the Lebanese situation was constantly heating up. I described before what became of Operation Accountability. That situation was aggravated by Katusha rocket attacks on northern Israel, conducted by the Hezbollah, as well as attacks not only by the pro-Israeli South Lebanese Army, but also by the Israeli Army itself, in the “Security Zone” in Lebanon as it is called. The Israelis finally countered with a massive bombardment which forced some 250,000 Lebanese from South Lebanon to take to the roads and clog up the transportation system. In all of this we were involved in an

intense form of negotiations, much of which was being handled on the telephone. At the same time I've mentioned that Ed Djerejian...

Q: These negotiations involved whom?

BROWN: This was Dennis Ross, with Secretary of State Christopher participating, but it was very largely Dennis Ross. Ed Djerejian had been bumped away from the negotiations, and Ross was appointed as Special Negotiator, while Djerejian remained Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs.

Meanwhile, I was in an even more delicate position because, if you will, on paper my reporting channel was to Ed Djerejian as Assistant Secretary, while the real action had shifted to Dennis Ross. In that capacity Ross was phoning Rabin and company, he was phoning Shara [Syrian Foreign Minister], he was phoning the Lebanese, and also getting Secretary Christopher on the line. These were open line and fast breaking conversations, conducted at all hours of the day and night.

I found myself in a position which became apparent to me as a trend. That is, Dennis Ross had a distinct tendency to jump over the heads of the local American ambassadors, deal directly with some of the other participants, and conclude things as he saw fit. In my position I really had to be on my toes to play catch up ball with him. I was in direct contact with Prime Minister Rabin, of course, and his military secretary who, in effect, was the chief of staff of his personal cabinet for everything, Major General Danny Yaton. Gen Yaton is a very unique personality and a can do man.[He later became head of Mossad.]

At the same time, I had to keep Ed Djerejian in the picture. There were times when I was frantically phoning Djerejian at, say, 3:00 AM, Washington time. When I couldn't get in touch with him, I called Dennis Ross. Then I filled in Djerejian later on. That was a delicate situation because, obviously, Djerejian had been bruised somewhat by this reshifting of responsibilities regarding the peace process. He was still Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, and a very good Assistant Secretary. As I reported to him, there were times when I had the impression that he was very sensitive to the fact that Dennis Ross was really going off on his own, without directly informing Ed and taking more and more control of the process. Djerejian naturally wanted me to continue reporting to him, which is only human.

It was a delicate business. It was to continue this way and to grow as a trend. That is, for whatever reason or combination of reasons, I found increasingly that Dennis Ross moved to jump over the head of his ambassadors and negotiate, or try to negotiate directly with some of the principal parties concerned. I'm sure that for Secretary of State Christopher this was okay. He had to cover the world, and the Middle East was a very important part of it. Dennis Ross might get results, and so forth. Secretary Christopher himself was persuaded by Dennis Ross to engage in a form of shuttle diplomacy to get the negotiating process going again.

And now we come back to the old rivalry between Rabin and Peres, in Israel. Rabin remained a very tough guy, vis-a-vis the Palestinians. Now he was both Prime Minister and Defense Minister. He had a new program, and that program contained a distinct outreach element of approaching the Palestinians, resembling what had happened at the Madrid Conference. In effect, Rabin was saying to the Palestinians: "We're willing to deal with you if you get off your duff. However, Rabin felt a growing frustration that nothing was really coming out of this process.

Peres, in his new-old capacity as Foreign Minister, was wheeling and dealing with me, with Dennis Ross, and with Secretary Christopher when the Secretary came out to the Middle East. It was quite clear to us that Peres was always out pushing the envelope, as it were, trying to accelerate the process and to take new initiatives. In all of these meetings we never, ever met with Rabin and Peres at the same time. Never. That old rivalry and bitterness between the two of them was still too strong. When we reported an apparent willingness of the Government of Israel, as articulated by Foreign Minister Peres, to go far out, what you'd get from Rabin was a dismissive wave of the hand, a grunt, and negative facial and body language, as well as the necessary words to go with it, amounting to: "Oh, that's a lot of bunk." Well, Rabin didn't use the word bunk, but that is the impression he was conveying.

This contrast was fascinating. We knew, on a very private basis, that a couple of Israeli academics were meeting in Oslo, Norway, with some Palestinians, courtesy of the Norwegian Foreign Ministry. I think that Stoltenberg was the Norwegian Foreign Minister at the time. Larson, and Larson's wife, were the key operators for the Norwegians in these talks. Knowledge of these contacts was closely restricted and representative of the new era. There was an open track in Washington with a Palestinian Delegation, but it didn't seem to be going anywhere and we were content to see academicians pursue a parallel track on the side to see what the possibilities were. However, we did not have much regard for these discussions. We concluded that these were talks between a bunch of academic types, but they weren't going to lead anywhere. We felt that the main action was going on in Washington.

Well, I won't go into this very fascinating and complicated bit of history at Oslo. It's in David Mayakovsky's book, Making Peace with the PLO. You'll also find it in the memoirs of Uri Savir, who was the new Director General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry. You'll also find it in the memoirs of Singer, who was an Israeli defense lawyer and a long-time lawyer with a Washington law firm. He also worked with the Israeli Ministry of Defense. He had dealt with sensitive matters, including matters related to West Bank problems.

At the time this was not known to us, but the Palestinian representatives in Oslo said that they were speaking for Yasser Arafat. They stated that they had a mandate from Arafat and that they represented him. These were PLO people who represented the Tunis crowd. They demanded that the Israelis upgrade the talks in Oslo, Norway, from an informal to

an official level. As I say, we didn't know this at the time.

Peres finally persuaded Rabin to allow these Oslo talks to be upgraded. As a result, Uri Savir went to Oslo, and Singer, the lawyer, also went to Oslo. As I say, we didn't know this. We tended, therefore, to write off these in Oslo. However, when I met with Peres, he was going farther and farther out in his statements to me about a deal involving an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and a portion of the West Bank. He also said that the U.S. Government ought to get with it and join in pressing for this line of action. He felt that we ought to push Prime Minister Rabin. Things got to the point where, at a meeting in the VIP [Very Important Person] Room at Ben Gurion International Airport, Peres went so far with me that I finally said, "Well, Shimon, this is fascinating to hear, but are you representing Prime Minister Rabin in this respect?" He said, "Yes!" I said to myself: "Wow!"

I think that this conversation occurred just as a delegation headed by Secretary Christopher was arriving in Israel. I was sitting down next to Dennis Ross. I told him: "I've got to tell you that something is happening here." Indeed, I went back to the Embassy in Tel Aviv and shocked my Political Section by gathering a couple of my officers together and saying: "I have the impression that something is about to happen. Even though Prime Minister Rabin is dismissive in his remarks about these Oslo talks, give me a draft of a very brief formula for an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and 'X,' meaning some portion of the West Bank" My officers said, "What?" I said, "I want something succinct on which we and the U.S. leadership can focus." I had that drafted and gave it to Dennis Ross. My own thinking had gone that far.

Now, bear in mind that I had reported that Prime Minister Rabin had been dismissive of such ideas, and particularly with reference to the role of Shimon Peres. There continued to be a stalemate in the Washington talks. This was summertime in 1993.

Q: While you were dealing with this initial period, how can you deal with a Prime Minister who dismisses the views of his Foreign Minister on something this important? You were not meeting together with them. At a certain point, in effect, you were asking: "Who's calling the shots for Israel?" What was your evaluation of this?

BROWN: My calculation in such a situation and at that time, and a good rule of thumb in general, is that, if there's ultimately one boss, it is the Prime Minister. Never forget this. You have to remember that, traditionally, from David Ben Gurion on, Israeli Prime Ministers, many of whom have been Foreign Ministers, arrogate unto themselves handling the U.S.-Israeli relationship first and foremost. That's the big game. The Prime Minister is in charge of the tough problem. In other words, what is he going to sacrifice, if anything, for a breakthrough with an Arab partner? So it had been with Golda Meir and so it was on down the years. Prime Minister Begin was a perfect example of this practice. His first Foreign Minister was Moshe Dayan. He got rid of him and replaced him with Yitzhak Shamir, who was, in those circumstances, if not a puppet, at least a "Yes man." Begin handled the problem of negotiations with the Arabs himself and the Camp David

discussions in particular.

So there we were, and that was the trap. With that mentality and a pattern of Rabin being dismissive, if you will, of references to Shimon Peres and a more radical approach to negotiations with the Arabs, the fact was Rabin himself had a history, including a history of negotiations involving us, of his own practice of outreach. He was a very cautious, skeptical man. However, the lesson to learn from this is that even a very cautious, tough, skeptical guy can, in some cases, switch his position. And that's what happened.

In the summer of 1993 there was a short visit to Israel by the new Norwegian Foreign Minister, Holts. This lasted about two days, or something like that. I received an unusual phone call from the Norwegian ambassador to Israel, or maybe it was from the Norwegian ambassador-designate or chargé d'affaires. Anyway, he asked me if I could see the Norwegian Foreign Minister. Well, it's rather unusual for the Foreign Minister of a European country to ask to see the American ambassador in Israel. However, of course, I was delighted to meet with him.

I had a very cordial meeting with the Norwegian Foreign Minister at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem. He was probing on U.S. attitudes and looking for the latest update on the Washington talks on the Middle East. In the process he let me know that his wife had just published a book. She was a sociologist and had written a book about the plight or situation of the Palestinians, particularly on the West Bank, I think. Throughout that conversation I was saying to myself: "This man is really involved in this matter. This isn't just a casual discussion, for the record. This guy is really involved in the Palestinian problem." Little did I realize how far involved he was in this matter!

To make a long story short, a time came when I was suddenly called in by Prime Minister Rabin. Remember, this was in the middle of the process. We had had all of this shuttle diplomacy by Secretary Christopher and Dennis Ross. Things apparently were still stalemated, as far as formal negotiations were concerned. Anyhow, Rabin called me in and said, "Look, Bill, I don't want you to report this," and I said, "Yes, sir." I didn't report this conversation because I took him at his word, and this was the way he wanted to handle it.

Rabin continued: "You should know that there's been a breakthrough, and Peres is flying to California to meet with Secretary Christopher, and maybe Dennis Ross, if he is there." He then summarized the deal. I realized that it was going to be a hell of a shock if the American leadership...

Q: Well, you realize that if you reported it, this meant that, Washington being what it is...

BROWN: So I held my tongue because Shimon Peres was already in the air, en route to California, and I had promised not to report it.

