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AMBASSADOR RICHARD TOWNSEND DAVIES

Interviewed by: Peter Jessup
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INTERVIEW

PREFACE

The following memoir is the result of interviews with Mr. Richard Davies conducted by Mr. Peter Jessup for the Columbia University Oral History Research Office. The interviews took place in Washington, DC, on November 9, 1979 through December 11, 1980.

Mr. Davies has reviewed the transcripts and made minor corrections and emendations. The reader should bear in mind that he or she is reading a transcript of the spoken rather than written word.

Q: Good evening. This is Ambassador Richard Townsend Davies and Peter Jessup from Columbia.

DAVIES: I entered the Foreign Service in 1947. I graduated from Columbia College in 1942, and went immediately into the Army. During my three and a half years in the Army I served with a Civil Affairs Military Government team that was stationed first in Belgium, then in Holland, and then as the American forces got into Germany we were in Germany, in a small city north of Aachen, between Aachen and Maastricht in Holland. And then later, in 1945, we were sent down South to a place near Kassel.

While we were not far from Maastricht we had a group of Ukrainian DPs - Displaced Persons - who were concentrated in a small village which lay within our jurisdiction, and I was put in charge of this group. They were about 50 or 60 people who had been brought by the Germans from the Ukraine to work on farms in the western part of Germany. And now that the war was drawing to its close these people had fled from the farms on which they were working, and in effect sought refuge with the Americans.

Not too long after we set up this little camp for the Displaced Persons we received a message from Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force that a Soviet repatriation mission was coming, and the message warned us not to tell the people in the camp that they were coming, but they said that this should be kept confidential. But we knew, having talked to these people in a mixture of German and a few words they had of English - words like radio and telephone - we knew how much they hated the Soviet regime. They said that they would rather die than be sent back there.

So my colleagues - my comrades-in-arms who were with me - and I felt we couldn't conceal this fact from them, and I suppose that was not a bad thing.

Q: You were in military uniform?

DAVIES: We were in military uniform. We had orders not to tell them, but we did. I forget how we got the word across to them. We didn't tell them in so many words that a Soviet repatriation mission was coming, but we said, "Well, you must all be here tomorrow." It was the custom for these people to go off and scavenge in the countryside. There was little food to be had in the spring of 1945, and they would go off and try to find some potatoes or something to feed themselves, and we said, "No, you must all stay here tomorrow, because...well, you'll all have to be here." We didn't...as I remember...I don't know, maybe some of the others were more straightforward, but I tried not to violate the letter of the order, although I certainly was not interested in observing the spirit of it, with the result that they all decamped. Maybe some of the other enlisted men there with me were less subtle, but in any case they all left, and the next morning, when a Soviet lieutenant colonel and about 20 heavily armed Soviet soldiers arrived, none of the Ukrainians were left, and they were pretty disturbed and angry at having made the trip for nothing.

We received a reprimand, I remember, from SHAEF several weeks later, implying that we had been at fault here - and I think the implication was justified - but at any rate I never felt any qualms of conscience about this incident. Nevertheless I mention it here to give some background. It was the first time I had ever been in contact with people who had lived in the Soviet Union, and these people were violent in their criticisms of the system, and as I say...

Q: Now would you say that they were Ukrainian separatists or just simple people who lived under the system?

DAVIES: No, I don't think they were separatists. I think they were just... They were peasants, they complained of course about collectivization, and they said that they had really been very pleased when the German Armies came and the collective farms were disbanded. They said, well, the Germans really were not too much better than the Soviet power.

In any case, when the opportunity arose, and while it was not completely voluntary apparently there was some form of volunteering involved, they did not try to avoid going to Germany. They received a certain small payment for work on German farms, and then it depended very much on the farmer, and most of them said the farmers with whom they had worked were pretty decent people, and had treated them fairly well. So they felt they were well off.

Q: Now was this policy established at Yalta? Or what dictated this return of...

DAVIES: There have been now several books written on the subject. I don't know that we have released our files. For many years, while I was in the State Department, we kept getting demands, letters, requests, for release of the files on what has come to be called OPERATION KEELHAUL, which involved the forcible repatriation, or at any rate our permitting the Soviets to repatriate forcibly Soviet citizens in Germany, and we never released them - we never released those files. Now I suppose under the Freedom of

Information Act they have been released. There has been at least one book written by a British scholar about the British experience.

I don't know whether this was agreed upon at Yalta. I think probably there was some form of agreement that each side would help the other, or would cooperate with the other in ensuring that its nationals were promptly repatriated, which some people on our side at any rate must have regarded as a very reasonable kind of thing to agree to. Presumably if there were Soviet citizens in Germany, when the war ended I can imagine our people - some of our people - would have felt, well, I want very much to go home.

Q: I remember General Lucian Truscott saying that one of his most unpleasant tasks in his life was shipping back General Vlasov and his contingents.

DAVIES: Right, right. Of course that was something the Soviets had asked for specifically - they'd asked for Vlasov back - but this was very much a worm's-eye view I had of the operation as an enlisted man, as a non-commissioned officer.

Q: Do you think that your small Ukrainian Displaced Persons' group was much luckier than others in filtering into the countryside, and that others in other areas were out of luck in that respect?

DAVIES: I suppose so, because I think... We were on the Dutch border, and I feel pretty sure that there were discussions among us, the Americans that were in charge and the Ukrainians, about Holland and Belgium. They knew where they were, and I think most of them rapidly went West, because so long as they remained in Germany they knew that they were likely to be the object of attention by the Soviet repatriation missions, or they would have known it after this episode at any rate.

So I don't know, I have no idea what happened to them after that. We left not too long after that episode for the South. We went down to a place near Kassel, and I stayed there until the end of 1945, when I came back to the United States.

I went back to Columbia then, and took some graduate courses with Franz Neumann, a professor of German history - well, government actually - at Columbia, and Herbert Marcuse, who was teaching there then. Actually he was kind of helping Franz Neumann, and later when Franz Neumann was killed in Switzerland in an automobile accident his widow married Herbert Marcuse. They were very close friends.

Q: I didn't know that.

DAVIES: Yes. Then I took the Foreign Service exams in the fall of 1946, and was appointed in 1947, and came down to Washington in May, and took the oath on my 27th birthday, so that's how I remember it. And I was sent to the Foreign Service Institute for the basic officer course, which lasted it seems to me six weeks or two months in those days, at the end of which I was assigned to Warsaw. We had a kind of post-preference form that we

filled out early in the course, and I had put down, as I remember, Buenos Aires - I knew a little Spanish then, I've forgotten most of it since - Hamburg, and...I can't remember now, I think it was Madrid. But since I had put those three posts down I was sent to Warsaw. Naturally since I knew no Polish, but knowing German they said, well, in Central Europe if you know German, you go to Warsaw.

So I spent a little while on the desk. Burke Elbrick was the desk officer then - and reading the files, and then went to Warsaw in September. I got to Warsaw in September. I went over on the Polish liner Batory, which was a very nice introduction, if a somewhat bibulous introduction to Poland. We floated over on a sea of vodka as it were, with Captain Jan Cwiklinski, who later defected after the Gerhard Eisler case...

Q: Who went on the Batory, too.

DAVIES: Who went on the Batory without the Captain's having been informed. Actually he didn't leave the ship immediately after that, but some time after that he left the ship, and he defected in England, he and his chief engineer Jan Hermann, both of whom we got to know on that trip over.

Then Captain Cwiklinski came to this country - I don't really know what happened to Jan Hermann - and eventually ended up owning an ice cream parlor in Newark, and died some years ago in Newark. He was a very fine man; he had the reputation of having a wife in every port, and I can well believe it - he was a man of great charm and infinite capacity for work.

Q: Like in that Alec Guinness...(movie, The Captain's Paradise).

DAVIES: Yes, kind of. (He had) an infinite capacity for every variety of strong spirit, including and particularly vodka.

So it was a good introduction.

On the ship too were Casey (Casimir) Zawadzki, who was our Consul in Krakow in Southern Poland, or had been before he went on home leave. He was on his way back to Poland after home leave - he was a Polish-American, and he is now dead - and Al Kowalski, another Polish-American who was going over as security officer in the Embassy. Al is also dead. He and I had a cabin together and we were very close friends.

Q: You didn't take dependents?

DAVIES: Well, I was unmarried, I was a bachelor, and Al's wife and children were coming later. Casey Zawadzki was divorced - his wife Eugenia was as well-known a fixture in the Foreign Service as he himself. She was for many years the publications-procurement officer in Berlin. He had served in Germany before the war, and was what we call a non-career Vice Consul, and Eugenia - his divorced wife - for many years after the war was

very active in Berlin, buying books and maps and things, particularly from the Eastern bloc: she knew most of those languages.

Q: Would it be inappropriate for me to ask at this time your opinion of assigning Polish-Americans to Poland? Is that an advantage or a disadvantage?

DAVIES: I think there are things to be said on either side. It is an advantage with the languages, provided the individual does know Polish well. Many Polish-Americans don't; they don't have a literary knowledge of the language. Casey Zawadzki did, and he was an excellent choice for this post.

Other Polish-Americans who served in the Embassy in Warsaw in those years, and some who have served there since, were excellent choices, because they know the language very well, and do not give people in Poland the impression that they are illiterate in Polish. It's no good sending somebody there who is illiterate in Polish or whose Polish is heavily dialectal or broken.

On the other hand, there is an attitude - which I think is not confined to Poles - of, well, yes, it's very fine to send somebody who speaks our language, but we think the United States ought to be represented by a "real American." And it's hard to argue with people who represent that point of view that a Polish-American is just as real an American as anybody else, as everybody in this country, with the exception of the American Indian, is some sort of hyphenated American, however far back the hyphenation began, and Polish-Americans can be just as good as anybody else.

John Gronouski...

Q: A former Postmaster General?

DAVIES: A former Postmaster General, was appointed Ambassador to Poland by President Johnson.

Q: I thought it was Kennedy who did.

DAVIES: No, it was Johnson. Kennedy may have appointed him Postmaster General.

Q: I see.

DAVIES: I think that was the case, but then after Lyndon Johnson had been elected in his own right he wanted to give a job to Larry O'Brien - Lawrence O'Brien - who had managed his campaign, and the job that seemed sort of the traditional one was Postmaster General, and he wanted to appoint Larry O'Brien Postmaster General. John Gronouski was occupying the position.

Q: I see.

DAVIES: A great deal had been made of the fact that John Gronouski was the highest ranking Polish-American in the Government, and that this was the highest position to which a Polish-American had ever been appointed, which was accurate. Consequently there was a political problem: what do you do? If you want to appoint Larry O'Brien Postmaster General, what do you do with John Gronouski?

John Gronouski was a protégé of Hubert Humphrey, and I think he was a strong Kennedy supporter too - he came from Minnesota - and consequently Lyndon Johnson hit upon the idea of sending him to Warsaw as Ambassador. John Gronouski had never had any ambition to become an Ambassador. He found himself somewhat in the same position as the famous James J. Curley, the Mayor of Boston whom Franklin Roosevelt wanted to get out of the country because of an air of scandal that surrounded Mayor Curley, and consequently he offered him the Embassy in Warsaw, and the people up in Boston said, well, that would be great because Mayor Curley of course had been accused of being involved in construction scandals and road scandals, and they said it would be great to have Jim Curley there because he can pave the Polish corridor.

Well, Franklin Roosevelt called him down to Washington and said, "Jim, this is a great job, you'll love it, it's terrific, nice house, people are great, and this and that," and he went on at great length, and finally Mayor Curley said, "Frank, if the job is so great why the hell don't you resign and take it yourself?"

Well, he was never confirmed by the Senate (because of) the scandals.

Of course there is no parallel, but I think John Gronouski when Lyndon Johnson put his arm around his shoulder and told him how he was going to love being Ambassador to Poland may have felt a little bit the way Mayor Curley felt on that earlier occasion. He really hadn't asked for the job.

In any case he bowed to the situation and went. He was given a great send-off. President Johnson swore him in in the Rose Garden - or attended the swearing-in that was held in the Rose Garden - and the leaders of the Polish-American community were invited to witness this, and President Johnson said, "Now look, I am not just sending John Gronouski over there as Ambassador to Poland. It's not just that. He is going to be my Ambassador to Eastern Europe as a whole," which caused a good deal of consternation among the American Ambassadors in Prague, Budapest, Belgrade and...

However...I have gotten way ahead of my story - John Gronouski, whom I knew quite well as a result of the fact that I knew his assistant, Walter Zachariasiwicz, which I won't even bother to spell, a very fine Polish-American. John Gronouski didn't speak any Polish. He came from a family from Western Poland, and like so many families in Western Poland they were sort of half-German and half-Polish, and he said the only foreign language spoken in his house when he was growing up was by his grandmother, and she spoke German, and he never really heard Polish spoken and had never had an opportunity to learn

it. So I think there was some disappointment among people in Warsaw. He went there at a very difficult time. Relations were not good in the declining years of Mr. Gomulka's tenure as Secretary General of the Party. And he didn't speak Polish, so he didn't have that, if you like, advantage - and I think it would have been an advantage - and people there were a bit...they really didn't know what to make of this. He was an American politician, a very shrewd and intelligent man in my opinion, but with no background at all, and a bit, I would say, at sea, as a result of that.

Well, so I think it depends. As is the case with a good many questions, is it a good idea to send Polish-Americans, it depends on which Polish-American you have in mind. If the individual knows Poland, if he - or she - has maintained those ties and knows what the political situation is and what the recent history is, by all means. It could be very good. But there are some doubts on the Polish side, and I don't mean on the part of Communist officials. But on the part of those whom I would call our friends - that is non-Communist Poles in Poland - who expect people in the Embassy to know the country and to be sympathetic on the basis of a knowledge of the country, not just sort of sympathetic in general, but aware of what the problems and the issues are.

So when I got to Warsaw in 1947 the Ambassador Arthur Bliss Lane had left in March, earlier in the year. I got there in September. Stanton Griffis, the author of that great memoir - at least the title is great - Lying in State, was Ambassador.

Q: He was that motion-picture producer.

DAVIES: That's right. Well, he was a big stockholder in I think Paramount. He owned Brentano's bookstores, and was a very wealthy man whose qualifications for the job were, minimal, and who I think felt very frustrated. He did not stay very long, he felt that there was nothing for him to do, and he was just about right, in that situation that existed there.

Q: He had other ambassadorial posts, too.

DAVIES: Yes, he went from there to Cairo, as I remember it now, from Cairo to Madrid - I think - and then I think his last ambassadorial post was in Buenos Aires, so he held four. He had four Embassies. He was a man of parts, there is no doubt about it, a remarkable man in many ways, but he found very frustrating the situation in Warsaw, where after the election of January 1947 relations had gotten very bad, and then of course there was the plan to...the invitation to the Polish and other Eastern European governments, including the Soviet Government, to attend the Marshall Plan Conference in Paris, and on the very day that he presented his credentials as Ambassador, the Polish Foreign Minister informed him that contrary to what the Polish Foreign Ministry had been saying up to that point they were not after all going to be able to come to the conference in Paris. Obviously they had gotten the word from Moscow. So Stanton Griffis in his book wrote, as I remember, that he and the Iron Curtain had descended simultaneously on Poland, and that was about right: there was nothing for him to do, he felt terribly frustrated. He was a man of considerable energy, and he consequently devoted himself to trying to get constructed facilities to take care of

the personnel, but at the same time I feel sure - in fact I think he writes this in his book - that he began to ask people in Washington if there weren't a more active post for him, and eventually they transferred him to Cairo.

Well, I spent two and a quarter years in Warsaw. My wife - my present wife, my only wife (laughs) was working there as a secretary in the United States Information Service office, and we were married in December of 1949, just before we left, and then came back to Washington. I had applied for Russian language-and-area training, and I went back up to Columbia for an academic year at the Russian Institute and studied Russian.

Q: Was that a more competent place than taking it at FSI at that time?

DAVIES: The way it worked was this: we came back in December, and had a month or so home leave, and then came back to Washington and spent most of February, March, April, May and part of June studying Russian at the Foreign Service Institute. Malcolm Toon, the man who's just left Moscow - left the Embassy, the ambassadorship in Moscow - and I and a number of other Foreign Service Officers were assigned to this course.

The Foreign Service Institute in those days had a program which had been developed by Henry Lee Smith.

Q: Oh, I remember him.

DAVIES: Haxie Smith, who is now up at Syracuse, or I think he is.

Henry Lee Smith I remember very well, because before the war he taught at Barnard, and his specialty was American dialectology, and he had a program on WOR under the title called Where Are You From, or something like that, and somebody whom he had never met before, never seen before, would be introduced to him, and after asking that person to pronounce certain words and sentences, he could identify the place where that individual had been born and brought up or educated very accurately.

Q: He ought to have a program like that now.

DAVIES: It would be much more difficult.

Q: Wouldn't he say, "You were probably born in West Virginia, but moved to New Jersey"?

DAVIES: Well, he would do that, he did that actually. He would say, "It sounds to me as though you come from this place, but then you must have moved because of this, and then you had your education in a third place." He was really remarkable. But he knew no foreign language. However, during the war he had gotten in the Army and was in charge of an outfit that put together Army textbooks on foreign languages for soldiers. And after the war he went to the Foreign Service Institute and began their language program, and his principle was, "You must start speaking the language, it's all done by conversation," and you learned

by rote certain sentences. Never mind what they meant, but you learned them by rote, and you didn't try to study grammar, you didn't even learn to read the language if it were written in a different alphabet like Russian, for example - you didn't learn to read the Cyrillic alphabet, but you learned to read a transliteration, which seemed to me like a wasted step, because the Cyrillic alphabet is quite phonetic and accurate, and it takes you maybe a day to learn it, and once you've got it you don't have to learn that transcription, you know.

In any case Mac Toon and I got into some difficulty with Frank Snowden Hopkins, who then ran the Foreign Service Institute, and with Henry Smith, because we said, well, why can't we study the grammar? And they said, no, this was against the doctrine, you can't study the grammar, and you can't ask questions about grammar, grammar is irrelevant.

And we said, well, you know, grammar is kind of a shortcut to learning, if you are an educated person and you know one foreign language it may help you.

"No, no, no, you must learn these sentences."

Well, we learned the sentences by heart in a month. Then we had to spend four more months there just repeating them, and that was all they would let us do, so Mac and I got some grammars and we studied at night, and then in the summer we were sent to the Middlebury College Summer Language School (in Middlebury, Vermont), which was excellent, very good. About five or six of us went there - Mac Toon, Bob Owen, who was a Foreign Service Officer, Culver Gleysteen, who is now retired from the Service, his brother is Ambassador in Seoul, South Korea, now, and several others - and when we arrived there they sat us down and gave us dictation in Russian.

Well, Mac and I were the only two who could do this, because the others hadn't learned the alphabet.

They then had us sight-translate from a story of Pushkin's, "The Captain's Daughter," and the others couldn't read it, because they hadn't been permitted to study the Cyrillic alphabet.

So we were put in the advanced class, and the others were all put in the beginner's class, and this made the Foreign Service Institute very unhappy. They said this was too highly structured, and they didn't understand the method and so forth.

They may have sent another class there the next year, I don't remember, but at any rate they were very unhappy with Middlebury because they had this traditional method of teaching Russian.

In any case we spent a very pleasant summer there.

Then we were sent either to Columbia, to the Russian Institute at Columbia, or to the Harvard Russian Research Center, I am not quite sure what it's called. Mac went to Harvard;

he lived in Medford - his home was in Medford, Mass. - and I was very happy to go to Columbia, with two or three others, Bob Owen and... I can't remember who the others were.

In any case, then we continued to study the language, but we also took the area studies, and that was the big advantage of Columbia: they didn't have anything at all comparable at the Foreign Service Institute. And we had very good people, like Philip Mosely, Geroid Robinson, Abram Bergson, and - what was his first name - Professor Ernest Simmons, who was an expert on Soviet literature. It was a very good course.

After a year there we were sent to Moscow, and arrived in Moscow in the fall of 1951.

Q: Who was Ambassador then?

DAVIES: Alan Kirk.

Q: Oh, yes, the Admiral.

DAVIES: Admiral Alan Kirk - Alan G. Kirk - who I guess after that went to Brussels as Ambassador. A very fine naval officer with very close connections to the Chapin family. His wife, Lydia Chapin Kirk, who subsequently wrote a book called Letters from Moscow, is - I believe she is still alive - a Chapin, related to the Chapin family, which has given so many people to the Foreign Service - Selden Chapin, Vinton Chapin. Selden Chapin was Minister in Hungary, and...I can't remember, but there is a younger Chapin in the Service today. It was a family that sort of alternated back and forth between the Navy and the Foreign Service.

Alan Kirk was there until the end of 1951, and then - I can't remember the dates exactly - he left shortly thereafter, and George Kennan we were told was coming, and of course that excited all the younger officers in the Embassy a great deal because George Kennan was very much our idol. He had published his famous Mister X article on the sources of Soviet conduct in the middle of 1947 in Foreign Affairs, and almost immediately thereafter everybody knew who had written it. After his service on the Policy Planning Council in the State Department he had gone up to Princeton. In fact I think he was at Princeton up until shortly before he was appointed. He had been active in initiating or in proposing the initiation of the Free Europe Committee and the Radio Liberation Committee.

But we were terribly excited to hear that he was coming. He was the person on whom most of the younger officers, I think - certainly those in Soviet studies - modeled themselves.

Mac Toon and I in particular were quite interested because in the fall of '51 the Foreign Service Journal had announced an essay contest for the most - I can't remember, I think they said original and imaginative and best essay on new departures in American foreign policy, and the whole idea of this was obviously based upon the concept - George Kennan had written this epoch-making article which was...formulated the doctrine of containment, and the Foreign Service was, I would say, riding high, the American diplomatic service in those

years, because here we had emerged suddenly as a world power without much preparation, and the few professionals who had had extensive service before the war and younger men - relatively younger men like Kennan and Bohlen (Charles "Chip" Bohlen) and Tommy (Llewelyn) Thompson...

Q: Let's see, was Acheson Secretary of State or Foster Dulles?

DAVIES: Acheson was by this time Secretary of State. Foster Dulles came...I guess the election was in 1951, was it?

Q: I am not sure.

DAVIES: Oh no, the election must have been in '52, and President Eisenhower was inaugurated in '52, that's right. Acheson was Secretary.

And the Foreign Service Journal announced this essay contest.

Well, Mac Toon and I, we were very ambitious young officers, and we felt, well...

We submitted an article called "After Containment, What?"

Q: An article done by both of you?

DAVIES: Yes, we collaborated on it, and I suppose we fancied ourselves very much...we thought, if Kennan can do it, why can't we? We were younger than he, but (we thought) we could do it too. I have a copy of the article here, which was sent back to me some time after the essay contest was begun. There is a letter here from Mrs. Lois Perry Jones, the managing editor of the Foreign Service Journal, dated December the 16th 1952: (reads) "I want to thank you for sending us "After Containment, What?" and to apologize for having kept it so long. I am sorry that it neither won the contest nor was accepted for publication. The board reached the latter..."

Well, she says "the later conclusion" but she means "the latter conclusion" reluctantly because of the article's controversial nature," And so forth.

Of course we heard what had happened. We had fancied that we were emulating George Kennan, and that even if he didn't agree with us he'd appreciate the spirit.