There was a host of players involved in this, but another key player in all of this was the

President of the State of Israel, Ezer Weizman. Weizman, a former, fiery hawk, had gone through an evolution since the Camp David agreements were signed, and now he was a dove. He was a tough dove, but a real dove. Weizman wanted action, and he wanted to be the center of the action, even though the President of the State of Israel is normally a figurehead who is supposed to stay above politics. Weizman couldn't resist involving himself in such matters. He would love to fly to Damascus and do a deal with President Assad, an old aviator like himself. Or he wanted the U.S. suddenly to invite him. I went through a whole process where Weizman's own Director General was pushing me to arrange for an immediate visit of President Weizman to Washington. He told me that Weizman felt that he had to see the U.S. President, but he must be invited, and then big things could happen here.

Things had gotten to the point where Weizman's Director General said to me: "We really have to have this invitation, and now!" I said, "Have you cleared this with the Prime Minister?" He replied: "Oh, yes, that's taken care of." I went to the Prime Minister and met with him on a one on one basis. I said that I had been told that Weizman wanted to visit the United States. I asked Rabin: "Is this what you want?" Rabin said to me: "There's a time and place for such a visit, and now is not the time or place." Now that's the kind of thing that you can really appreciate. [Laughter] Imagine managing this. Finally, Prime Minister Rabin said to me: "I'll take care of this," which is what he should have said, because I was in a very delicate position.

Anyway, a sudden announcement was made that talks were going on in Oslo between the Israelis and Palestinians. Washington went into a temporary state of shock and then, predictably, tried to recover in a way that tried to suggest to the American people and the world that we were aware of this all the time. In fact, we weren't. The shock, if you will, was the result of years of concluding, and rightly so, that such things couldn't be done without us. Over and over again competent people, like myself and certainly people even more competent than I, have stated, when all was said and done, that it takes the U.S. as an honest broker to put something over the top, because feelings and passions all run so deep.

However, it was done. In its attempts at recovery, Washington then instructed me to invite Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres to come to Washington to participate in a ceremony at which Peres, a Palestinian counterpart, and Christopher would participate in a signing ceremony. My outstanding DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] at the time, Jim Larocco, who, I think, is now still ambassador to Kuwait, said to me as I arrived at the Embassy: "We just received this. It's a NIACT [requiring action, even at night], Urgent cable. Do you want me to call Peres' office?" I said, "No, I don't want you to do that. I want you to phone the Director General of the Prime Minister's office and say that we've received this cable. Ask him if we should deliver the invitation to Foreign Minister Peres. Handle it that way."

Q: I assume that your idea was not to go directly to Prime Minister Rabin but to give the Israeli Government a little wiggle time so that you weren't looking across the table at

Rabin when you broke the news to him.

BROWN: I knew in my bones that this proposal for a visit to the U.S. by Peres wasn't going to fly. Clinton was already President of the United States. This was big stuff! With Clinton newly installed as President, a ceremony where a couple of Foreign Ministers sign a peace document or go through a signing ceremony was not going to work out. This was presidential stuff. I knew it in my bones. I also knew that Prime Minister Rabin, and particularly his entourage, wouldn't accept the idea of Foreign Minister Peres running off to steal the glory. Invitation or no invitation. So I figured that the way to handle this was to feed it into the Prime Minister's office and they would do whatever was necessary.

Q: Where did you think that the impetus for this ceremony was coming from? Was it just that the Department of State was thinking small?

BROWN: No, this was a case of instantaneous thinking. We had learned that there had been a breakthrough. Secretary Christopher had received the word from Foreign Minister Peres. Therefore, in the eyes of the State Department, it followed that Secretary Christopher should meet with Peres and the Palestinians. You get into Washington politics here. Come on! So that's the way I handled it.

So DCM Larocco called the Director General of Prime Minister Rabin's office and said that Ambassador Brown had asked him to tell the Director General to inform him that we had this invitation for Peres. He asked him: "Shall we deliver it?" The instant answer was: "No! Hold it! Just wait!" [Laughter]

Some hours later, I received another phone call from Dennis Ross in the State Department. He asked: "Have you delivered that invitation?" I said, "Not yet." He said, "Well, forget that one. We want you to go in and invite Prime Minister Rabin." So I sought an immediate, one on one appointment with the Prime Minister. He received me in his office in the Ministry of Defense in Tel Aviv. He served me the ritual cup of Turkish coffee. With a cigarette in his hand, he said, "What's up?" I said, "Mr. Prime Minister, President Clinton instructs me to extend to you a cordial invitation to join him and Yasser Arafat in Washington for a ceremony commemorating this great breakthrough which you have achieved. President Clinton would be very happy to have you come to Washington for this purpose." Rabin took a drag on his cigarette, looked at me, and said, "You know, Bill, there's no business like show business!" [Laughter] So I said, "Yes, sir!"

Q: This was one of the great moments in diplomatic history.

BROWN: And so the Rabin visit to the U.S. was arranged. Rabin very kindly invited me to travel on his plane to the U.S., which was a very nice gesture.

I'll tell you about that flight to the U.S., because it exposed me to a unique window on the Israeli Prime Minister's VIP [Very Important Person] flight. The aircraft was a Boeing

707 configured for VIP travel, Israeli fashion. In the center of the aircraft was a small compartment with two tables, something like a Silver Diner Cafe.

Q: It was like a booth.

BROWN: Yes, a booth. It was one compartment, but it had two booths in it, separated by the aisle. Every other seat on the plane was, if you will, economy class, but in sections. The plane was jammed full with supporters of the Prime Minister and all kinds of very interesting people. In the Prime Minister's compartment sat Rabin and his wife, Leah. They faced a fairly narrow table, which might have been 2.5 feet wide. For a tall person like myself, you'd be touching knees with the person opposite you. Opposite Rabin and his wife was Motta Gur, who was Deputy Defense Minister and the liberator of Jerusalem, and his wife. He was suffering from cancer. He was an old stalwart and friend of Rabin.

At the other table, next to the window, that is, the position farthest away from Rabin sat Shulamit Aloni, who was the representative of a peace party, a highly dedicated lady who had criticized all Israeli Governments, including that of Rabin, for being too timid and for not recognizing a Palestinian state. She was a lawyer. On the aisle, next to Shulamit Aloni, was Shimon Peres, the Foreign Minister. I was seated opposite Peres. Throughout the flight his knees and mine were touching. To my left, at the window, again, the farthest from Rabin, was Yosi Beilin, Deputy Foreign Minister. Again, he was a dove, at one time labeled publicly by Rabin as Peres' poodle for his allegedly crazy ideas about giving too much to the enemy in negotiations. Yosi had been a critical figure in the whole Oslo process. (End of tape)

He had played a critical role in bringing the Oslo process to an official level.

We flew first to Amsterdam, and then to Washington, DC. During the whole trip Prime Minister Rabin sat there with a glass of whiskey or a cup of coffee and a cigarette, chatting with Leah Rabin and Motta Gur. Yosi Beilen sat next to me, reading a novel throughout the whole trip. During the trip Shimon Peres sat writing the speech he was going to deliver on a tablet of long, legal sized paper. He is a very serious man who was obviously struggling to produce the best, philosophical, comprehensive, political statement that he possibly could as Foreign Minister. Prime Minister Rabin's statement had obviously been prepared and was in his pocket.

It was fascinating. This was a long trip. There was a little bit of banter back and forth, but essentially there was no communication between Rabin and Peres, who were just across the aisle from each other. No communication whatsoever. At one time I wrote out, in Chinese characters, a piece of an essay written about in the Eighth century and gave it to Rabin, who turned it around several different ways and said, "What's this?" I said that it referred to great leadership and that I thought that it applied to him.

Well, after we arrived in the U.S., there was a great ceremony on the White House lawn. I

want to add this. There was great euphoria, particularly among the American peace-oriented supporters. These included all kinds of kids in special T-shirts representing different faiths which were for peace. Now they were finally in the limelight. You may remember the photo of the handshake which portrayed Yasser Arafat reaching over, past President Clinton, to Prime Minister Rabin. This had all been arranged in advance. It showed an obviously less than enthusiastic Israeli Prime Minister, literally shaking Arafat's hand.

However, what I particularly want to convey here is that when I walked back to the State Department from that ceremony on the White House lawn, I did some real thinking. When I arrived at the State Department, I sat down in the office assigned to me, picked up a pen, and wrote out yet another message, this time to the Secretary of State. I don't have a copy of it now, but it ran along these lines: "I've just come from the great ceremony which you and the President attended. I would say that Prime Minister Rabin has once again demonstrated great, political courage. This is a risky endeavor to which he has now publicly subscribed. I think that, as part of our effort to bolster him and encourage him to move forward, the time has come to move the American Embassy in Israel to the Western part of Jerusalem, where we have a site which has already been negotiated for a diplomatic facility. I gave that handwritten letter to Ed Djerejian, Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, to pass up the chain of command.

Well, it was the subject of an animated, spirited, stand-up conversation between Dennis Ross, myself, and Martin Indyk. I think that Ambassador Sam Lewis and some others were standing by. During this conversation I was obviously in a distinct minority. Dennis called this proposal "idiotic, absolute foolishness" at that juncture, using the standard argument that we should save that possible, American move for the very end of the peace process, as a way of putting it over the top.

For my part, I argued that the time was right, and there will always be 111 reasons why we should not move the American Embassy to Jerusalem. I said that the time was right for several reasons. I had in mind the political grounds, for the reasons I just set forth. I had in mind the security grounds, meaning physical security. I had in mind efficiency, manpower, and a whole complex of other reasons as well. Needless to say, that effort went nowhere.

It is interesting that, meanwhile, the United States Congress has moved to a similar position and that certain Presidential candidates, including President Clinton himself, have adopted this position, but that's politics.

Well, there is one other subject that I would like to cover. From the beginning of his new tenure as Prime Minister, Rabin set forth a new set of priorities which provided that, as far as settlements in the occupied territories were concerned, there should be no, new settlements. As far as his efforts to straddle the issue are concerned, there were such strong feelings and differences of opinion on this subject that he had the existing settlements re-categorized into security and non-security divisions. The thrust of this new

categorization was that, henceforth, no more public monies would go into non-security establishments. That is, those which were far out, obviously political statements, as opposed to those which, it could be argued, were essential to the security of Jerusalem, the roads leading up to and down from Jerusalem, and the overall security of the country.

That statement immediately triggered the usual uproar in those settlements which were categorized as non-security establishments, as well as efforts to include other settlements in the security category. This meant money, not only for existing facilities, but subsidies for mortgages, and continued growth in terms of infrastructure, roads, and buildings.