Of course it was controversial. We should have... We said containment was not enough. It was understandable, we said, it was quite understandable that we would have this policy now, but it's not enough, it's a defensive policy.

Q: Foreign Affairs would have snapped it up, wouldn't they?

DAVIES: Well, I don't know whether they would have snapped it up, because George Kennan was an adviser to... - or was on the board, I am not sure.

At any rate we agreed, we rather patronizingly I suppose said, "The goal of containment is correct." We agreed with the goal of it. It only remains for us to examine the policy's major premise here, the probability of the internal collapse of Soviet power." Well, we said there was no probability of the internal collapse of Soviet power.

Q: How right you were.

DAVIES: We, "let's look more closely at those facets of the Soviet system which are regarded as seeds of decay" - those were words that Kennan had used.

And in short we thought it was in the right spirit, but it was quite critical of what George Kennan had written.

And then we proposed - of course one can be as critical as one likes, but one should be constructively critical, so we proposed something to go in place of the containment policy. We said we should replace it with a policy "which will lead to the achievement of our aim, the destruction of Stalinism", we said. You know, we were young, relatively young. And critical. I am shocked to see how critical young people used to be.

Q: They still are.

DAVIES: They still are, yes. (laughs) So then we said, "The strategy to be applied should be the detachment of successive areas of the periphery" - we used long words like that (laughs) because you should if you are writing a serious article - "of the periphery from the Soviet empire." "It should be much easier for the free world to subvert the satellite regimes than it was for Stalin to install them, since the great majority of their subjects are on our side and are potentially our active allies...Upon examination of the Soviet periphery...it becomes immediately apparent that the one area which best fulfills the requirements [for the area we ought to detach first] is the Soviet zone of Germany, the so-called German Democratic Republic [which] has the longest common frontier with the West," and so forth.

"How would the operation be carried through?" (You may well ask." "The area would be infiltrated by volunteer German agents, acting under central direction, whose task would be to organize tightly knit underground groups." I think we thought that this might be fairly easily done, but I am not so sure now that that was right.

At any rate, "Meanwhile strong pressure would be exerted on the Soviet Army of Occupation...by propaganda and direct action" and so forth, so that may not have been too realistic either.

Then on Liberation Day, "armed bands of German patriots would appear in the streets and move against Soviet installations and an East German Liberation Committee, the cabinet of the underground Parliament would appear."

We based this very much on Polish experience, because both Mac Toon and I had been in Poland and were thoroughly familiar with the history of the underground there. So this East German Liberation Committee - the cabinet of the underground Parliament - which we had postulated would be set up inside East Germany, would appear and appeal for United Nations aid.

"It is probable that such an action, if followed through with lightening speed, could catch the lumbering Soviet machine off guard and achieve its aim before effective countermeasures could be taken.

If, however, such countermeasures should threaten the success of the liberation movement, United Nations troops could knife through the GDR" - it's all rather dramatic - "for example, north and northeast from Hof in Bavaria," where indeed there were American troops in some numbers, "take up positions along the Oder River, and seal the territory off from interference from the East, while other troops move against Soviet installations in support of the German insurrectionaries... The detachment of Eastern Germany would give us a common border with Poland. The Poles need little more than a concrete hope of liberation to undertake a whole series of insurrectionary actions," which I think was quite true at the time.

A "properly conceived and implemented policy of detachment in Eastern Europe could work with the speed of a chain reaction." Everything depended on speed, as you can see - you had to take them off guard.

"Some may question the wisdom of such a policy on the ground that it might precipitate all-out war. Admittedly, there is such a risk" - we were prepared to look facts in the face. "However, there is no evidence, apart from our acceptance at face value of Stalin's threats, that he would initiate World War Three."

"In any event we are already committed to the rearmament of Western Germany, which the Soviet dictator has said he `will not tolerate.' If this threat is more than calculated bluff, our days of grace are already numbered."

There is a certain amount of casuistry involved in the argument, I must say, now that I look back on it and rehearse it here. It may not have been the most judicious proposal or essay that the Foreign Service Journal received.

"The policy of detachment does not, in our view, accentuate this risk. Rather, it makes our job easier. In the event of Soviet armed action, it offers the assurance of the active support of the peoples of Eastern Europe..."

"Our propaganda efforts up to now have been largely futile, words without deeds. With the adoption of a policy of detachment, propaganda becomes political warfare. We can then offer a positive prospect of freedom to the inmates of Stalin's multinational prison."

Well, as I say we sent that in - it must have been in the fall of 1951, before George Kennan left Washington. George Kennan at the time was in Washington in the Office of Eastern European Affairs, being briefed and reading up in preparation for his coming to Moscow to take up his mission. And Mrs. Lois Perry Jones, the managing editor - it turned out, we heard later - had sent this article over to him for his comments, which struck me as rather an odd way to...

But of course it was inflammatory, certainly, and it should not have been...I quite agree, looking back on it now. I would not...

If I had been George Kennan I would not have recommended that it be published.

In any case apparently George Kennan took considerable umbrage at the presumption of these young pipsqueaks, of these young officers, and was heard to say - we were told later - that these fellows, they don't belong in the Foreign Service.

Q: Really?

DAVIES: Yes. We heard that later, we didn't know that at the time.

So he came to Moscow. It would have been, as I remember now, maybe in late winter, or early spring of '52, and as I say we were prepared to worship at his feet, but of course we got no opportunity to do that.

When he arrived I remember he held a staff meeting, which was very impressive, and he said that when he had been Deputy Chief of Mission to Averell Harriman he had been very unhappy because Averell Harriman had set up a kind of office in Spaso House and spent all his time there, and rarely if ever did he come to the Chancery, and when George Kennan had written things that he thought should go out, then he had to go to Spaso House and show them to Averell Harriman. He showed quite a bit of...

Obviously he had been very displeased with this arrangement.

Averell Harriman's daughter - I am trying to think of her name, I did know it - acted as his secretary and hostess, as a sort of barrier between (him and) George Kennan, I guess, and he said, "Well, we are not going to do that. I mean I want you to know that my door is open," this kind of thing.

But in fact he spent just as much time...

Well, no, that's not fair, because Averell Harriman did have his office in Spaso. They were very short of office space in those days, and it was necessary.

But in fact he spent a lot of time at Spaso, too, and we didn't get the opportunity of sort of learning from the master that we had anticipated.

Q: To get back to the article for a minute - After Containment, What? - that's never seen the light of day?

DAVIES: Well, no, no.

Q: Would you care to include it in the memoir, just as an attachment? Why not?

DAVIES: I think I would. Why not have it xeroxed? Yes. It has a number in sort of oil pencil, "5", so apparently it was read by members of the jury, but I think after George Kennan put his...not his nihil obstat, but the opposite - something obstat. (laughs)

Q: Along with the memoir that would be a useful addendum.

DAVIES: Yes, it would, and it would make clearer what I am (trying to say).

But it was very brash, and certainly injudicious.

Q: But the way you have put it in context, I think it would be very useful, if that's agreeable to you.

DAVIES: Yes. Well, I'd be delighted. I can make a xerox of this, and I will, and bring it along and give it to you.

Now Peer de Silva...

Q: He died recently.

DAVIES: He died recently, a career CIA officer, operations officer who wrote I think, really, a very good book - undoubtedly parts of it were regarded as quite indiscreet two years ago when he first wrote it, Sub Rosa: The CIA and the Uses of Intelligence - New York Times Books, New York, 1978 - (in which) Peer de Silva discusses the question of the establishment of a CIA station in Moscow. There was a proposal, he writes, to do that, and he went and spoke - he was working in Washington then, I guess - with Charles Bohlen, who at the time was working in the State Department. He says here "Assistant Secretary of State for East European Affairs." I am not sure that's accurate, and I notice a number of inaccuracies in the book. Our Ambassador in Moscow, he writes, was George Kennan, who had arrived in the spring of 1953. That's not right - he had arrived in the spring of 1952. He got the wrong year.

And he was authorized to begin discussions with the State Department at an appropriate level on this matter. He talked with Chip Bohlen. He was reluctant - Chip Bohlen was - and eventually came down against the proposal. He did agree that Peer de Silva could go to London to see Kennan late in June, when the Ambassador would be there briefly on personal business.

The implication was that if Ambassador Kennan concurred we might go ahead, otherwise the matter was closed.

Well, Peer de Silva went to London and saw Ambassador Kennan, who turned down the proposal. But the interesting thing, and the thing I am coming to here, is that he writes, "However, during the conversation I had noticed that the Ambassador was very tense and nervous: he was pale, his hands trembled, and he seemed to have much on his mind. At the end of our talk he said there was something he wanted to ask of the agency" - that is, of the CIA. "There is something you must do for me," he said to Peer de Silva - "I have here a letter." And he then handed me a letter, and I noticed that it was addressed to Pope Pius." "I have a very pessimistic view of our immediate future with the Soviets, particularly at the diplomatic level. I want you to get this letter to Allen Dulles, and make sure that it is passed by secure means to the Pope in Rome."

My questioning look brought the following explanation: "I fear that there is a good possibility that I will wind up some day before long on the Soviet radio. I may be forced to make statements that will be damaging to American policy. This letter will show the world that I am under duress, and I am not making statements out of my own free will."

Q: Who wrote this letter?

DAVIES: Kennan.

Q: I see.

DAVIES: "The letter to the Pope will let him make public my position and the true situation there."

That is Peer de Silva.

"I was astounded at the grimness with which these words were delivered," de Silva writes, "but I was in no way prepared for the following."

Again Kennan speaking:

"I understand that the CIA has some form of pill that a person could use to kill himself instantly. Is this right?"

Q: Meaning, not morally, is it correct that there is such a pill?

DAVIES: That there is such a pill. And so the upshot is that Kennan asked Peer de Silva, according to the latter's memoir, for these pills, and Peer de Silva says that through the diplomatic pouch two pills were sent to Ambassador Kennan. Well, I am not sure it says "two pills" but at any rate, some pills were sent to him.

"Shortly thereafter he went from Moscow to Germany on an official visit, where he made a speech with strong critical reference to the USSR. This speech resulted in his being declared persona non grata on the spot. He never returned to Moscow from Berlin.

"Ambassador Kennan finally came back to Washington from Europe. I made an appointment to see him, and asked what had happened to the pills. He told me with a curious smile, "I have already flushed them down the toilet."

"At the time and in the years since I have always thought that the actions of Ambassador Kennan were the actions of a very brave man.

"During the early 1950s, the CIA was aware that the Soviets were experimenting with drugs and tended to destroy a person's natural inhibitions and controls.

"In the Cold War atmosphere of the times Kennan saw himself as a likely target for a Soviet effort along this line. Nevertheless he went back to that environment of danger and was prepared to take his own life rather than let himself be used by the Soviets in a manner degrading or shameful to the United States."

Well, I was intrigued by this because of my own experiences with Ambassador Kennan in Moscow. He came there - I don't know whether you remember, but before he came he gave - I judge that he gave - two interviews, one to Richard Rovere, which was published in The New Yorker, and one to Marquis Childs, which was published...Marquis Childs was working for the St. Louis Post Dispatch, and it was syndicated.

Well, it didn't quote him, but it said, "People close to Kennan, sources close to Kennan," - but it seemed obvious that it was he speaking behind that journalistic convention, and in these interviews, if my suspicion is correct, he said that it was terribly important, that admittedly no individual probably could influence the course of events that much, but nevertheless since Stalin would leave the scene one day, if it should happen that he died or left the Soviet political stage, while Kennan was there this would be very fortuitous because of course Kennan knew the Soviet Union so well and knew the Soviet people so well, and he would be in a position to interpret to the United States the confused situation that ensued upon Stalin's death.

I think that was the clear (implication).

I don't know whether...

I think he may even have said that.

And this might be crucial, because you know, at a critical moment like that to have somebody so knowledgeable as he there might indeed prove to be the case of the right man in the right place at the right time.

And then he came to Moscow, and of course he found a Moscow which was very different from the Moscow he obviously remembered and had anticipated, I suppose, returning to, much less tolerant of foreigners than even during the '30s, and of course during the war things were relatively free and easy there.

George Kennan plays the guitar, and so far as I know very well. He is a folk singer, and apparently during the 30s when he was there first - he was a young man in the first place - there used to be very pleasant evenings, and it was possible to know and see a certain number of Soviet citizens, of Russians who obviously were if not under the control of the Secret Police at any rate had some kind of permission to mingle with foreigners.

Q: People like Ilya Ehrenburg?

DAVIES: Well, I don't know. Yes, I suppose some of the cultural figures, but there was a kind of... I always called it the demi-monde, which grows up in a place like that - people who are licensed to have contact with foreigners: some of them are rather shady characters, and some of them are pitiable characters, but one assumes that all of them cooperate, collaborate with the police. In any case it can still be rather pleasant, if the ballerinas from the Bolshoi, you know, if...

But when he got back there in 1952, the situation was very different. There were no contacts at all of any kind. It was the period that can reasonably be called the Deep Freeze, and he came back into that situation, with his very charming and strong wife, a Norwegian girl by birth - a very fine woman - and he found no contacts at all. Now here is a man who speaks beautiful Russian, who knows Russian literature and appreciates Russian literature and so forth, and who was completely cut off from Soviet society.

Well, one thing he did in order to try to overcome this was to go once a week to the theater, and part of the time he was there - he was there less than a year, around nine months I suppose - Mrs. Kennan was in Norway with her parents, taking care of the older children, having put them in school somewhere, so he was alone a fair amount of time in Moscow, and he would go once a week to the theater, and he would go with a language officer, and if the language officer was married with the language officer's wife. He'd send his car for them and would have them picked up, and then the car would go to Spaso House to pick him up, and they'd go to the theater, and then come back to Spaso House after the play and have a little midnight supper in his study underneath the famous carved eagle with the microphone in it. We didn't know that there was a microphone in it at that point.

Q: How many months or years had that microphone been there?

DAVIES: Not too long; it had been up in the attic, and I think when he got there he went through it and found it. It is a very impressive carved seal of the United States. But I don't even know whether the microphone was in it up in the attic. I don't think so. I think it was (put in it) after it was hung down there, because as I say he was alone in the house, and out of the house a fair amount. I think there would have been ample opportunity for somebody to stick the thing in it.

In any case I remember my wife and I went with him, and we went to see The Inspector General of Nikolai Gogol. I didn't want to go to that because I had seen it at the Moscow Art Theater, but obviously that was what he wanted to go to see, so we went to see it. (laughs)

The thing that got me a little bit was that we had to pay for our own tickets, and I mean I had seen the thing once. If I'd had my druthers I'd have gone elsewhere. However, one didn't question those things, one just went with the Ambassador.

And so we went to the theater, and of course he had these four goons following - these four Secret Policemen - and we went in and they had free seats there and they sat down. There were four people sitting in the row right behind, and these people, these characters came up, and they really didn't have to say anything, they just looked at the people and they said, "You, out, we will sit there." Which they did - the four of them sat behind us.

Q: Were they rough types or sophisticated types?

DAVIES: No, they were muscle men, and it made him feel very... Well, I was used to this. I had been in Poland.

And the anti-American propaganda of course got to him very much. He took it very personally. He walked to work every morning from Spaso to the Embassy, which was on Mokhovaya Street, right next to the National Hotel, across from the Kremlin.

Q: Would you say that this was a calculated policy to isolate him and render him ineffective and drive him out?

DAVIES: No, no, it had nothing to do with him at all. It was a policy that was applied to everybody, to all foreigners, including even Eastern Europeans.

Q: And it was so solidified and concentrated, but he wasn't prepared for it is what you are saying?

DAVIES: He had no idea that this was going on. He had been at Princeton. Of course we had been reporting all this. The thing that surprised me was that he wasn't aware of it. He obviously hadn't been reading. I can only imagine that he hadn't been reading the Soviet press, because you know the anti-American propaganda was all through the press: you

couldn't pick up any publication, any newspaper, without reading some horrible story about the alleged atrocities committed by American troops in Korea. Some of them were absolutely... You know, they were modeled on the kind of things that the Nazis had done. The effort was to make us look...to equate us with the Nazis, and they had absolutely horrible stories in there, which you know...

I remember one story about American soldiers who were said to have captured a Korean girl, and with their bayonets had cut off her breasts and had mutilated her. You know, the most...absolutely the most...

Well, as he went to the office he would pass these hoardings of billboards with frightful cartoons against the United States on. Of course we all saw them, but we all sort of understood that this was the game that was being played, and what did one do about it? You could protest about it, and we did protest about some of these things, but it was no good.

At any rate this night at the Moscow Art Theater I remember after the first act of the play we went out to the lobby - in Russian theaters they have this famous what they call "gulyanye," the walking around during the intermission, everybody walks, sort of in a clockwise fashion. We didn't walk, we went over in a corner, and in sort of each of the other corners were two of these goons who were keeping their eyes on the Ambassador, and he was very, very depressed, and finally he sort of looked up and he said, "It's just as though there is a great hand pressing down on all of us." I tried to sort of make some joke, but that was no joking matter to him.

Well, then we went back and saw the rest of the play, and then went back to Spaso for a midnight supper. But it was a very morbid kind of evening.

Q: How old a man was he then?

DAVIES: I am guessing, but I would say he must have been in his latter 40s. That was '51, so he would have been in his late 40s, I would think, perhaps not yet 50. (*) George Kennan was born in 1904, which would make him 47 yrs of age in 1951. [transcriber's note])

He spent a fair amount of time in bed in Spaso, and we had to go over there with the messages that were going out to be cleared, and he'd go over them. He'd be in bed, and it wasn't clear to me what this was. I don't know... I suppose it was physical, I don't know.

Q: A Churchillean use of the bed?

DAVIES: No, not at all, no, he was...the whole thing was very depressing. I wouldn't say that he has a sense of humor. He is dour. I am half Welsh. He is a black Gael - the family I suppose is Scottish way back where. But that kind of brooding - what people call black Irish, you know - (was what he had), although I never saw any signs of the kind of extremes of temper that one can get with certain Irishmen.

Well, in any case, to more or less finish this up, I've often been asked how could he, a professional diplomat - at that time he was regarded as the pinnacle of our service - how could he have done what he did in Berlin, and said what he said, which resulted in his being declared persona non grata, comparing the Soviet Union, life in Moscow, with life in a Nazi internment camp in Germany during the war. And my answer is, well, he found himself in what for him was psychologically an intolerable situation. This is my interpretation, for what it's worth. I recognize the pitfalls of amateur psychologizing. Nevertheless we all indulge in it, and I think what had happened was that he had given these interviews, he had this picture of himself, this self-image, which to a very considerable extent was quite accurate, as the - if not the greatest at least one of the three or four, two or three, maybe two - he and Chip Bohlen, let's say - most highly qualified Soviet experts we had in every sphere, language, knowing the history, having served there before, knowledge of what happened during the war, the whole thing, and on the basis of that he had said to people - not only to Rovere and to Marc Childs, but presumably to others - "I'll be the right man in the right spot at the right time," or "I could be, at any rate."

And then when he got there he found on the contrary this... He was never received by Stalin - a point that he makes a great deal of in his memoirs. In his memoirs he tells about the effort he made to break out of that isolation, having the Deputy Chief of Mission, Hugh Cummings, mention to somebody in the Foreign Office his - Kennan's - desire to have somebody with whom he could speak Russian, to have some contact with somebody. And then a few weeks later this young man coming into the Embassy, obviously in the effort to stage a provocation, saying that he represented an oppositionist group and all they needed was help from the United States, in arms and money, and they would assassinate Stalin, or words to that effect, which was obviously... I think this is his interpretation in the memoirs, or if it's not at any rate the implication is clear that this was the answer to his effort to break out of the isolation, that this was the answer to Hugh Cumming's approach to the Foreign Office.

Q: A provocation.

DAVIES: A provocation was the answer to it.

Q: Did this black Gaelic mood permeate the whole Embassy? It must have had some effect.

DAVIES: Well, it did. It did have a bad effect, I'd say. The morale was not (high). I should say that morale was not bad before he came. Of course we all felt that we were under attack, and under the circumstances there was a certain esprit de corps and a pulling together, and a recognition that everybody was in the same boat and we had to try to help each other. But morale...

I think he had the idea, he projected his depression, his gloom, his discouragement on the rest of us. He thought we were in bad shape. I didn't feel that way at any rate. Of course a lot of us were young and...

And he decided that we must organize ourselves in order to combat this. Consequently he started a number of activities, some of them really quite good. I don't know that ballet classes were possible then, but perhaps they were. But there were a number of kind of hobby groups: painting, you could join a group and sing Russian folk songs - I think he belonged and helped along there, he was really excellent at that, at playing the guitar and singing, perhaps another side of his Celtic heritage, I don't know. One can't possibly...these things are stereotypes.

In any case he set up a study group, which for my sins - which are many, beginning with this article - I was made responsible for. The idea was that at Spaso we were going to meet once a month - on sort of like the last Thursday or something like that - and there would be a lecture.

Oh, no, we didn't really get started until after he'd left there. He was declared persona non grata, as I remember, in December, and Jack McSweeney who was the political counselor, had been pressing me to get on with it and set up a program, and it was with the greatest reluctance that I participated in this, because it involved dragooning people, you know, to make command performances and write lectures, and appear and give speeches, and who had time for it, so to speak? We all were fairly busy with what we considered was our duty.

But no, the Ambassador wanted this, so when he didn't come back Jack McSweeney I think actually was charge then, as I remember - it was the beginning of the Christmas season - and I said to Jack, after the initial shock had passed, I said, "Well, there's one thing, there's one sort of silver lining here. We don't have to go forward with this lecture group." And Jack said, "No, no, no, we are going to go forward with it anyway."

I said, "Why?" I said, "I mean, everybody is grumbling about it."

And he said, "Well, you've got a schedule lined up," which I had by that time, I'd gotten people, and I'd submitted a schedule for six months.

He said, "No, we are going to do it anyway."

Then Jake (Jacob) Beam came as charge. He was in Belgrade, and he came up there as charge. The Beams moved in.

By the time he got there we'd had two lectures as I remember. I gave one of them, and I can't remember who else gave one. Was it Henry Shapiro, the UPI correspondent? I don't remember now.

In any case Jake Beam arrived to find that the house in which he was going to live as charge, Spaso House, was invaded once a month by this motley crew of American and other diplomats and correspondents who would come in and expect to be given some drinks or something like that, and then sit solemnly there and listen to each other lecture. And Jake Beam said, "We'll have one more meeting, at which I will talk on the situation in

Yugoslavia, and that will be the end." And that's the way it worked. (laughter) He talked to them, and that was that. After that no more meetings.

But that was already in the middle of 1953 by that time.

In any case, George Kennan - just to finish that part of the story - was going out in December, and as I said I'd been asked how could he have done this.

Well, he sent a telegram before he left, saying he knew very well when he got to Berlin - to the airport of Berlin, Tempelhof - that the correspondents would all be there and would be asking him what his impressions were, and since, he said, he could not reply honestly to them without saying things that would be incompatible with the continuation of his mission in Moscow, he intended simply to say NO COMMENT.

He sent this telegram, almost as though he were trying to ensure it putting it down on paper.

But indeed when he got to Berlin and they asked him, implicitly he made this comparison and was declared persona non grata.