The Palestinians, of course, denounced all of this, and it has a certain relevance today, as we speak. Here we are with the Barak Government in 1999. I read in the news the other day that a Palestinian negotiator had said, "This continued expansion of Israeli settlements will kill the whole arrangement." In reply, Barak's spokesman said, "We're not talking about new settlements. We're talking about the natural growth and expansion of existing settlements, which are vital to our security." It was a familiar line.

That takes us way back to the early foundation of Israel and its development. It started with Galilee within Israel proper and within the Green Line. It was a standard, Zionist practice, from the very beginning, to put settlements up on high ground, in strategic passes and so forth, as a marker showing that: "This is ours. We're not leaving here. If push comes to shove, we have the high ground and we will dominate the area around it."

Q: It was very clear in the 1948 battle for Jerusalem.

BROWN: Later on, when a weak Rabin Government permitted a settlers' group to establish themselves on the West Bank of the Jordan River, that was the nucleus from which emerged the situation when I came back to Israel as ambassador. At this time there were 110,000 or 120,000 people living in these settlements on the West Bank and, to a lesser degree, in the Gaza Strip.

This also fits into an Israeli mentality of negotiations. These are tough enemies that they were dealing with. The Israelis felt that one of the best ways to handle this is simply to continue to develop your strength and let your enemies see it. You create "facts on the ground," as the expression has it. If you're a negotiator, whether you say it or not, the implicit message is: "You'd better negotiate while there's something left to negotiate. If you don't negotiate in good faith, there's going to be more and more of this." This practice has caused great agony among Palestinians and Palestinian negotiators. That pattern of negotiations is still very much there.

A second element that I would point out is that, within this new prioritization announced by Rabin, the development of what the U.S. would call settlements in and around Jerusalem continued apace. Indeed, this situation got to the point where I went to the new Minister of Housing, "Fuad," or Benyamin Eleazar, who was born in Iraq who had a military career. He was one of those former military associates of Rabin, in whom Rabin

placed trust. Now he was Minister of Housing. He laid the situation right out. In fact, he gave me a map which, when transmitted to Washington, caused a great commotion. It was his updated map of the plan of "Greater Jerusalem," or, if you will, "Municipal Jerusalem." It was the expanded Jerusalem developed with ongoing funds, bulldozing, and so forth. When I talked to him about this, he said, "I'm not trying to put anything over on you. This has always been our plan. It is part of the Labour Party platform. We are merely implementing it. We never said anything about stopping the construction of normal housing developments here in Jerusalem, which has been and will remain unified." He didn't say this, but this is what had been done by previous, Israeli Governments. This is something which is vexing to the Palestinians, to put it mildly. But there it is. And it's there now as we speak, on October 1, 1999.

Bear in mind that when you pigeonhole political parties and party positions, right up to now it has been a Labour Party position that, whatever is done in terms of the staged withdrawal from the West Bank of the Jordan River area and the final settlement with the Palestinians, the Israelis continue to implement their agenda, which includes strengthening Jewish housing settlements in and immediately around Jerusalem. Even the definition of Jerusalem has an increasingly Greater Jerusalem character.

For example, the settlement of Ma'ale Adomin now has more than 20,000 people living there. It is a five or 10 minutes drive from the center of Jerusalem. It started on a barren ridge where some Bedouin goatherds lived. Over time it has grown to be a tremendous community. No Israeli leader that I know of has any idea of a pullback from Ma'ale Adomin or similar settlements in the residential block around there.

All of the Jews now living on the West Bank vote. I don't know what the Jewish population of the West Bank is, but I would say that it is probably now about 130,000 people. These people have full voting rights. So when you get into an election, a referendum, or a fight in the Knesset on assets, one has to remember that the people living in West Bank settlements are a very important, political group.

Ed Djerejian, the new Ambassador-designate to Israel, and I had long agreed that we would spend Christmas in our respective households, he in Washington and I in Israel. I said that I would leave Israel shortly after January 1, 1994, which I did, and then returned to retired status in the U.S. At this time I joined the board of the Israel Discount Bank of New York, which is registered in New York. It is a very conservative and successful bank and a subsidiary of the Israel Discount Bank of Tel Aviv. I did more public speaking and went back for a while to my duties in the small Senior Review Panel at CIA, reporting to the Director of Central Intelligence. I was there through 1997.

Meanwhile, I again became the pro bono Chairman of the Board of the Truman Institute for Peace in Jerusalem. However, in June, 1996 I was asked to go out with Stanley Roth as a Special Envoy on the Burma question. Maybe we can touch on that later.

Q: Yes. Okay, we'll stop here and pick up the Burma question the next time we meet. I

also wanted to ask when Jordan abandoned the West Bank.

BROWN: Jordan lost the West Bank in the War of 1967.

Q: I mean the official relationship between Jordan and the West Bank.

BROWN: In 1988 King Hussein, somewhat to the surprise of others, said in effect, "All right, we're now disengaging from the West Bank," although he remained the protector of Islamic rights in Jerusalem.

Q: Jordan isn't mentioned much in the current context. I take it that...

BROWN: Before I close this section, let me mention the Jordanian aspect here. When Rabin reached agreement with the Palestinians, there was also a dramatic breakthrough with the Jordanians, and this was no accident. The Israelis and the Jordanians watch each other very, very carefully. Prime Minister Rabin called me in one day, when I was scheduled to fly to Antalya, Turkey, and do a 10-day cruise on a sailboat. Rabin asked to see me alone, so I knew that it was important. I took Jim Larocco, my DCM, with me and told him to wait outside the Ministry of Defense.

I went to Rabin's office, and he said, "I want to tell you that I've met with King Hussein and have worked out a deal. Here is the outline of the deal." He showed me a document outlining its provisions and summarized the negotiations. He said, "If you want, you can go next door, sit in Danny Yatom's office, and read this document. However, I'm not going to give you a piece of paper. I ask you to handle this on a very confidential basis, because I promised the King that I would handle it this way." So I moved with Danny Yatom to his cubbyhole office next to Rabin's office in the Defense Ministry, and I absorbed the outline of the agreement as rapidly as I could. The outline was a convoluted document which had been submitted and made a part of the record by the King's brother and at the time his nominal successor, Crown Prince Hassan. [Hassan was later passed over in favor of Abdullah who became King]

Anyhow, I memorized the document as best I could. Then I met my DCM and headed for the plane which was to take me to Turkey. I said, "I'm just going to describe this. Take notes as well as you can and report this to Washington. A deal has been made between Israel and Jordan. Here is how it was done." Rabin had used the Deputy Director [later Director] of the MOSSAD, [Israeli foreign intelligence organization], Efraim Levy, as his key adviser. Not a Foreign Ministry officer. This was a typical Rabin maneuver.

As it worked out, the borders between Jordan and Israel would be adjusted by a unique method. Israel would cede certain, disputed areas back to Jordan, but Israel would hold them for a long period under a rental arrangement. There would be the possibility of a joint, Israeli-Jordanian airport near Eilat and Aqaba, at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba. Water issues would be dealt with. It was a great breakthrough. There would be a possibility for Israeli investment in Jordan because, of course, Jordan had a very weak

economy, which had been further weakened by the embargoes which the Saudis and others had proclaimed against Jordan because of its stance during the Gulf War. There was hope that something could be done in this respect. So that's how that particular breakthrough worked out.

Maybe next time we can handle Burma, or Myanmar, as it's now called.

Q: Great.

Today is October 19, 1999. Bill, over to you.

BROWN: Thank you, Stu. Chronologically speaking, I went back into retirement in January, 1994. As I said, as a contractor I rejoined the Senior Review Panel under the direction of the Director of Central Intelligence. I stayed with them on a part-time, contract basis until 1997. In 1997 the new head of the NIC, the National Intelligence Council, which is responsible for producing the National Intelligence Estimates, came up with the idea of folding our independent, Senior Review Panel under the NIC. We tried to resist this idea, but when we were told that that was the decision, then the two of us who remained decided to resign, rather than be folded in under somebody else's wing.

Q: What was the issue, from your point of view, which led you to this decision?

BROWN: It was essentially bureaucratic. From the very beginning, and historically, there had been criticism of this Senior Review Panel. It is anathema to any bureaucracy, as I said, to have a truly independent unit or cell reporting to the boss and criticizing your work. Especially when the critique sent to the boss [i.e., the Director of Central Intelligence] is about the last thing he reads before he goes in to chair a meeting of the National Foreign Intelligence Board. It is irritating, to put it mildly, to the head of the NIC and the drafters of the National Intelligence Estimates to see a bunch of what they consider to be old, retired has-beens nitpicking or criticizing their work. That kind of complaint had been made for years. It was perfectly understandable. On whatever grounds, whether cost savings or whatever, the new Director of Central Intelligence apparently went along with this idea of folding the Senior Review Panel under the NIC.

The two of us did a sort of historical survey of the SRPs [Senior Review Panel] contributions over the years, underlining the main issues involved. Then we quietly folded our tents and left. I think that this was a fascinating episode in institutional history. In retirement I went back to chair, on a pro bono basis, the Board of the Harry Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace, which is under the wing of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The staff of this institute had made significant breakthroughs with Palestinian counterparts during the dark days, even before the Intifada. Initially, we were the only institute which had achieved this. Many of the players behind the scenes as far as the makeup of negotiating teams was concerned, came from or were inspired by

papers which had come out of the interface between the Truman Institute and Palestinian scholars.

I also joined the New York branch of the Israel Discount Bank of New York, a New York registered subsidiary of the Israel Discount Bank of Tel Aviv. I did some public speaking. In late 1995 I was then asked by Winston Lord, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, to join the three-man Board of Directors of the American Institute on Taiwan [AIT]. This Board was asked specifically to approve the appointment of a new Director of the AIT. Win Lord had run into some difficulties on the selection of a new Director. He had been told by a senior person in the State Department, with close connections with the Clinton administration, that the new Director should be so and so. Win Lord had initially resisted but finally acceded to this request. There was a bit of a flurry, so he asked me and another gentleman to join the Board of Directors of the AIT and cast our vote in favor of this man, which we did. A rather unhappy episode followed and, in the end, the new Director of the AIT was replaced at the very end of Win Lord's tenure as Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs.

I think that at this stage I will say no more about that particular episode, except that the Taiwan account is very important, in so many ways, in terms of the relationship with Beijing; tensions across the Strait of Taiwan, about which we read; and very strong Congressional cross currents. The selection of personnel to handle the Taiwan account, and I mean not only the Director of the AIT, but the whole staff, is of the first importance. It may be a small staff, but it is extremely important. That also, of course, is true of the Taiwan desk in the State Department. You have to have very good people because something is always happening. You see this even as we talk in the current situation, where President Lee Teng-hui of Taiwan has declared that the negotiations or talks between Beijing and Taipei ought to be conducted as between two states of equal status, rather than Beijing portraying Taiwan as nothing but a renegade, runaway province of China. We saw the tensions of 1995-1996, between Taiwan and the PRC [People's Republic of China] ending in the launch of missiles which impacted in the sea near Taiwan. So this is a very important matter.