So my answer when people have posed the question to me has been, well, the man was in an impossible situation: he had, both in terms of his own self-image and of the image he felt he had in the eyes of others, somehow failed, which of course he hadn't - he had not failed. What could one have done? No one else could have done (more). But he felt that he should have been able to do more, or he felt perhaps that he'd promised somehow that he would do more, and he'd been unable to do more, and consequently I felt - and I felt for years, long before Peer de Silva's book ever appeared, and I knew about the pills - that finally...how could he get out of that situation? He couldn't go back to President Truman and say, "I have to resign." That would have been a kind of admission of failure. So how to get out of this? And perhaps that was the way. That was the way he got out of it.

So all this kind of boils down to taking some issue with Peer de Silva's interpretation. I don't really think he feared that - that somehow they were going to slip him a Mickey or a truth serum or the opposite rather. I think his fear was not that, but was less specific, and this was the way he got out of it.

Q: I think maybe that was less of an accurate interpretation of Kennan than the indoctrination and lifelong feeling that Peer de Silva had about the enemy?

DAVIES: Yes.

Q: If you know what I mean.

DAVIES: Yes, yes. Well, that's his interpretation. My interpretation would be rather a different one.

A feeling of great insecurity. He was under attack psychologically certainly, as all of us were, but he much more than the rest of us as the head of the mission, as a man who after all was the author of the best articulation of the doctrine which in fact we were following.

Q: Doesn't that draw a parallel between this career man who couldn't fulfill his promise and the average politician who never fulfills his promise and never thinks about it?

DAVIES: Well, yes, yes, there is something kind of interesting there. He was so conscientious, and of course there's another thing that I think, and it's not being really able to... - what should I say? - to laugh at himself, taking himself so seriously. We are all poor sinners on our way to the grave, and we are going to stumble occasionally, we are not divine beings, and that's why we have to have religion, or we used to at any rate. (laughs while speaking) I don't know what we do now.

Q: What did Lenin say? We are dead men on furlough?

DAVIES: Dead men on furlough, yes. Somebody said that, yes.

Well, I suppose there is one postscript.

As long as I was in Moscow, after he got there at any rate, I got very bad efficiency reports.

Q: Really?

DAVIES: ...saying that, well, the young fellow has certain elements of promise, but he's shown that he is incapable of conforming to and subordinating himself to American foreign policy. And the same happened with Mac Toon.

Actually Mac Toon was transferred out of there before his tour would have ended, because it was felt that they'd better break up the dirty duo, the troublesome twosome or whatever it was, (laughs) before they wrote something again.

He was sent to Rome, but he got a bad report, too.

Q: Really?

DAVIES: But some years later Mac Toon told me that he'd seen Kennan on some occasion, (I can't remember - it sticks in my mind that it was in Berlin, Mac was assigned to Berlin at one point, but whether Kennan came there I don't know) and had said to him, "Well, you know, the reports that we got..."

Of course he didn't write the reports. They were written by our supervisors. We were down on the totem pole.

But I don't say he dictated or said that the report should be along those lines. But I got two of them like that, and later when I was being considered for assignment to Afghanistan the people in NEA - the Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - who had my file said, "My gosh, this guy, it says here, he can't follow...he doesn't accept American foreign policy. What does that mean? I mean he really sounds like someone who is really insubordinate - that's hardly an adequate word for it."

Ray Thurston fortunately was then the director of the office - or the deputy director, I can't remember which - of the Office of Eastern European Affairs, and he had been in Moscow on an inspection trip during Kennan's ambassadorship, and he wrote a memo very kindly saying, well, there were disagreements in the Embassy, and this was not the only one on containment, because of course Kennan wrote his famous telegram, large chunks of which were published by I think Joe Alsop in his column, saying that NATO was all a big mistake, that this had been a very bad idea because it had made the Soviets bellicose somehow.

And I kept trying to point out from my worm's-eye position there that contrary to his interpretation we were not...what we were doing was not provoking them - provoking the Soviets, provoking Stalin - to be bellicose. It was scaring him. And the last thing he wanted after the fright he had had during the Second World War was any kind of a military threat from us.

Well, Kennan saw the thing very much in the opposite direction: he thought that the Soviets were beginning to build up, whipping up their population and so forth, to the point where they would go to war against the West.

I had thought that earlier, when I was in Warsaw, but I had gotten over that when I got to the Soviet Union and saw that this was very largely a defense mechanism - all this anti-American propaganda was an effort to inoculate the Soviet people against their natural feelings of, well, I would say even friendliness, resulting largely from the fact that during the war so many Soviet people and soldiers had been kept alive on American C rations, and had admired so greatly our supplies of Studebakers and jeeps which were highly prized, and boots. So many Soviet people would tell you, if you ever got a chance to speak with them, "Oh, your shoes, your boots, they are so wonderful." They were Army boots. "So wonderful, I wore mine for 15 years." You know it wasn't 15 years, but they said they were wonderful boots. And your C rations, and your SPAM. Oh, SPAM! They loved SPAM. It was great, it was a great delicacy. If you had a can of SPAM, one of the greatest delicacies you could give to a Soviet was a can of SPAM of all things. We thought, well, this was second best or third best.

So there was this great feeling of comradeship in arms and fellowship, which came out when the circumstances were right, when they felt they weren't observed. That was their real feeling, in my opinion. And Stalin and the leadership were trying to inoculate them against it, they were trying to drive that out of them by this propaganda.

But George Kennan accepted it somehow at face value, and I just think that was much too simple a way to regard it, particularly in the case of men whose political perceptions tended to be much more sophisticated than that.

Q: Now did Kennan then go on to any other ambassadorship?

DAVIES: No. You remember what happened was, he came back. In the meanwhile the election had taken place, and Eisenhower had been elected. And he came back, and according to the Foreign Service Act of 1946, a man who had held the position of Ambassador - and there were certain other qualifications - who was not appointed to another position for six months, was automatically retired, and he was the only one - Dulles by that time was Secretary, and he utilized that provision of the Act against him, and again he writes about this in his memoirs, and he is very bitter about it.

Q: Then he went to Princeton.

DAVIES: Then he went back to Princeton, where he'd been before, and I think really he was a brilliant reporting officer. Some of the things he wrote - copies of them were available in the Embassy when I was there - were just brilliant, beautifully written, great insights, but not an ambassador somehow.

And again some of these traits came out when he was Ambassador to Yugoslavia. I was not connected with him then, but needless to say I followed with great fascination what he said, what happened to him and what he did.

Oh, and one other thing. I was in Belgrade in - it would have been I suppose 1964 or '65, after he had been Ambassador to Yugoslavia, and he came on a visit when I was there. Adolph Dubs, who was killed in Afghanistan, was charge d'affaires when I visited there, and I was staying with the Dubses, and Ambassador Kennan came on a visit. He came to a dinner party at "Spike" Dubs's apartment. It was a stag party of just men, and some of the Yugoslav officials with whom he had dealt when he was there attended, and it was a very pleasant evening. Finally all the Yugoslavs left and only Ambassador Kennan, Spike Dubs and I were left. He left then - there was an Embassy car to take him back to his hotel. Spike's living room was about twice as wide as this, and it had no rugs. It had a parquet floor with some scatter rugs, but no wall-to-wall carpeting. And as he walked over this parquet, his footsteps resounding, he walked more and more slowly, until he got to the front door. He turned around and said, just sort of, you know, to nobody in particular, "It's so hard for me to think that I will never be part of this again."

It was sort of poignant.

By then he had given up I guess the idea of coming back into the (Foreign Service).

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Q: Good evening. This is the second interview with Ambassador Richard Townsend Davies by Peter Jessup from Columbia, and it is nice to have you here this December evening.

I think you remember more clearly where we left off than I do, so I turn it over to you.

DAVIES: (laughs) Well, we did leave off I believe with Ambassador (George Frost) Kennan's statement in Berlin, which resulted in his being declared persona non grata.

I was reading this week a clipping containing an interview by the former Director of Central Intelligence, Richard Helms, with a correspondent of the London Daily Observer, I believe it was, in which former Director Helms was presenting a justification of the MKULTRA program, the agency's involvement in experimentation with drugs, in particular LSD, and he said, among other things, that one reason it had seemed imperative to begin a program to determine what the effects of LSD were was the statement made by Ambassador Kennan.

Q: Which statement was that?

DAVIES: A statement made at the airport in Berlin, when the Ambassador said that he could only compare his - whatever it was - six or eight months in the Soviet Union with the period he had spent in the Nazi internment camp during the Second World War. And Director Helms half said and half implied that this was such an unpredictable or unexpected or astounding result of occurrence that really it could only be explained...or one attempt to explain it involved the hypothesis that the Ambassador had been served something with LSD or some truth drug, with something like that in it, and consequently when he reached Berlin he was unable to do anything but blurt out - that's the implication - what was really in his mind, and was no longer in a position to dissimulate or...

Q: Had you ever heard that?

DAVIES: Well, obviously there is some kind of tie, and I am wondering in fact whether Dick Helms isn't putting some things together, such for example as the material in Peer de Silva's book, because I had never heard this before.

Q: Neither had I.

DAVIES: And our understanding - that is, the understanding of those people who were then in Moscow and who had had a close association, as close as the Ambassador would permit, with him - was that which I tried to outline last time, and which I would summarize by saying that having given the interviews that he did to journalists before he left to take up his post - in which he said that of course no one man could make that much difference, but if any American ambassador could affect future events when Stalin left the scene, then perhaps it would be he with his knowledge of the Soviet Union - I think built up these expectations for his mission, and they were very thoroughly dashed. In the first place, Stalin didn't die soon enough to enable him to play the role that he had forecast in these

background interviews he had given, and finding himself in that position, finding himself under enormous psychological pressure, surrounded by suspicion and provocations and the kind of treatment which he being I would say a pretty sensitive person was particularly impressed by - and depressed by - finally there was no other way out for him, although he knew he shouldn't say what he did, than to say something which would result in...

Now that's my hypothesis, that's by belief, and I think it is borne out by a close reading of the Ambassador's memoirs, or reading between the lines, or a Kremlinological analysis of his own memoirs.

I am concerned of course - and I don't think I would be writing this, I wouldn't want to write this, and I intend to be quite careful in controlling what happens to this so long as the Ambassador is alive...

Q: That's understood.

DAVIES: It's not that I feel that there is an obligation after all these years not to talk about these things because they've been talked about and written about first of all by the Ambassador himself time after time in one fashion or the other, and it's also not that I feel that there is an obligation of loyalty, but there is a certain level of discretion that I think should be observed.

I again don't want to seem to be criticizing my superiors. Ambassador Kennan was and is probably one of the two or three leading American historians of the Soviet Union, of Russia. He has just written now a book on Franco-Russian relations and the Franco-Russian Alliance beginning at the end of the 19th century, which I haven't read but which got excellent reviews. He is an outstanding historian, but to those of us who were in Moscow, who as I said were waiting so to speak to worship at his feet and to learn from him, it was needless to say a terrible shock to find that our idol had feet of clay and I think that somehow the historical record somewhere should have room for that kind of perception.

Q: I agree. I think you have stated it now in summation and went into it in considerable detail in the earlier interview.

DAVIES: The other thing I wanted to say about that period also refers of course to Ambassador Kennan and to the containment thesis which he enunciated, to my way of thinking very correctly and cogently and convincingly in the X article.

Actually I think he was articulating what our policy had already become or was already becoming, but he did it in a fashion which made the basis of that policy clear to people who are interested or were interested in foreign affairs in this country.

After that however he began to have second thoughts, because he felt that the policy had been taken to imply that we should construct a kind of "cordon sanitaire" around the Soviet

Union, including, if not consisting primarily of, the military bases. I mean he felt that that was a distortion, and he said later that that was a distortion of his hypothesis or of his thesis.