I am still on the AIT Board of Directors. The whole history of it is fascinating, especially to me because, as you know, I am the guy who set up AIT in Taipei, some 20 years ago.

Q: Bill, it seems to me that during your career you've dealt with two of the major, unresolved issues which seem almost legalistic but terribly important. That is, locating the American Embassy in Jerusalem, which is again imbedded in some Congressional legislation, and the Taiwan issue. These issues, maybe along with the Korean Cease Fire Line, are matters about which Congress is extremely sensitive. Any American administration has to deal with these issues with extreme care. Although these might seem to be minor matters with other countries...

BROWN: These problems require careful thinking, policy formulation, and selection of people to manage them.

Q: What was your impression, both before and after the event? I'd like you to comment on the staffing. There is something slightly less than a firewall built between our relations with Taiwan and the China desk. Does this mean that the State Department, in its official relationship with Taiwan, in a way has hindered dealing with Taiwan because of the need to have a certain distance between them?

BROWN: No, not necessarily. There are rules spoken and unspoken in the diplomatic business. It is understandable that those representing Taiwan always want to push the envelope and expand their room for maneuver. However, long ago procedural rules were established on how to handle this. The fact remains that in Taiwan we are dealing with an entity which is really dynamic and which has evolved over the years into a democracy. The emergence of a true democracy in Taiwan with a free swinging press and new attitudes among this young population, plus unprecedented affluence in Asian terms, have created a remarkable, new complex out there.

So in dealing with Taiwan we need careful policy formulation and extreme care in managing our relations with both Beijing and Taiwan. This affects our choice of people to deal with both entities, among other things.

As I was a member of the Board of Directors of the AIT, I made a brief visit to Taiwan. I think it was in 1996. It was wonderful to get back, talk with old timers, and see the progress that had been made. Members of the Board don't meet too often, but I really enjoy serving there. We have a very good staff currently in place in Taiwan, and I'm delighted to see that they're handling things professionally.

Q: Before you leave AIT, it strikes me that at a certain point in diplomatic life, you encounter certain problems, and this happens under any administration. The Secretary of State goes off to the capitals of both countries involved in a dispute with each other, such as India and Pakistan. He goes around and talks to the leaders of the countries concerned and says: "Look, this is where the American Government stands." This practice has a certain impact.

In this case the American Secretary of State, by treaty, is essentially precluded from going to Taiwan and talking to the government leaders. This has to be done at a different level. That raises a question regarding the delivery of messages in both directions.

BROWN: No, I don't see it that way, Stu. For instance, if we have in place a system for delivering messages, if we have a Director of AIT who is so identified by whatever system of rhetoric that those to whom he or she speaks, including President Lee Teng-hui, know that he or she speaks for the United States with full authority, that's all there is to it. Messages can be delivered using different types of letterhead. However, the key consideration is that whoever is delivering the message is presented and perceived as authoritative and speaking for the U.S. That takes care not only of these special cases but applies to all diplomatic relationships. This is something which can be managed in the

absence of the physical presence of the Secretary of State. After all, we have members of the U.S. cabinet visiting Taiwan on selected, business-related matters. For years that arrangement was considered unimaginable. For a time we couldn't have a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State visit Taiwan, let alone a member of the U.S. cabinet. Things have evolved so that cabinet members now visit Taiwan on a select basis.

Returning to your question, there is little or no problem, in my view, in the fact that the Secretary of State can't go to Taiwan.

Q: You know, personalities play a role.

BROWN: Oh, yes.

Q: The President now has been going annually to these APEC [Asia Pacific Economic Council] meetings. The leaders of the various countries get together and put on fancy shirts, whether the meeting is held in Honolulu, Manila, or wherever it is. Here is Taiwan, probably the most dynamic, industrial and democratic country in the group, precluded from sitting down and having a chat with President Clinton, or whoever is the President of the U.S. It occurs to me that we have gotten into a certain disconnect which is as bad as when we were precluded from talking to the PLO.

BROWN: Take my word for it, Stu, there are ways by which this kind of problem can be handled and is being handled. Messages can be conveyed, and impressions can be made. However, the key question throughout all of this is that those whom you pick to handle our business have to be seen as fully authoritative and authentic representatives of the United States. In other circumstances that can even apply to a Secretary of State. With all due respect to him in other matters, take the case of Secretary of State Rogers. As you'll see from the accounts of various people who were involved in this whole business of normalizing relations with China, Rogers was the Secretary of State, but he was regarded as a virtual cipher.

Q: Who was his interpreter? Was it Chas. Freeman? At one point Rogers was talking about golf to a veteran of the Long March in China.

BROWN: So mere rank, formal rank, in and of itself, is not a key question.

Q: Has a Director of the AIT ever gone to Washington and chatted with the Secretary of State or the President...

BROWN: The answer is "Yes." The Directors of the AIT have often been former ambassadors. The arrangement is that one is suspended from the Foreign Service during one's time on Taiwan. Again, the selection of that particular individual is crucial as well. He or she must be seen as fully authentic representatives of the United States with the full backing of our government, all the way to the top. Therefore, he or she is able to gain access and to see top officials and deliver whatever message that is entrusted to them,

efficiently and authoritatively.

All right. Let's touch on something else. I think that in June, 1996, I was chairing the annual meeting of the Board of Directors of the Harry Truman Institute in Jerusalem. I received a phone call from a friend in the State Department who said, "Look, pretend that I haven't called you." I use this phraseology, Stu, to show you how business is sometimes done. He said, "Expect a phone call from someone else, asking you to proceed immediately to the Far East as a Special Envoy on Burma." I was staying at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem at the time. I said, "All right, if it's deemed necessary, I'll do it, but what's the story here?" The answer was: "They want you to fly, as soon as you can, and meet high level people in Asia to call to their attention this whole business of the dictatorial, military junta in Burma" (or, as they now have re-styled the country, Myanmar). The question has turned on the persecution of the opposition party leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, who in effect has been under house arrest for some years.

The other party to this phone conversation said, "There will be two of you involved in this mission." The other person is Stanley Roth, formerly of the NSC [National Security Council] staff and now with the U.S. Institute of Peace. I sort of blurted out to this friend: "Who needs two people for a Mission of this kind?" The answer was: "Well, there's a story behind this, and would you do it, because they want you to do it?" So I said, "Okay."

So I flew back to Washington and joined Stanley Roth for really intense burst of briefings and meetings with members of human rights constituencies. We were subjected to a bombardment of questions and probes by a variety of these human rights groups in Washington. I can't remember their specific names. They wanted us to go out and really sock it to everybody, as far as getting the Asians on board and really putting the heat on this military junta in Rangoon, [Burma, or Myanmar].

We were not asked by the USG to go to Rangoon itself, but we were to deal with the top ranking people in other Southeast Asian countries. I said, "If that's the case, then I want a Presidential Letter or Message to go out with us." I knew that Madeline Albright had already been to Rangoon. I think that she had gone before becoming Secretary of State. She'd seen Aung San Suu Kyi and then came back to Bangkok, held a press conference, and made a blistering attack on the Burmese military junta. In effect, the junta continued to thumb their noses at us. So I said that if the Department of State really wanted to get high level attention on Burma, we had to have a Presidential Message. I was told: "Okay, yes."

Stanley Roth then took a plane to East Asia. Now, the basic background here is that Burma has been in chaos almost since its independence was recognized in 1948. Initially, it had had a more democratic type of leadership but rapidly fell into the grip of a military strong man. Elections were held in either 1991 or 1992, and Aung San Suu Kyi's party won an overwhelming electoral victory. However, the military rose up, stepped in again, and junked the results of the elections. They resumed control of the government, and the

U.S., and other, democratically minded countries were very upset about this.

Burma is a country which is rich in natural resources, but the government is a terrible manager of these assets. For many years Burma had been under a statist, socialist, almost reclusive regime under a military strong man. The country's economy has remained very primitive. However, UNOCAL [Union Oil Company of California] had invested in oil production in a deal with the Government of Burma and in collaboration with TOTAL, the French oil company. On the one hand, it was drilling offshore for oil and/or gas. When it obtained positive results, it engaged in an effort whereby oil pipelines were to be constructed from Burma into Thailand. UNOCAL has a large stake in the production of natural gas in Thailand. So UNOCAL now had acquired an important stake in Burma.

The human rights organizations in Washington, DC, were highly critical of UNOCAL for having this stake in Burma. They proposed embargoes and other sanctions against Burma. As Stanley Roth and I set forth on our mission, Congressional pressures were brought to bear in response to these human rights organizations to apply a total embargo on our trade with Burma, which was minimal, as I said. I really wondered what our leverage could be.

The main players in the Burmese economy were the Japanese, with money to invest, not only in business ventures but also in infrastructure projects. At the time the Indonesians had the kind of regime which the Burmese admired. That is, a military dominated government, with the central authorities deciding virtually everything. Some Singapore Chinese businessmen had invested in Burma, through their Chinese contacts. The Thai have a long, centuries old history of rather tense relationships with Burma. The interests of other countries were rather tangential. However, off we went on this extensive itinerary. With the Presidential message behind us, we were received at high levels of the various governments we contacted.

We were received by Foreign Minister Ikeda, in Japan. Japanese government officials at senior levels listened to us. Senior members of the Japanese bureaucracy were mindful of our concerns and appreciative of the human rights aspect of the problem and the status of Aung San Suu Kyi. However, their approach to this issue was somewhat different from ours. They believed in keeping up business relationships with Burma and, in their own way, trying to moderate the attitudes of the Burmese regime through these relationships, rather than the heavy stick which is favored by certain people in Washington in handling such matters.

We then went to the Philippines and were received by President Ramos. He was quite supportive. After the experience with the late Senator Aquino, the Philippines was very human rights oriented. Here was another lady in distress, Aung San Suu Kyi, who reminded Filipinos of the experience of President Corry Aquino. So we detected decent vibrations there. However, the fact of it is that the Philippines have little influence with Burma. Nevertheless, the Philippine leaders were willing to listen and, within ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] circles, and that's what we were really aiming at, they might have some impact. An ASEAN meeting was coming up shortly. Burma had

applied for membership in ASEAN, and we didn't want to see Burma automatically included in this organization.