It's quite clear - and again a great deal has been written on this, there was a whole issue I guess of the magazine Foreign Policy, published by the Carnegie Institution, devoted to the subject, edited by Charles Gati some time ago, and it was called "Containment Revisited" or something like that - the clear implication of the thesis, of the article, and I believe also of what the Ambassador was saying at the time in policy recommendations, was that there was an important military dimension to the thesis, but then I think later he did become concerned and disturbed that that military aspect of the resulting policy was not matched somehow with a comparable balancing or perhaps even overbalancing political dimension. Just what that political dimension might have been and how it might have been developed is a whole other, a whole different subject.

When he was in Moscow he sent several telegrams expressing his concern, one in particular that was I believe published by Joe (Joseph) Alsop almost intact in his column, which objected to the establishment of the NATO Alliance, which of course had already been established a couple of years earlier, I guess. No, actually it was less than that. But he said in the message that he felt this was a mistake. Characteristically he did not circulate the draft of the message before he sent it. He sent it and then he asked us to comment on it - he asked the people in the Embassy to comment on it - which did seem a little futile, but...

Q: Now since this is an age of leakage, and Washington has always been the center of leakage, would that reprinting of a State cable almost verbatim by Joe Alsop have been because someone handed it to him? It wasn't Kennan's doing, was it?

DAVIES: I have no way of knowing. I can't believe it was Kennan's doing. I don't know how it happened, but Joe Alsop did have excellent sources. But I just don't know how it happened. It clearly was leaked to or shown to Joe Alsop, and he had enough of an opportunity to study it and perhaps to take notes on it, so that he reproduced whole sections of it, or paraphrased them only very transparently. But this was clearly - and he described it as such, I believe - a message that had come from Ambassador Kennan.

Walter Lippmann criticized the containment thesis, both in terms of principle, so to speak, and in pragmatic terms, saying what is diplomacy for if it's not precisely to find solutions to some of these problems?

Kennan's thesis on the other hand was that you could not do business with Stalin. I think in retrospect we could find evidence to show that we could have done business with Stalin if we had understood how to do business with Stalin, which we did not understand. (laughs)

Kennan I think understood it, I think (Ambassador) Chip Bohlen understood it, but they came out of a tradition in the American Foreign Service which had been primarily that of reporting, observing, not making policy recommendations. That's evident in many ways, for example in Lynn Etheridge Davis's book - I forget the exact title of it - Davis, Lynn E.,

The Cold War Begins: Soviet-American Conflict Over Eastern Europe, Princeton U. Press, 1974.) on the origin of the cold war, a very fine book, I think. She interviewed a lot of the Foreign Service officers who were in the State Department involved in our relations with the Soviet Union during the War, who subsequently were very critical of our policy as being too friendly towards Stalin. But when she asked some of these officers - and some of those in fact who later were known at least in the Service as real hardliners, one of whom now is very active in the anti-SALT struggle - when she asked them, "Why didn't you stand up at that time and point these things out?" this officer in particular said, "Well, the policy was what The Boss wanted. He wanted it that way, so we tried to carry it out."

Q: By "The Boss" meaning the Secretary of State?

DAVIES: Meaning President Roosevelt.

Q: Oh!

DAVIES: And of course it's difficult to find fault with that. It is the President's job under the Constitution to form foreign policy. Actually the poor old Foreign Service had had its best shot at opposing the President's views in this regard many years earlier, at the time that recognition of the Soviet Union was being worked out, when Robert F. Kelley, who was then the head of the Soviet or the Russian Desk in the State Department - Bob Kelley, who had been our assistant military attache in the Baltic States at the end of the First World War, and was the father of the Soviet specialization in the Foreign Service, he sent Kennan and Bohlen and Eddie Page and all the others off to learn Russian in the '20s, before we had relations, in anticipation of the day when we would have relations - (when Bob Kelley tried) to get the President to negotiate recognition - the terms of recognition - with the Soviets in such a fashion that we would get a meaningful quid pro quo, and failed. I think he wrote and said all the right things, but the President was bound and determined to have recognition, and was not concerned with the modalities, and finally had it, despite all the things that Bob Kelley said and wrote, and Bob Kelley's star of course faded from then on, he was increasingly shoved aside, and...

Q: Did he serve with Ambassador William Bullitt over there or not?

DAVIES: No, he was the man who in essence organized the whole thing from back here in Washington. He continued to be the head of the...on the Desk, but as the years went by he was increasingly put to one side. He had built up this fantastic library in the State Department on the Soviet Union, which was probably unique, certainly in this country - I don't know, people said in the West - over many years, beginning with his own years in Russia at the end of the war, through the Legation in Riga (Latvia), through Berlin, through the Eastern European capitals. He had been procuring publications and laws; he was a real scholar himself, and he built up this fine library which eventually was moved out of the old State War-Navy Building - there wasn't room for it there as other activities began to move in and the library I guess eventually was dispersed.

Bob Kelley himself ended up after the War as the representative in Munich of the Radio Liberty Committee.

Q: I vaguely remember him.

DAVIES: A wonderful, wonderful man. He never married, he died here three or four years ago, he never wrote any memoirs, he said he didn't intend to write any memoirs, but he is a character, a personality who should be remembered, and I hope...maybe...

I'd like to see an adequate biography and study done of him. The problem will be - I just don't believe, I don't know whether he kept any papers or not. I think he had a sister.

But that's sort of the story, which again has been thoroughly documented in a number of books.

After that initial effort, nobody really, it seems to me, succeeded in getting to President Roosevelt with the kinds of recommendations that were needed.

Well, I've gotten away from George Kennan in the period of 1952, when he served in Moscow. So, he objected to NATO, he thought that the Soviets regarded this as a warlike move on our part, and those of us in the Embassy whom he asked to comment on this point of view - after he'd transmitted it to the Department - said, well, we really didn't think that, we regarded it as much more an action by the West in response to what the Soviets had been up to, and George Kennan was warning the Department in those years that now Stalin was beginning to mobilize the Soviet people for war against the West. We tried to tell him that that was not the case, that the anti-American propaganda, which had such an appalling effect on everybody, was essentially a defensive reaction and not an aggressive or a threatening one. The Soviet Union after all was still a shambles, largely from the effects of the war, with 20 million dead and a major percentage of the national productive capacity destroyed.

He was succeeded after he was declared persona non grata...

Oh, I meant to mention one other thing, which again affected him a great deal, and through him all of us.

The American Embassy in those years was on a street next to the National Hotel - Mokhovaya Street, Moss Street, that's where they used to sell the moss with which people chinked their log cabins in the old days, that's how it got its name - right across from the Kremlin, I guess on the north side of the Kremlin.

Stalin ordered us to move. The British Embassy was just across the river, just south of the Kremlin, and the American Embassy was just north of the Kremlin, and it was quite clear that he didn't like...

One imagined him walking the parapets of the Kremlin looking on one side and seeing the Stars and Stripes, and looking on the other side and seeing the Union Jack. He was surrounded.

In any case he gave orders that we should move both embassies. The British, applying the lessons of hundreds of years of successful diplomacy, procrastinated indefinitely until the old man died and never did move. But we being Americans, well, if we have to do it we have to do it - we did move.

We first learned of this requirement from the Soviet Government when Ambassador Kennan called a meeting at Spaso House of all the people in the Embassy, and presented this decision as quite clearly what it was - a move by Stalin out of pique, but designed to show his dislike for us in a tangible way, but one which would not entail any consequences, or at any rate any important consequence for him. And Ambassador Kennan presented it in that fashion, he spoke of the great fondness everybody had for the Embassy at Mokhovaya, which of course not only contained the chancery, the offices, but apartments in which a large number - perhaps half or more - of the personnel of the Embassy lived, and which had been acquired by Charlie Thayer back in the early '30s, the acquisition of which he wrote about in his book Bears in the Caviar. So there was a sort of combined nostalgia and an effort on his part to reassure us that we shouldn't worry, that this was regrettable, but we would all be all right.

Well, I think most of us were a little surprised by this because again it was something that we quite understood. It was part of the game.

Q: You referred in retrospect to the long-standing wisdom of the British, who played it out. Was that evident among the personnel you worked with?

DAVIES: Not at that time, because this was early. The British of course said, "Of course we'll move." They never said, "We won't move."

Like us; we did the same thing.

They said, "Well, show us where we should move to. You control all the property here and the housing, you control the buildings."

And of course this was part of the deal. The Foreign Ministry, which did try I think - to the extent that it had any leeway or latitude in the matter - to be reassuring too and they said, "Of course this is nothing personal, but it's just a question that we have other plans, this and that, urban renewal and what have you, and we'll find not only adequate but superior quarters for you elsewhere, so that you won't regret this at all."

And the British went along with this, but they just kept looking, they were never satisfied with what they were shown. I don't know how many places they were shown, but they were sort of being shown the 20th or the 30th on March the 5th - or whatever it was - in 1953,

when the word got out that Stalin had died, at which point the Soviet authorities said, "Now wait a second, you don't need to move now."

By that time we had already started to move. We had found a building which we accepted, the one in which we now have our chancery, on Tchaikovsky Street, on the so-called Garden Ring. The Soviets had undertaken to refurbish it, and we had imported very substantial amounts of American and Western European plumbing and appliances, electrical equipment and what have you, in fact I think several million dollars worth by the time we got done, so we had an investment in the new building by that time, which we could not just write off, and although as a matter of fact the Soviets then did tell us, "You don't have to move if you don't want to, and we'll work out some compensation, we can negotiate a kind of fair value of this equipment with which we are refurbishing your building," and that kind of thing, by that time we had gone so far, and I think by that time too people were beginning to realize that this would be a better deal for us, not right side by side with the Kremlin a hundred yards away from Red Square, but in a very nice location, and the quarters were more adequate, the building in which we had been was old and had never had a fundamental renovation from the day we had moved in, it had been occupied on what one can only call the hot apartment system - one family moved out, and another family moved in the next day - and the furniture was in terrible shape. I was in charge of moving us out of that building, and the filth and decrepitude were really something to behold. The building was in fact falling down around our ears, and under the conditions of crowding that existed there we would never have been able to do the sort of renovation that we needed.

So all in all by that time we decided we might just as well go ahead and move, and we did. The British were still in their fine, old "fin de siecle" - turn-of-the-century - sugar baron's mansion on the other side of the river, and we of course are waiting now to build our new embassy down in the flats of the river bottom behind the present site.

Well, then Chip Bohlen came. As I remember he came right after May Day 1953. We had just completed, or were in the process of completing, moving out of the old building on Mokhovaya Street. I think his only act with regard to the old building was to come down the day that we climbed up and took the seals, the shields, down. They were over the three archways, only one of which was used - the other two were blocked up. But the three seals were there - the Great Seal of the United States - and he climbed up on a ladder for a photographer, and he ceremonially unscrewed one of the screws that was holding it and had been holding it since 1933 or 1934, whenever it was put up.

We took those down, and they were then taken up to the new building.

He of course was very different from Ambassador Kennan, certainly the world's greatest raconteur. I am even tempted to say monologist - sometimes you couldn't even get a word in edgewise, particularly if you were, again, a young and rather worshipful officer - a great raconteur in any number of languages, obviously in addition to English, French, Russian, and for all I know German, and a man of enormous charm and presence and background

again in Soviet affairs, very close friend of George Kennan, they corresponded constantly, both when Ambassador Kennan was in Moscow and of course... No, I guess that was Tommy Thompson (Ambassador Llewelyn Thompson) who spoke at his funeral or memorial service at the Cathedral, and told the story about how Chip... - I am confused now, but I think that's right - about how Chip, when he was off to the Embassy in Moscow, had written to Tommy, who I think had also been asked about it and had sort of said, "Is it all right for me to accept it," which was kind of... (as if to say), it won't offend you if I do.

(the above has many false starts of speech, as the Ambassador is trying to recollect the story, and his voice trails off very often)

A very fine guy.