From Manila Stanley Roth and I flew to Indonesia and saw President Suharto. We spent 45 minutes with him. It was surprising. I sat two feet away from him and heard him go on at length. I opened the conversation by saying that I had served in the Southeast Asian area some 30 years previously and had witnessed the material progress in Indonesia under Suharto's leadership. I didn't go into the human rights aspects of the situation in Indonesia. I said that I realized that the military group in power in Burma had a special respect for the Indonesian Government. He lit up at this and said that the Burmese military had frequent contacts with Indonesia. Indonesia didn't want to impose its will on anybody. However, if the Burmese military leaders sought advice, Indonesia would be willing to help.

From there we went to see Prime Minister Goh of Singapore. In typical Singapore style, he was very realistic. In essence, he said, "Look, there's a way to deal with the Burmese. We are aware of who they are and what they are. In our own way we will try to have some effect on them. However, the use of a heavy club will not have any impact on them whatsoever. We understand what you are saying and will cooperate to a certain degree and in our own way."

Before I leave the subject of Singapore, I would like to mention a little sidelight which was very interesting to me, personally. I did not tell anybody in the American Embassy in Singapore that I had previously served there until I arrived there. Even then I just made reference to the fact that, having served in Singapore many years before, I would like to take a walk around the Embassy. In my days there it had been a Consulate General. It had been in a different building when I first arrived there in 1961.

I mentioned to people in the Embassy that I had known a lady who became Chairperson of the Department of Political Science at the University of Singapore. I had known her as an 18-year-old girl. I wondered whether there was a chance, during this short stay in Singapore, I might have lunch or get together with her. I mentioned this matter to my Control Officer at the Embassy. Well, as we were departing the Embassy for the call on Prime Minister Goh, the Control Officer said, "This lady is the subject of a cable just received this morning from Washington. She has been granted agreement as the next Singaporean ambassador to the United States. We've tried to reach her, and the word is that she's busy. However, we'll keep working on this."

As we arrived at the Prime Minister's office, out in front was the Foreign Minister of Singapore, an Indian and former Professor of Law. I mentioned that I had known this Singapore woman as "Daisy." She no longer uses that name. The Foreign Minister said, "Daisy? Sure. I remember her. She was my student," and so forth. Then he turned, introduced me to Prime Minister Goh, and said, "Bill Brown here knew Daisy, our new ambassador to the United States." Perhaps to the surprise of our Embassy officers, I then recalled that I had been in Singapore during the really tough days when a brand new

Prime Minister had taken over, Lee Kuan Yew. There was ethnic tension and strife, as well as a great struggle over the Malaysia issue. I recalled the turmoil of that period. So I could relate to Singapore and I wanted these people to know that I knew something about the city and its dynamics. This was a very useful recollection to hark back to.

From Singapore we went up to Kuala Lumpur. Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad was out of town on a trip. So we saw the Acting Prime Minister, Anwar Ibrahim. Stanley Roth knew Anwar from his many trips to the area. He had met Anwar first when he worked for Congressman Steven Solarz, and later on in his own capacity in the U.S. Institute of Peace. Stanley really knew the Asian scene. We had a good chat with Anwar. Again, we had the impression that, yes, the Malaysians, and Anwar in particular, were sympathetic to the need to do something about Burma. However, they were saddled with the ASEAN approach that the way to handle such problems is to bring people into the ASEAN fold and exert one's influence once they're in the fold. By contrast, our pitch was: "You have high standards in ASEAN. Make the Burmese adhere to the standards before admitting them."

From Kuala Lumpur we flew to Bangkok, my own relatively recent post of assignment. We saw the Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, Amnoi, with whom I had quite a reunion. I had been visiting Bangkok annually, around Christmastime, to see my daughters who were working on refugee affairs, and their families. On a fair number of those visits to Bangkok I would make calls on old friends and contacts, including Amnoi. On the one hand, the Thai I talked to about Burma were extremely understanding, but cautious on the other hand. They had real interests that came into play here. Of course, there have been historical incursions between Thailand and Burma. There are border areas between the two countries which are in dispute. In some areas the border has not been demarcated. There were Burmese groups which resisted the central government, including the Karen, the Kachin, and others. Burma and the Golden Triangle [parts of Burma, Thailand, and Laos] are a great source of narcotics. Burma is a country in which Thai entrepreneurs often operate illegally. Some of these Thai businessmen have connections with Burmese government officials as far as timber and other Burmese resources are concerned. It's quite a ball of wax. So the Thai bureaucracy is very cautious about new initiatives concerning Burma.

Altogether, it was a fascinating trip, and we were well received in terms of access to the highest level officials. We conducted ourselves diplomatically. We didn't give press conferences in the various countries we visited until our mission was all over. We behaved somewhat circumspectly. It gave us an insight into the workings and attitudes of these very important officials. On the way back to the U.S., I remember asking Stanley Roth who, in his view, would be the leading candidate to be the next Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Stanley said, "You're looking at him." [Laughter] And that's what Stanley became.

Q: Was that part of the deal, in a way, to get him out in Southeast Asia once again?

BROWN: I don't know. The real story, harking back to that off the record telephone conversation while I was in Jerusalem, was this. Washington became incensed over the way the Burmese handled Aung San Suu Kyi. It was decided to send a Special Envoy. I strongly suspect that the original idea was that the Special Envoy was to be Stanley Roth, who had lately served on the staff of the National Security Council.

Probably the State Department got its institutional hackles up and said, "Wait a minute. If you're going to send an envoy to discuss this issue, it ought to be a State Department officer." They bickered back and forth and finally decided to send two envoys. The next question was: "Who's going to go from the State Department?" Somebody said, "I know a guy, Bill Brown. He's been ambassador to Thailand and served in Southeast Asia." So I was included in the equation. From my point of view, I was thinking: "Who needs two envoys?"

This takes us onto a broader subject. That is, this whole phenomenon of Special Envoys. I don't want to exaggerate, but it seems to me that we have Special Envoys for this, that, and the other thing, going all over the place. I had worked with a very special, Special Envoy, Phil Habib. At times, in very complex and explosive situations, I can see an argument for Special Envoys. But there's a real danger here in terms of the derogation of ambassadorial duties, image, and so forth.

These demarches which Stanley Roth and I made could have been presented by locally accredited American ambassadors, bearing a special message from the President or the Secretary of State. The locally accredited American ambassador could say that this demarche represents a very special kind of message. I felt that this use of Special Envoys was becoming a rather common practice. You've got to be careful, lest the image get around that anything above the mundane requires a Special Envoy.

Q: Isn't this a kind of bureaucratic response to a problem? Here is a bunch of ravening non-governmental organizations [NGOs] dealing with human rights and you have to do something. In other words, "don't just stand there. Do something." If you say, "Well, we're sending our ambassadors in to do this," that doesn't sound very good.

BROWN: Well, it's unfortunate that it doesn't sound very good. There's a story here, Stuart, and that is that I hark back to the time when you could have said to anybody making an inquiry that we're telling our ambassador to raise such and such a matter with the government to which he is accredited. And that would have been it. Somehow, there's been slippage here, so that there may be a perception that when you're dealing with a bunch of howling advocates on whatever side of whatever issue, whether this involves a Congressional inquiry or a question from an ordinary citizen, a desk officer may feel impelled to rely on a Special Envoy, rather than a regular, locally accredited ambassador.

Q: This is also an example of micromanagement from Washington. In other words, a lot of this is show business.

BROWN: Yes. Now, that wasn't the end of it. The annual ASEAN meeting was coming up. Notwithstanding our best effort, Burmese entry into ASEAN was on the agenda for this meeting, and it looked as if the Burmese were going to be admitted. So I was asked to go out in advance of Secretary of State Christopher's trip to Jakarta to attend the ASEAN meeting. I headed out to Jakarta, and I'll tell you another sidelight.

When I was asked to make this trip, this time I received a phone call from the desk. I said, "Okay, I'll do it. When do Stanley Roth and I leave?" I found out that Stanley hadn't been asked to make the trip. I said, "Wait a minute. If only a short time ago Stanley Roth and I were a team, didn't you think to call Stanley and ask him to go also?" They just hadn't called him. I said, "He might take your failure to invite him as a slap in the face." Then I called Stanley myself. I said, "Stan, I want you to know that I've been asked to make a special trip to Jakarta in advance of the ASEAN meeting and have accepted. I was shocked to find out that I would be going alone. Tell me, were you asked to make this trip?" He said, "No, but that's all right. I've got other things to do, but you go ahead." This shows you how the intramural rivalries and so forth can "play around town."

In any event, I went out alone to Jakarta and worked the ASEAN circuit. This was fascinating because ASEAN is run in terms of the delegations from the various member countries. It's really quite an organization now and is even larger than it was. You have even more peripheral participation.

Now the standard is that ASEAN meets as ASEAN, that is, as a group. Meanwhile, bilateral meetings are being scheduled and held. Then ASEAN as a group meets with the larger countries, such as the U.S., Japan, China, and Russia. India was now making its first appearance at an ASEAN meeting. It had long wanted to be represented there, as a major power on a level with the United States, Russia, and China. Very important business is done at side meetings at the level of the Secretary of State. For example, I sat in the back row when Secretary Christopher met bilaterally with the Chinese Foreign Minister, following a period of significant tension. Now these relationships were improving again.

As I said, I arrived in Jakarta before Secretary Christopher's party. I asked my Embassy Jakarta Control Officer to set up appointments for me with the chief delegates of the major ASEAN countries and some other countries as well. I was able to meet with people from these individual, ASEAN countries at the Foreign Secretary level. I also met the Indian Foreign Secretary and had a fascinating conversation with him. India has a very long, convoluted relationship with Burma. Aung San Suu Kyi's husband had special, Indian connections. He has died since this ASEAN meeting was held. There was an Indian constituency looking at this whole question of Burmese entrance into ASEAN. The Indians felt that they had to be very careful. The Indians look on Burma as a place where too much Chinese influence could be dangerous. You get into such questions as the Irrawaddy River as a possible, special channel up to China. There were all kinds of special, Indian fears apparent.

The point that I want to make here is that this visit enabled me to sit down, one on one, with individuals and hear their remarks on Burma, which were very different from the public language and the public positions they expressed, let alone the voting and so forth. I won't go into specific, individual cases, but I'll give you at least one case where a foreign official said to me, point blank: "You're on the right track. You be the tough guy. You understand that we can't be, but it's a good thing that you're playing the tough role. Be assured that we'll work our own way, even though it's not your way." It was frustrating to hear this, in one sense, but it was refreshing, in another sense, to hear a very senior official give me the real story.

Q: But this is what the United States is doing all over the place. We're playing the "tough guy," and other countries are saying: "Yes, we're with you, but we can't say so openly." I think of Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia telling our ambassador in Belgrade: "Thank God for the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean!"

BROWN: But he also said that he couldn't say that openly. He said, "But keep your bases in Greece." [Laughter] Well, that's the kind of game that the larger powers get into.

We lost on this. As I met these senior people, face to face, my approach was: "You know and I know that the Burmese are a rough, dirty crowd. I know that you've got special problems handling this." For instance, take the case of the Malaysians. They had a special problem involving the Muslim minority in Burma which felt persecuted. There were all sorts of special problems, and we were aware of them. The point is this: from a distance I had witnessed this kind of problem as an observer, because I was in Moscow at the time that ASEAN was established. Over the years ASEAN developed strength and prestige. It conducted itself very well and became a very prestigious organization.

But the question is: why, in effect, should you give candidates for membership in this organization a blank check? I might add parenthetically, that the Cambodians of the Hun Sen faction were let into ASEAN. Why not put them through some tests or exercises? Let them demonstrate their bona fides because they are applying to become members of a prestigious club. You ought to treat new applicants that way.

Well, we lost our case, but, really, I wonder whether we did. Over the longer run, funny things subsequently happened. Let me say that this happened in 1996. By 1998 all of those figures that I mentioned, including Ikeda of Japan, Ramos of the Philippines, Suharto of Indonesia, Anwar Ibrahim of Malaysia, and Amnoi of Thailand were all out of office, for various reasons. Ramos retired as President of the Philippines, and a new President was elected. Suharto of Indonesia was overthrown. Anwar Ibrahim of Malaysia was charged by Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, with sodomy and is now in prison. Amnoi went the way of senior Thai ministers of the period, as the Thai economy virtually collapsed. The only one of the whole bunch still in office is Prime Minister Goh of Singapore. There also is a story there. Singapore has a stable government of a particular kind with a rather authoritarian grip on power.

I say all of this to highlight that, in our business, times change, and leading figures come and go. And here is the American Foreign Service, as a professional corps, which has to cast its net widely. It has to have a wide variety of contacts and always be prepared and ready for changes in the personalities with whom it is in contact, and to be ready to deal with a new crowd of people who come into office from time to time.

I think that I've spoken my piece on that. It was fascinating a year ago to see a new Thai Foreign Minister articulating, at a luncheon held in a United States Senate building, a line on Burma that was right out of our position. He's a great guy. He did an internship here in the U.S. House of Representatives and in the U.S. Senate. He was articulate and has publicly criticized what was happening in Burma. What a change from the past! I'm sure that there were Thai bureaucrats wincing and grimacing when they heard him speak so forthrightly on the subject of Burma.

I certainly don't wish to write off such exercises. I do think that you have to consider how often to use this title of Special Envoy, as I said before. It should be used only sparingly and for special situations.

Q: I'm dubious about it. I think that for Washington desk people it's a handy way to get people off your back. It's like calling a conference on crime or something like that. Who can be opposed to that?

BROWN: Stuart, I don't want to get too philosophical as I look back at my career. However, I would like to say that the nature of the Foreign Affairs Oral History certainly brings out the pronoun, "I."

Q: That's what it is.

BROWN: Yes. I'd like to pause here and reflect just a moment with you on the tremendous back up I have had from colleagues and from DCM's in particular during my career. In terms of DCMs, all but one who served under me subsequently became distinguished ambassadors. I would like to emphasize the need for very careful selection of DCMs and their empowerment. There should be more recognition of the potentially dangerous road that they tread. The career mortality rate, if you will, of DCMs can be high. They should be very carefully selected and backed up at top levels of the State Department. The same consideration applies to Deputy Assistant Secretaries of State. There are people whom I know, and perhaps it would be better not to go into names, who did terrific jobs as DCMs at major posts. In some cases they became Deputy Assistant Secretaries, and I'm thinking in particular in EAP [Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs]. However, they were never made ambassador because this or that political appointee didn't have the guts or the interest to go out and get them the ambassadorship which they deserved. I think that episodes like that leave a very bad impression among the professionals in the Foreign Service.

I would like to make another remark in that regard. Long ago I decided that if I, or,

indeed, anyone, were appointed either ambassador or Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, as far as the State Department was concerned, the debt was paid. I do not believe in anything like an iron grip on ambassadorships. Once you've made ambassador or Deputy Assistant Secretary, that's it, in my view. There are plenty of other people in line for those positions.

I say that because, when I was Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, all kinds of guys came out of the woodwork who had been ambassadors here or there and who were now temporarily stranded. They would come to me and ask for assistance in getting them appointed as ambassadors or Deputy Assistant Secretaries. I would listen to them sympathetically. However, in my heart I would say to myself: "Hey, this guy has been an ambassador already. He's had his fling. Unless there are some very special circumstances, I would just as soon see someone else who hasn't had a shot at being ambassador be given the chance."

Q: Bill, let me just play the Devil's Advocate. We've had people interviewed in our oral history, some of whom were political appointees. I'm thinking of David Bruce or the Adams family. They served as ambassadors on several occasions. In a way you can say that they got better with experience. There's a difference in attitude between career Foreign Service ambassadors and political appointees. You can say that service as an ambassador is a reward for a job well done. Now, be on your way. Then there is service to the United States. I'm sure that you brought with you to Israel the real benefits of having been ambassador to Thailand. There's a yin and a yang in these things.

BROWN: Oh, I certainly agree. I have not been speaking in rigid terms. I have run into people who have projected the view that, somehow, they were due an appointment as an Ambassador. They've been an Ambassador one, two, or three times, or whatever...

Q: I've interviewed someone who was quite bitter about not getting appointment as an ambassador for the fourth time.

BROWN: On the surface, without knowing the individual or his background, that appears ridiculous to me. However, I wish that we had a better system of indoctrination at the Assistant Secretary level of the need to groom and back our upcoming, hardworking, bright types, so that you fight to get such people into positions and give them a chance to serve as ambassadors. I've seen too many cases where the front office of a bureau doesn't do that. I've seen other cases where I've felt that the front office of a regional bureau really failed to cope adequately with administrative problems and sort of shucked the job of selection of ambassadors onto the Executive Office of the bureau. They failed to take it, if necessary, up the line to the Secretary of State.

In that regard let me pay special homage to Secretary of State George Shultz, who, in my view, was the only Secretary that I can remember in my career, which started in 1956, who would really go to bat for the Foreign Service in very important logistic and administrative terms. This building complex in which we sit...

Q: The Foreign Service Institute, the National Foreign Affairs Training Center.

BROWN: It ought to be named "The George Shultz Center." Here was a Secretary of State who took the matter up and fought through all of the budgetary and intramural politics of the matter and got it for the Foreign Service, as opposed to some other Secretaries of State whom I could mention who let this and that piece of the Foreign Service fall away or that piece of it wither. Somehow, there has to be a better appreciation on high of the varied needs of the Foreign Service, apart from the purely pro forma considerations.

Q: A lady is coming to see me at lunchtime who is starting on a biography of John Stewart Service. I was wondering whether you would comment a bit on whether you saw any lasting effects from McCarthyism? It wasn't just McCarthyism. It was the whole attack on the China hands in the Foreign Service which eventually evolved into McCarthyism. Did you feel any of that when you came into the Foreign Service?

BROWN: Oh, definitely. Remember that I came into the Foreign Service as a graduate of Harvard University in 1956. I had already done my Ph.D. oral examination when I came into the service. I entered the Foreign Service when I was already a Ph.D. candidate in history and languages. Therefore, one of my key professors had been John King Fairbanks, who had been named by Senator McCarthy as the chief spy and communist agent at Harvard and one of those who had been instrumental, along with others, in the total sellout of China.

I came from a background in which John Vincent Carter was pilloried by Senator McCarthy and later came up to Harvard University. He had taken a sabbatical, or something like that. I came into the Foreign Service at a time when McCarthyism made a major onslaught on the China Service in the Foreign Service. I don't recall anybody specifically cautioning me. They didn't have to do that. The atmosphere in the Foreign Service in 1956, when I entered the Department, was filled with tension. As a young officer, I felt that common sense dictated that I should tread carefully.

Remember that, in those circumstances, just speaking linguistically, you couldn't say "Beijing" or "Peking." You had to say, "Beiping," which was Chiang Kai-shek's appellation for that city. For years we didn't refer to the "People's Republic of China," except in quotes. It was always "Red China," "Communist China," "Mao's China," or "Mainland China." We had to be very careful and we ourselves were, to a certain degree, "caught up" in the spirit of the times. We had just gone through the Korean War, which ended in July, 1953. I had been a Marine and was certainly aware that the communists had killed some 37,000 American troops, while we had killed perhaps 300,000 to 500,000 of the Chinese Communists, let alone decimating the North Korean Army.

Then, after the prisoner exchange, we woke up belatedly to find that the communist side was still holding Americans like Downey and Fecteau in Chinese prisons. The

atmospherics, the bombast out of Peking was really awesome in denouncing the U.S. as “World Enemy Number One.” The spectacle of millions of Chinese schoolchildren doing bayonet drill against dummies of Uncle Sam was also a part of the picture. There was an awful lot of bombast in the air. Chinese public pronouncements were very dramatic and very much anti-U.S. Then there was the whole emergence of the Vietnam War and China's involvement in that.

So these were very difficult times, in a sense, for the China Service in the Foreign Service. That does not mean that we were cowed. I may have related that I met Owen Lattimore in Leeds, England. He had retired as a Professor of Chinese at the University of Leeds, had gone to Paris, and come back to Leeds. When he found me studying Mongolian at Leeds, I think that from his viewpoint he was astounded that here was an officer who could discuss China objectively, and so forth. Owen was so scarred by the McCarthyite experience that he thought that all U.S. Foreign Service Officers who followed developments in China were nothing but robots of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles.

Q: Or one of the cohorts of Walter Robertson [former Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs].

BROWN: Yes, but there was a considerable amount of intense, creative thought that was going on, certainly in the minds of people like Paul Kreisberg and others with whom I was associated at that time. So when I came into the Foreign Service in 1956, I entered an atmosphere that was filled with tension as far as the China Service, if I can call it that, was concerned. There were current examples of what could happen at that time. Overall, there was a very, very negative atmosphere, given the bombast being exchanged between China and the United States. The tensions of the Quemoy-Matsu crisis and Beijing's very hard line pronouncements were countered with hard line statements of our own.

The development of the Sino-Soviet split, however, had an influence here. We began to see this ever deepening chasm between Beijing and Moscow. Some of us began to see potential opportunities which were worthy of careful examination in our national interest. There were those of us who felt that this split between Beijing and Moscow was already apparent by 1960-1961. It was really apparent, given the rhetoric that the two communist giants were slinging at each other, as of that time. Some of us were asking: “Can we profit from this situation? Can we play on this in our national interest?”