Q: But Bohlen was not a subordinate or an acolyte of Kennan. They were sort of coequals.

DAVIES: They were coequals. It's interesting. I talked about Bob Kelley. Bob Kelley...

I don't know how this worked out, but Chip wound up going to France to study Russian. He studied at the Sorbonne, and he lived with a Russian emigre family in Paris. Part of the deal was that he should speak nothing but Russian with them, and that's how he learned his Russian.

George Kennan went to Berlin, initially, and lived with a Russian emigre family there, and then went on to Riga (Latvia) where he did the same thing, and learned his Russian there, and worked in the Soviet section of the Legation at Riga, which was before we had relations - it was one of our principal listening posts or observation posts.

So they had been in different places, but I assume they had known each other as young officers in the Service together, and they were always very close, although they were such totally, diametrically opposite people temperamentally.

Q: I know your bracket was Malcolm Toon and so forth, but were Charlie Thayer and Eddie Page older than you?

DAVIES: Oh, yes, they were of that first generation.

Q: I see.

DAVIES: Now I can't remember whether Charlie actually was...I can't remember whether he was in Riga - he may have been - or whether he was somewhere in Western Europe.

Of course Avis Bohlen was his "Charlie's) sister - is her sister. Both he and Chip are dead, but Avis is still very much alive, and she is Avis Thayer, who married Chip Bohlen, so there was that connection. They were of the first generation, and there was I would say an intermediate generation.

Q: Who were some of the other conspicuous people, like Thayer, Page, other early types? I mean the Soviet specialists.

DAVIES: Well, there was Freddie Reinhardt (Ambassador Frederick Reinhardt), who I guess finished his career as Ambassador to Italy.

Q: Yes.

DAVIES: Dick Davis - Richard Hallock Davis - was of a slightly younger generation; he belongs to what I would call the intermediate group. Tommy Thompson is sometimes classified with them, but he was not a Russian language student like Bohlen, Kennan, Eddie Page. I am not sure Freddie Reinhardt was either, although I tend to think he was.

In any case Tommy Thompson served in the Soviet Union before, just on the eve of, and during the war, and his Russian was pretty good. It was not as good as Bohlen's, Kennan's and Page's, who had lived with Russian families and really were as close to being bilingual in Russian as people who had not come from Russian speaking families could be.

Q: You were talking about early service in Poland, and you mentioned the business of Americans of Polish origin, and you made the observation that they could be very good if they were thoroughly versed in Polish and so forth, and depending on their personalities and qualifications. There weren't many former Russians? That was not possible, was it, to have White Russians or Russian-Americans stationed in the Soviet Union, was it?

DAVIES: No, some of the married Whites, for example Angus Ward. Angus Ward was not one of those especially trained people. He went to the Soviet Union - he was a consular officer primarily, and he went there as a consular officer. But he had married in the Baltic States I believe - or maybe in Finland - a Finnish girl, and I believe she was of the Finnish nobility, a baroness or a countess or something like that, who had been educated at the famous school in St. Petersburg for daughters of the nobility before the First World War.

Ambassador Loy Henderson had married a lady who was from the Baltic nobility. There were others.

Q: Ambassador Norman Armour.

DAVIES: Norman Armour.

Q: And Ambassador Henry Villard.

DAVIES: Henry Villard and...

Q: But that didn't particularly propel them into the Soviet sphere at all.

DAVIES: Not particularly, but they were officers who spent most of their time in Europe, and then they went to the Soviet Union, they were assigned to the Soviet Union.

Now there was an interesting thing - and of course it still persists for that matter, so far as some of these people, and in particular some of these ladies, widows now, who are still alive - the officers who were not specialists, educated in the language and hadn't gone to school as Kennan, Bohlen, Page and some others did, who were married to wives from that part of the world, formed quite a different group, for reasons I think that you can well understand.

They did tend to see things against a background of...of recognizing or paying more attention to the viewpoint of what in the Soviet Union are called the former people, that is the former ruling class.

Q: Spencer Barnes was another.

DAVIES: Spencer Barnes was another, but Spencer was not quite...you know...

Q: But is it a correct summary to say that right after World War One in the Foreign Service people were accepted when abroad? They didn't have any home leave and they were often bachelors.

DAVIES: Oh, obviously, yes.

Q: Some were married and emigres...

DAVIES: Inevitably, certainly they did.

Q: Would you explain about how they didn't... They didn't come home every two years.

DAVIES: No indeed, they didn't. Take just as an example Angus Ward, under whom I served when he was Ambassador to Afghanistan.

Q: Oh, we'll get to that.

DAVIES: Yes, but just to take his example, it's kind of interesting.

He was born in Canada in a Gaelic speaking community - a Scots-Gaelic community, I can't remember whether it was in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, perhaps even in Ontario - and came to this country as a young man, I think. In fact I've heard - and I don't know how true this is, but it wouldn't surprise me - that he only really learned English when he began to go to school in kindergarten or the first grade. He was a high school graduate. He was in the Army then during the First World War. When he was mustered out he stayed in France, he didn't come back to this country. He was employed by the Embassy in Paris as a clerk, and of course the salary was 750 dollars a year or something like that. Then he worked his way

into consular work, where he met his wife. I don't really know whether it was in Paris, or later when he was serving in Eastern Europe. She was - and is, because she is still alive - a woman of considerable force of character, very well educated - because that was an excellent school in Petersburg, for any time and place - very strong willed, and he himself was a man of no mean force of character and will power.

But they never came back to the United States. They had no home in the United States. I don't know how much family he had back here, but he spent whole decades abroad without coming back here, or if he did come back it was on very short trips. Mrs. Ward really had no reason to come back here, she didn't particularly like to come back here, she did not like the United States.

Q: And eventually when he retired he retired in Spain, didn't he?

DAVIES: He retired in Malaga, and I believe Mrs. Ward is still living there.

Q: Amazing.

DAVIES: They never came back to the United States, they did not regard the United States as their home, and I have to say that Mrs. Ward did not like America, she did not like American women. I am not sure... I guess she liked...well, she obviously liked one American citizen (laughs). And she made no bones of this.

Q: That's an interesting theory, because he was quite a remarkable man who did great services for the United States, but it's sort of like the mercenary idea. For honorary consul you can hire a person of extreme value and...

DAVIES: Well, of course in the 19th century, before the idea of nationality became quite so important, one did do precisely that. The Tsarist diplomatic service was full of non-Russians, and what's more in many cases people who were not even subjects of the Tsar - they were from France, or Corsica, or Italy, from some of the small states in Italy or the small states in Germany, or at best, if they were subjects of the Tsar, they were Baltic barons, or Poles or something like that, so that the Tsarist diplomatic service, like others for that matter, consisted of people who were professional diplomats and who really, one could say, could represent any country with equal facility if... (laughs)

You know, it was a profession in rather the narrow sense of the term.

And for that matter this country for many years - of course it wasn't really until the end of the Second World War that our Foreign Service became a service which was doing things that most Americans regarded as very important. Before that nobody thought it was doing something very important.

But we had a lot of people for example - in addition to the famous writers like Nathaniel Hawthorne or Washington Irving - who obtained sinecures because they either couldn't live

on their writing or wanted to spend some time abroad and didn't have the means to do so, or couldn't find the means to do so in any other way. We had a number of people who came over here as a result of various revolutions or turmoil in Europe, and then more or less turned right around and went back once they'd gotten their citizenships, and became American representatives in various places.

Q: How do you feel about that? Would that tie in at all with that...

I remember Ed Korey's report in which when he was Ambassador to Ethiopia he suggested that we should decide which three or four countries in Africa are of any significance to the United States and have honorary consuls and the rest, and save a lot of money and so forth. Is that a very obsolete point of view, or could it work now?

DAVIES: Well, it makes eminent sense from nearly every point of view except one, and that is the question of the self image of the country concerned. If you have a non-resident ambassador who is sitting let's say in Ghana and representing you in several of the surrounding countries there, and spends his time traveling, each of the countries where he is not resident says in effect, "Well, you don't care about us. You have a resident ambassador in Ghana, but you don't have one here in Cameroon, or wherever."

Q: But that's sort of Third World development.

DAVIES: It is a Third World...

It's a question of why can't I... You know, you are a big, wealthy country, and if you really do care about us you put somebody here.

The same goes for The New York Times, for that matter. If we are such an important country, how come you, The New York Times, only send a correspondent here once every three years when we have an election? You ought to have somebody stationed here.

Q: That's how [things] develop.

DAVIES: That's right. But in Poland when I was there the Times closed its bureau. That was the last American resident special correspondent there. When they pulled him out the Poles were terribly unhappy, and they complained about it, and now there is again a Times correspondent there. They closed the bureau solely for economic reasons - it cost a lot to maintain - but they've come to the conclusion, and I think this is completely accurate, that the potential in Poland is such that they've got to have somebody there to keep following that story on a constant basis.

But the same goes for this business of ambassadors.

I regret terribly that we got involved in this game. It did seem that Benjamin Franklin had the right idea. It was of course done with a certain histrionic effect. I think the reason was

his wig had gotten lost en route, but he just clubbed his hair back and went dressed in his rustic American outfit. He knew perfectly how rustic it was because he was a great dandy in fact. But this was...you know, he and the coonskin cap. That was a stroke of great public relations, and we should have continued that. (imitating a sort of southwest accent), "Shucks, I don't want to be an ambassador, I just want to be a minister, and I don't really care," as Henry said, "I don't care, just as long as you call me Excellency..." (laughs) It seems to me we would have been better off not to get into this, but of course inevitably then we say, "Well, then you don't get into the protocol list, and you can't... Actually our Government won't let us become dean of the Diplomatic Corps. We never stay long enough in one place in the first place, and in the second place, even if an American ambassador does reach the point where he is going to become Dean the United States Government in Washington is terribly nervous about that situation, and doesn't want us to do it.

Q: I guess one of the last long term American ambassadors was Wally (Walworth) Barbour in Israel, for about 11 years.

DAVIES: That's right, he was there a long time, and I am sure was - I can only imagine that he ended up as dean of the Diplomatic Corps.

But when that happens the American Government is terribly unhappy. "Oh, dear, you are going to be in the middle," - which of course you will, any dean of the Diplomatic Corps is. I just don't see any reason to worry about that.

Well, Angus Ward really was in a way a kind of expatriate, and many of the people in our service in the ‘20s and ‘30s, through no fault of their own - his was an extreme case - simply because the Government paid them so little, did not pay for the home leave - there was no requirement for home leave until the Foreign Service Act of 1946 - didn't pay their way back and forth, during the Great Depression their salaries were cut and on occasion they were not paid... You know, it was a time when unless you had independent means, and not everybody did in those years, it was a very difficult time for people in the Foreign Service. They couldn't get back here. Certainly a young man who went abroad - an unmarried young man - was very likely to end up marrying a foreign girl, and this happened in many cases. I think in most cases it obviously worked out very well, but in some cases the outlook of the officer was inevitably colored by the fact that he'd married a foreign woman.

And that was the case I think with those officers who married women who represented the former ruling class in the Soviet Union. Inevitably they had a more than theoretical or hypothetical antipathy to the Bolsheviks. Some indeed may have had quite intimate family reasons for having very strong emotional reactions to the Bolsheviks. So that when somebody like George Kennan came along, who sort of said, "Well, you know, we have to try to understand these people," this was not regarded with favor, it was regarded like sort of, "Hmmm, can we really trust this guy?" And that was the attitude expressed by some of the older, I'd say, non-specialist people who served in the Soviet Union towards the younger generation, and particularly I think towards George Kennan, who had fallen in

love with the culture of the people. I don't know to what extent he was influenced by his uncle, who was one of the great American pioneers in Russia.

Q: What was his name?