I think that I have previously related Secretary of State Dean Rusk's response to me in 1972, when I asked him about our trying to exploit the Sino-Soviet split. The account that he gave was that President Kennedy had told him: “Lay off this! Tell your people in the State Department who are inclined in this direction to back off. I've got enough problems on other scores.” So, already that early, there were those who were quietly advocating not only an intensive examination of the China situation but also its policy implications. Well, this wasn't to develop for another 10 years or so.

Q: Of course, an awful lot depended on the Chinese. An opening of a dialogue takes two sides, and China was in no position at the time really to begin such a dialogue.

BROWN: Remember that we did have a dialogue of sorts. It began in Geneva [in 1955] and then was transferred to Warsaw. For years this dialogue was rather stultifying. But eventually little signals were exchanged, and I was privileged to be involved later on in all of that.

There was a different phenomenon which I became involved in, and that was the whole Arab-Israeli business. As seen by Israel and American Jews, there was the phenomenon of the American Arabists in the State Department.

Q: Oh, yes.

BROWN: That further evolved later in my career and began to be perceived differently. There were Foreign Service Officers stationed in Arab capitals who became obsessed with inordinate Israeli or Jewish influences on policy, as they saw them. In their own view they tended to see an Israeli or American Jew behind every setback or machination hostile to the Arabs.

It was interesting to see how the wheels grind. All of us say that American interests should come first. It's interesting when you get into the interpretations. I always happened to be of the school that we should be very "firm" with Beijing and that we had to be firm with the Taiwan group, too, in defense of our national interests.

In closing these recollections of my career, I would like to pay a very special tribute to my wife in all of this. She was a tremendous pillar of support throughout my career. I met her when she was a professional, social worker, and I was an amateur social worker. That was a very important difference between us. She gave up quite a career to marry me and to put up with the rigors of the Foreign Service, as it was when we joined the Department of State in 1956.

Remember, those were still the days when CONFIDENTIAL personnel reports were prepared on Foreign Service Officers and on their wives.

Q: Oh, yes.

BROWN: That was a time when wives were expected to do a heck of a lot, for which they got no compensation. Helen was extremely active in various American community affairs overseas. She taught in Singapore, Taiwan, and India, and the same thing was true with other members of my family. I received tremendous support from all of them. From my wife I got the very best in Foreign Service terms, in the sense: "Whither thou goest, I go." I went off, if you will, on some wild assignments and had some wild times. Helen certainly went through them all with me.

I'll never forget the time when the first SCUD missiles hit Tel Aviv. I said to Helen: "Now, apart from my difficulties with Washington, I've got to get non-essentials personnel, and particularly the dependents, out of here." I told my wife: "Not only do I want you to go, Helen, but I want you to lead the other dependents out of here. Some other wives will feel the same way you do. However, you, and they, ought not to be here at this time. You ought to be in a safe place."

So, reluctantly, she went down in a bus caravan to Eilat, the Israeli port on the Gulf of Aqaba. It wasn't too long before they were back again. Some of the wives broke off and went to the United States. However, Helen returned to Tel Aviv, wore a gas mask, and did her thing during the SCUD missile attacks.

I owe her a tremendous debt for my success in the Foreign Service. We were really a pair throughout the whole venture.

Q: Well, Bill, we're now in our 42nd hour of this interview. I want to thank you very much. It has been very illuminating and fun.

BROWN: Yes, it has been.

Q: Let's add this addendum right now. You want to talk about...

BROWN: I would just like to touch, very briefly, and not in a very organized manner, on what I would call presidential diplomacy. Here we were, as Foreign Service Officers, steeped in the craft of diplomacy. Every so often we were involved in, or witnessed, a major case of what I would call presidential diplomacy.

For example, the President makes a trip abroad. The President meets abroad, or receives in the U.S., umpteen foreign dignitaries during his or her tenure in office. In my own situation I bear in mind a couple of episodes in particular.

One was the visit of President Nixon to New Delhi in July, 1969. I don't recall whether I've mentioned this, but a group of us were summoned one day to the office of the DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission]. He was Charge d'Affaires at the time. There appeared a gentleman whom we had never seen named Ronald Walker. He was introduced as "White House Advance Man for a Presidential Visit." Walker said, "Ladies and gentlemen, I don't know your rank, and I don't care what it is. You are a select group that has been cited to me as the most can do people in this Embassy. The President is going to come here, and I'll tell you what our task is. We're going to turn this town on." That's the way he began.

He named me "Motorcade Officer." You might think that a motorcade officer is just another ho hum job. It turned out that the motorcade or the motorcades in a presidential visit are rather important. You deal with itineraries, you have security concerns, you look up precedents, you get the precedence of those who accompany the President internally.

That is, the President's entourage. You help negotiate where the ambassador and others fit on this, where the officials of the host government fit in all of this. You deal with a tremendous amount of jockeying around on various fronts as to what the itineraries and stops are going to be, and so forth. So, for me, it was a wonderful, educational experience to see Walker set up the motorcades for this Presidential visit, which was to take place during the hottest time of year. It was unprecedented. State leaders just didn't visit New Delhi in July, because it was so damned hot and uncomfortable. However, this was part of a worldwide trip by President Nixon, it took place in July.

It was a great education for me. It was to become of immediate use when, shortly thereafter, it was decided on high that members of the crew of APOLLO XI, including Neil Armstrong, Aldrich and Michael Collins, would come to India. It was decided in Washington that they would come to Bombay, not New Delhi, because, after all, Nixon had already visited New Delhi. So we were instructed to inform the Indians that a) the APOLLO team was coming to India as a great gift, and b) it wouldn't be a visit to New Delhi; it would be a visit to Bombay. I was appointed the Control Officer for this visit. Thank goodness that I had had previous experience with Ron Walker.

Jumping now many years later, Ambassador Sam Lewis could tell you all about President Carter's visits. I've recounted how I went out with Michael Deaver on two different trips to prepare for President Reagan's visits to Asia in late 1983 and early 1984. When you get on a plane with a guy like Deaver and an entourage like this...

Q: You said 1993. You mean 1983.

BROWN: Yes, 1983. The summer of 1983. As I say, when you get on a plane with a guy like Michael Deaver, you come to realize, as a Foreign Service Officer, that the name of the game, first, last, and always, is to make the President of the United States look good. That is the object of this diplomatic exercise, whatever you may want to call it. The State Department and other government agencies are sort of in the category of an afterthought.

Someone in the White House may say, all right, bring along a State Department guy like Bill Brown, as you're setting this thing up, to make sure that you don't trip over yourself. However, just remember that, throughout it all, and particularly if the visit has its delicate aspects, this is a Presidential visit, and the President has to emerge victorious and confident in terms of his image. The same thing goes for the First Lady. Essentially, to take this to its extreme, all other considerations can easily be swept aside. That consideration can lead you into very interesting byways.

Having done this before, I felt that I was on my own. I mean that I went out, after being told by Larry Eagleburger [Deputy Secretary of State] to get on the plane and go. In other words, I was to use my best judgment, and that was it.

There were some problems which came up in second flight during which we were preparing a Presidential visit to Asia. After the Aquino assassination it had been decided

that the President would not visit Manila. My objections notwithstanding, it had also been decided that he would also not visit Jakarta, Indonesia, or Bangkok, Thailand, either. We had gone first to Jakarta to explain why the President couldn't visit southeast Asia because of the press of congressional affairs. We were now flying to Manila, in the Philippines to do the same. I placed a call on a secure phone to the DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] in Manila, just to touch base with him. I was immediately approached by one of Michael Deaver's sidekicks and asked to explain why I had taken it upon myself to call the DCM in Manila. He said that this decision was not mine to make. I said that this had nothing to do with the substantive program. I just wanted to touch base with the DCM. I was told in no uncertain terms that, henceforth, all phone calls would be cleared by this person, who worked for Michael Deaver. He displayed extreme sensitivity about a Foreign Service Officer getting in the way or playing any game.

Let's take the other side of the spectrum. It now appears that during the SECRET visit by Henry Kissinger to China, via Pakistan, that a U.S. Navy communicator or a Navy Petty Officer, was taping, swiping, and bugging the various memoranda about the trip and running them on his own to CINCPAC [Commander in Chief, Pacific] and the U.S. Navy. You get into all kinds of games within games within games. However, the requirements of the White House, over the years, have, if anything, increased, as far as the demands for staging one of the greatest shows on earth. I recall the shock felt by Art Hummel [ambassador to China at the time] when I told him to prepare for a visit by President Reagan involving 800 people and 13 Boeing 707 aircraft. Imagine, 13 aircraft! He was absolutely shocked. I felt it professionally incumbent on me to warn him that this is what was going to happen. And it DID happen! And more than that! These pressures certainly haven't diminished since the time of President Ronald Reagan. On the contrary, I think that the demands and requirements in connection with a Presidential visit have gone up.

It got so bad in the case of Israel, after my time there as ambassador, that I can remember Chaim Herzog, the former President of Israel, writing to the effect that the Israelis were appalled by the demands of the White House that the main highway from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem should be totally closed for hours! This was to accommodate the travel by President Clinton from Ben Gurion International Airport up to Jerusalem. We also insisted on our own helicopters to monitor his flight.

I recall occasions when I learned from a Thai that a Presidential Advance Security Team had demanded to go through the Thai Prime Minister's office with special dogs to check the place out, in anticipation of the possibility of a presidential visit. So you get into some very strange aspects here which require extreme sensitivity and a good "nose" for possible scandal. It also requires judgment and, on occasion, guts, to step in and say, "Don't do this," or "You ought not to do that," or "You ought to think about this."

You may run into cases where you may think of something daring. I think that I mentioned the case when I persuaded Michael Deaver to listen to a USIS [United States Information Service] officer, in connection with a Reagan trip. In fact, the PAO [Public

Affairs Officer], recommended that, when President Reagan visited Tokyo, he should go down to visit Hiroshima. That visit was not to be, as I predicted. The Charge d'Affaires at the time was adamantly opposed to such a visit. However, I felt that it was incumbent upon me to let Michael Deaver hear an argument in favor of this visit. The argument was that such a side visit would have made a tremendous impression on the Japanese intelligentsia, or the political elite. Of course, there was risk involved in all of this as well. These are things that are worthy of attention.

You've heard Ambassador Chas. Freeman go into his version of Presidential diplomacy during the 1972 visit of President Nixon to China. You've heard Ambassador Sam Lewis recount aspects of Presidential diplomacy as he saw it, in the Middle East. This is a subject which deserves a special niche, a special category in this oral history program.

Q: Very good. Thank you.

BROWN: Yes.

[Addendum: I add this portion as an example of the use of retired Foreign Service Officers in special situations and of the rough and tumble that one can experience as one copes with a bitterly divided Congress, a partisan White House and a State Department, portions of which are trusted by neither of the other two.

In late April of 2002 Elliot Abrams, then on the domestic policy side of the NSC and later Middle East advisor, phoned to ask that I lead a small team to China to review and report on the activities of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) program in China. This would help the Bush Administration determine whether the USG should continue to provide funds to UNFPA family planning programs elsewhere in the world consistent with the 1985 Kemp-Kasten Amendment which prohibited funding of “any organization or program which, as determined by the President of the United States, supports or participates in the management of a program of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization.” As Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs (1983-1985), I had been involved in developments which led first to the Reagan Administration's cutoff of funding for UNFPA's China program and later to all funding for UNFPA. In fact, once during the earlier phase, after a conversation with AID Administrator McPherson who told me of an ultimatum delivered by Senator Jesse Helms, I had convoked the PRC Ambassador to tell him that in an effort to save overall funding for UNFPA programs elsewhere we were cutting off funding for UNFPA programs in China under Reagan's so called “Mexico City” policy. Aware of the very deep domestic political (including of course Congressional) divisions over abortion issues, I figured that such a mission to China in 2002 would be a non-win proposition, but Elliot Abrams assured me that what the White House wanted was an objective, professional assessment and would then let the chips fall where they may. In this connection, he noted that recently a team of British MPs including one Catholic Conservative member, Edward Leigh, who had been hitherto very critical of China's population programs, had recently given the UNFPA effort in China a clean bill of health, and if that turned out to be the case with our team, then so be it. So I

agreed to go. The other two members of the team were Bonnie Glick, a former FSO and mother of two children who had worked at the White House (and who knew Abrams' colleague at the NSC, Jay Lefkowitz), and Dr. Theodore Tong, Associate Dean and Professor of Public health at the University of Arizona, a California born Chinese-American who spoke some Cantonese but no Mandarin. Neither Bonnie nor Ted had ever visited China.

Some more background: In 1993 President Clinton had removed Reagan's administrative ban on funding for UNFPA, but President Bush had reimposed it. Congress appropriated up to \$34 million in 2001 but President Bush froze those funds following charges by PRI, an anti-abortion advocacy group and a bitter opponent of UNFPA) that UNFPA funds were being used for coercive population control programs in China, and urging by Representative Christopher H. Smith (Republican New Jersey) and 54 other members of Congress that President Bush to withdraw all funding for UNFPA In the ensuing uproar the White House agreed to send a fact finding mission to China. So now the time had come.

Having been severely criticized by abortion opponents, the State Department did its best to avoid any appearance of influencing our team and arranged an intensive program of meetings with those representing both sides of the issue. We met with Madame UNFPA Executive Director Thoraya Obaid (a Saudi lady), PRI President Stephen Mosher, Congressman Christopher H. Smith and a variety of Congressional staff members some of whom reflected the bitterness of the debate and were anything but courteous to us. This is a phenomenon that pervades the Congress; in their rough and tumble existence the staff members are often out ahead of their principals and at times can be downright rude if they perceive an interlocutor to be part of a State Department or even a White House exercise. In this particular case there were some who viewed the whole exercise of a team assessment in China as a pro (or anti)-UNFPA charade. Indeed, Congressman Smith warned us against being duped by Chinese hospitality, briefings, guided tours, etc. Similar dire warnings also appeared in the press. Meanwhile, the Department had Embassy Beijing extract Chinese agreement that we would use our own interpreter, set our own program and give the PRC no more than 24 hours notice of each portion of our itinerary, which was to cover some five disparate counties of the 32 counties in which UNFPA had a program. For our part, we stayed away from the press, digested a great deal of briefing material by the State Department and some other material as well: in addition to the June 10, 1998 hearing before the House Subcommittee on International Relations with its shocking testimony by a defector, Ms. Gao Xiao Duan, of Fujian Province, a former PRC population control officer, I had come across a very valuable study entitled Chinese State Birth Planning in the 1990s and Beyond published in September 2001 by Susan Greenhalgh, Professor of Anthropology, University of California and Edwin Winckler, Research Associate of the East Asian Institute, Columbia University for use by Immigration and Naturalization Service officers who are faced with requests for asylum by Chinese women, many from Fujian Province, on the grounds that they were subjected to coercive abortion. We also got to know each other and found that although our backgrounds varied (and I was much older than the other two), we were compatible and

dedicated to providing an honest, objective assessment and set of recommendations. Moreover, we were happy to have accompany us a career FSO from PRM/POP, C. Jess who carefully maintained neutrality on the issues and offered valuable administrative assistance.

On arrival in Beijing we were booked by the Embassy in the posh St. Regis Hotel (The management upgraded me to an executive suite outside of which stood a beautiful young lady in a tuxedo who informed me that she was there to take care of my needs. I said to myself, "Here we go; if only Congressman Smith were here to witness this!") After a courtesy call on Ambassador Randt (a Yale classmate of President Bush), we met with the head of UNFPA's Beijing Office, Seri Tellier, a Danish lady who gave us a Powerpoint presentation and answered our questions. What struck us at the time was how thinly spread UNFPA Beijing was spread. It was a small office covering programs other than family planning spread across a large geographic area which meant that its ability to monitor meaningfully was limited. Moreover, its independent auditor was actually a branch of the PRC Government notwithstanding that reputable U.S. and other private audit firms were available. Its small staff included several PRC nationals. Predictably, it had a UN "engagement mentality" i.e., notwithstanding the PRC's past draconian coercive population control campaigns, this school of thought argues that it is better to engage and thereby nudge the PRC toward a more liberalized approach rather than close down and pull out. True, UNFPA had negotiated with the PRC Government a joint program for 32 counties where flyers in Chinese proclaimed that the two sides would "work together to ensure" that there be no engagement "in any form of coercion" and they would work to "abolish birth quotas and targets." Moreover, UNFPA cited statistics to show that since the implementation of the program the rates of abortions in these 32 model countries had significantly declined. On the other hand, once the joint program had begun, the PRC had passed on 12/29/01 a national law which contained coercive provisions and Thoraya Obaid's remonstrance was noticeably weak.

We then met with Minister Zhang Weiqing, Chairman of what the PRC called in English the State Family Planning Commission (SFPC) but which in Chinese is The State Birth Planning Commission. (I found it truly remarkable that FBIS and all elements of the USG, let alone the UN, were using the SFPC designation when in fact there was no reference in the Chinese texts to "family planning" which is, of course much more politically correct and acceptable in the West.). The Commission members were a suave, sophisticated, well educated group highly experienced in handling Western critics. We were told we (or indeed Representative Christopher Smith and PRI President Stephen Mosher) could visit anywhere anytime, that our frank criticism would be welcome, that UNFPA's inputs and influence had been invaluable, that there had been coercive programs and practices but that these had now been corrected and violations would be punished. When I asked why, if success was now being achieved, could there not be further immediate loosening Zhang replied that the risk was too great that rapid liberalization would lead to another population explosion - a line faithfully echoed down the line in all five counties we visited.

The county visits highlighted the fact that the Communist Party and State apparatus had budgeted significant money to foster a better image for population programs that had been very draconian through 1997-1998. For an old hand such as myself it was interesting to see not only the new imagery but also remnants of the old, including tough wall slogans proclaiming a one child policy. Also interesting was the material progress that had been achieved in the countryside, but also the great gap remaining between the countryside and the cities, which accounts for the huge population of migrant workers seeking urban work (and which constitutes a big challenge for population control). Returning in Beijing, I kept my sightseeing to one visit to the temple complex commemorating the 13th century hero Wen T'ien Hsiang, and drafted as much as I could with the goal of finishing the job quickly so as to minimize the inevitable dissent it would create in Washington. We found that:

- 1) UNFPA had not knowingly supported or participated in the management of a program of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization in China and therefore recommended that up to \$34 million be released to UNFPA for use elsewhere in the world
- 2) there remained ample evidence of coercion in PRC law and practice and therefore recommended that unless and until that coercion ceased no USG funds be appropriated for support of Chinese population programs and
- 3) China's population policy was of major concern to U.S. national interest and therefore recommended that more resources be devoted to this area.

So sensitive were the White House and State Department to possible criticism that they had influenced our assessment that we finished our drafting on the premises of the George Washington University Law Faculty. We then presented our findings and recommendations to Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage. Having agreed that we would stick with our findings and recommendations and that we would not see the press, we parted company and waited for the fun to begin.

We did not have to wait long. Soon I was invited to the White House by Jay Lefkowitz and Elliot Abrams who praised our work and all the new material we had gathered, but suggested that there was a tension between our findings that coercion continues in Chinese population law and practice but that UNFPA does not knowingly support or participate in the management of a program of coercive abortion or forced sterilization. In particular, Lefkowitz said that years ago a judge had ruled that knowingly was immaterial in this situation, to which I replied that neither the State Department nor the White House had so informed us before our trip. (I later learned that an appeals court had overruled the lower court on this issue.) Lefkowitz wondered whether we might consider redrafting portions of our assessment, to which I replied in the negative. Later we had a group session at the State Department with Lefkowitz, Abrams and several lawyers from the White House and State Department and we declined to change our findings and recommendations. Although we continued to avoid the press, our material was leaked and under pressure the Administration announced that it was cutting off all funding for

UNFPA after a legal finding that UNFPA, whatever its good intentions, had in fact supported/participated in the management in a Chinese program of coercive abortion/forced sterilization. Instead, the money would go via AID to other worthy projects for women and children.

Although pro-UNFPA advocates were angry, their arguments were undercut by the presentation which Bonnie Glick and I made before “informal” sessions attended by congressional members and their staffs where we cited the coercive portions of the PRC law of 12/29/01, two visa cases in which Chinese population officials admitted that they had been involved in coercive abortion, as well as a good amount of other material e.g., the flow of UNFPA's funds through and to PRC population organizations, UNFPA's monitoring and auditing practice and the weakness of Thoraya Obaid's remonstrance to Zhang Weiqing on the passage of the 12/29/01 Population Law. Meanwhile, the Administration skillfully used our material to defend its decision to override our recommendation to provide funding for UNFPA. Given the fact that so much of President Bush's political constituency consists of vehement anti-abortion advocates, we were not surprised.

From a professional FSO viewpoint, we had cast new light on Chinese population law and practice as well as the workings of UNFPA. Hopefully others in the State Department and the field as well as members of Congress and their staffs will profit thereby.

End of interview