DAVIES: George Kennan, who traveled across Russia in the latter part of the 19th century by dog sled, by reindeer sleigh, on horseback, on foot - just a fantastic man. He wrote amazing books about this country, his great work being "Siberia and the Exile System," about the political dissidents, the prisoners in Siberia in those years.

In any event, George Kennan (the nephew) was in love with the country in a way, and still is, and this was terribly resented because some of the people felt, well, he is prejudiced in favor of the Russians. And he certainly was and is, but obviously he was never prejudiced in favor of the Bolsheviks - on the contrary.

The feeling was not that strong against or about Chip Bohlen, who was less intense and didn't quite have that degree of attachment somehow to the country, although he too was intrigued, to put it mildly, by this peculiar...by the Russian character or soul or whatever you want to call it.

Well, I left shortly after Chip Bohlen got there in July or August of 1953.

Q: And you were assigned to Paris?

DAVIES: I then went to Paris to the NATO Headquarters, which was then still in the Palais de Chaillot.

Hugh Cumming, who had been our Deputy Chief of Mission in Moscow, had been sent to Paris as a Deputy Secretary General for Political Affairs. No, he was an Assistant Deputy Secretary General. The Deputy Secretary General for Political Affairs was an Italian - that was the nationality assigned to occupy that post - and Hugh Cumming was his deputy.

Hugh Cumming asked for me, and we got there - our first child John was born in Germany in June 1953.

Q: In Regensburg?

DAVIES: Yes. He was born there, and it was in June, and I remember because the rioting was going on in East Germany at the time, and I was in Regensburg listening to the radio to hear what was going on there.

Chip Bohlen - this was just before...

Yes, I think...

Lavrenti Beria was removed from office (in July 1953) either just before the rioting or just after, I can't remember which, and Chip Bohlen had sent a telegram two or three weeks earlier, recounting a rumor, giving a report that the Italian Ambassador had given him, to the effect that it was being said that Beria would be removed, that he was in trouble, and Chip sent in this telegram, and the comment he put on it was that while the Italian Ambassador had picked up many such reports because there was a bit of an Italian colony there - Italians who had married Russian women and they had heard these stories - this was obviously just another rumor, and one shouldn't put any credence in it. And of course two or three weeks later it did happen.

Q: Was Lavrenti Beria an Armenian or a Georgian?

DAVIES: A Georgian, like Stalin. Well, he was removed, and John Foster Dulles had been under some criticism for having appointed Bohlen. Of course this was the McCarthy era still. During Bohlen's confirmation hearing an effort had been made to get Charlie Thayer to come back because there was some amorous peccadillo apparently in his past before he had even gotten married, which had been turned up somewhere, and I guess there was some plan afoot to utilize this to sort of by association blacken Chip.

I was in Charlie's office in Munich when he got a telephone call from Chip - from the States, from Washington - to discuss this with him, and I was there when Charlie Thayer said, "Well, I'll just resign then." Which he did, and it was too bad, because he was an outstanding officer.

Anyhow Chip was confirmed as I mentioned earlier, and he came to Moscow. Not too long after he came he wrote this telegram. John Foster Dulles felt that this was a good opportunity to show that he'd made the right choice, I guess, and called him back and said at a press conference, "Ambassador Bohlen predicted that this was going to happen," which embarrassed Chip Bohlen very much because it's true the telegram had contained something that could be regarded as a prediction, but he had then said that he didn't put any credence in it.

And he called him back to confer with him, and as I said it was embarrassing because he didn't really know what to do. He couldn't very well stand up and deny that he had predicted it or correct the Secretary under the circumstances.

It was after this then, I think, that the rioting began in East Berlin, in East Germany. At that time I was in Regensburg. The baby was born - he was the last American child to be born in an Army hospital there, which they then closed down or were in the process of closing down because the American troops had been taken out of there by then.

We had a little Hillman Minx, and we got into that - my wife, the baby and her mother, who had come out for the accouchement, and I, and drove to Paris.

Q: The Hillman Minx was a little car.

DAVIES: Yes, it was a little car, and we had everything in it. There was not a wasted cubic millimeter in there, believe me. I'd made a little creche I would say for the baby, which took up about a third of the back seat. There was enough room then for either my wife or my mother-in-law, depending on who was sitting in back at the time to look after the baby, and we all fitted in very nicely. The car had a roof rack with all our luggage up on top that we were taking with us.

And we got to Paris and...

Q: Was the NATO commander (Alfred) Gruenther then?

DAVIES: I guess it was Gruenther. But I didn't have anything to do with the NATO command per se. Yes, it was Al Gruenther, it must have been. It was only later that the Air Force general came.

Q: Norstad.

DAVIES: Yes, Lauris Norstad. But I was working there for Hugh Cumming, who in turn was working for...I can't remember the name of that very nice Italian Ambassador who was the Deputy Secretary of Political Affairs, and Lord Ismay - "Pug" Ismay - was the Secretary General, a wonderful old gentleman. I don't know whether you were ever there or not, in the Palais de Chaillot, where NATO has offices.

Q: Once or twice.

DAVIES: It was one of those temporary buildings which I guess like the temporary buildings that we used to have down here on the Mall had been built many, many years earlier, and there is nothing so permanent as a temporary building.

Q: And that Ambassador to the governments-in-exile during the war was on active duty was General Anthony Biddle Duke wasn't he?

DAVIES: Yes.

Q: As a liaison?

DAVIES: He was, yes. I can't remember now what his title was, but he was around there. Well, it was a very active place at that point. NATO was really getting cranked up.

What they wanted us to do was, they wanted us to set up a section there to analyze what was going on in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe. There were two of us: Frank Meehan, who is now our Ambassador in Czechoslovakia, and I, working for an English international civil servant, Bill (William) Newton, a former BBC correspondent here in Washington, who is now retired and still as far as I am aware living in Portugal.

Well, no sooner had we gotten there to do this than Hugh Cumming, whose idea this was, was transferred. I can't remember now whether he went to Indonesia at that point as Ambassador, or whether he came back to head I & R [INR] (Intelligence & Research in the Department of State). It was one of the two, but I think it was the former, and then later he came back to head I & R, as I remember it.

Well, he left, and (Ambassador) Vinton Chapin - one of the many Chapins that have adorned our service - came to replace him. A very fine man.

But the whole idea was ridiculous - to try to set up inside NATO, with three officers, a section which would do research on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe at a time when the member states - first and foremost the United States, but also Great Britain, France and others - were in a position to provide massive amounts of information. However, the position was that this was an international body, and they weren't going to give us their information. That of course rested on the very accurate perception that the International Staff of NATO was not a safe place to store any classified information.

Q: Was your particular product for American eyes only, or...

DAVIES: No, this was for...

You know, there was an International Staff composed of representatives of all the member countries.

Q: So your product was for everybody?

DAVIES: For everybody, yes. It was turned out as I say by... The head of the section was an Englishman, and then there were these two American Foreign Service officers. But it went to everybody, and it was recognized by the Americans and the British and the French and the other national foreign offices that you just couldn't trust NATO to keep a secret.

Q: There was some basis for that.

DAVIES: Oh it was absolutely correct. You know the big thing, the big kind of political document that we turned out every year was the so-called estimate of Soviet intentions, and that was the other thing we were there to do - to help put that together.

The Estimate of Soviet Intentions was a document put together, as one could well imagine, by all the member states. They all chipped in, and in fact as it turned out the Americans and the British largely put the thing together, and the others offered emendations of greater or lesser significance.

We did that once a year for the ministerial meeting in December, and it was an important document in those years, because in effect it provided a guideline, it took the temperature

of the threat against which the Alliance had been established. So there was always a lot of interest in that document, and invariably year after year Cy (Cyrus) Sulzberger published it verbatim, and this got to be very embarrassing, because it was I believe COSMIC TOP SECRET, COSMIC being a NATO designation. And COSMIC TOP SECRET was the highest designation that the organization had, and it was just plain embarrassing when something that was not only classified COSMIC TOP SECRET, but was the most important document that the Organization turned out (appeared in print).

Q: The Americans were more security conscious than the others, and yet it appeared in an American leak.

DAVIES: Well, of course the answer that we Americans always gave to that - and don't think the accusation wasn't made to us many times - was, well, Cy Sulzberger is not celibate, I mean he is married, and of course is married to a very charming Greek lady, and so we point towards the Greeks, and I am sure the Greeks were pointing somewhere else, and everybody was pointing at everybody else. (laughs)

At any rate, for a long time the question had been mooted: what are we going to do about this? And finally the recommendation was made to Lord Ismay that he really ought to talk to Cy Sulzberger about it, which nobody had done of course.

So Pug - Lord Ismay - did. They had a drink together at some point, or perhaps dinner, and we heard reports of this, that he said, "Cy, this is terribly embarrassing."

And Cy said, "Well, Pug, I had no idea of that. If I'd known..."

And Pug said, "Can't you paraphrase the damn thing in some way? I mean it's terribly embarrassing when a thing appears verbatim, and people ask, how can we trust you with our secrets?"

And Cy said, "Oh, Pug, I didn't realize that... Of course, I know it is COSMIC TOP SECRET, but there are so many documents like that that I see." [laughter]

At any rate, they worked it out. I forget exactly what the solution was. Of course that didn't mean that Cy stopped writing about the NATO estimate, but he did it in a slightly more discreet fashion, which did not involve massive quotations.

Q: So leaks didn't begin recently, did they?

DAVIES: They certainly did not.

The net effect of this of course was that Frank Meehan and I, who had the job of trying to analyze - imagine, two people - what was going on in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe that would be of interest to NATO - it was never too clear who exactly our customers were, but however that may be, we went over to the United States

Representative to Regional Organizations, where Martin Hillenbrand was then working, and Arthur Hartman, and other good friends, and we said, "Look, we can't get our hands on any of these documents."

And some of our good friends, particularly Marty Hillenbrand, said, "Well, we'll stick them in a folder, and we can't let you take them out of the building, but you come and read them once a week at least. It's ridiculous that you are over there, and you are supposed to be working on this and you don't have the benefit of all this research that's being done. Just so long as you don't quote any of this stuff, or attribute it, you can come over and use it at least for background knowledge."

So we did that, and that worked out very well, and we were able to...

Q: Now this stuff that Hartman and Hillenbrand had was prepared abroad or by I & R?

DAVIES: Some of it was prepared by I & R, some of it was telegrams from Moscow and Warsaw.

Q: Oh, I see, the general...

DAVIES: It was just the traffic. None of it was...what would you call it? I mean it wasn't a question even of its being highly classified.

Q: But it was timely.

DAVIES: It was timely, and if we had been in the Embassy, working in the Embassy, we would have seen all this stuff, and there would have been no problem. But we could not work anything out with the security people, because the International Staff had this - as I say deservedly - very bad reputation.

Well, this worked out fine, and we were able to provide some documents and to do some analyses about what was going on, because we were particularly supposed to concentrate on the domestic developments in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. As I say, why this was deemed desirable I am not quite sure, apart from the fact that Hugh Cumming felt that it would be a good thing, and then he left, and nobody really knew why it had been begun.

But we did this for about a year and a half, and then out of the blue I got a letter from somebody in the Personnel Office in the State Department which said that I was being transferred to Afghanistan.

Q: Hmmm! From Paris.

DAVIES: From Paris. Actually we had some very good friends there - Roy and Barbara Percival - who had served in Afghanistan earlier and had enjoyed it thoroughly, so this didn't worry us too much. But our second child was just about to be born. This would have

been along in February or March - maybe April, I can't remember - and this baby was due in a couple of months.

Q: Kabul isn't the best place to have a baby.

DAVIES: No, I would say not. Ha! And there was just no way I was going to take my wife... We had this nearly two year old boy, and she was seven months pregnant, or something like that, and I just said no way.

So I took this letter over to Glenn Wolfe, who was the administrative officer of USRO, and so far as I am concerned really a great guy, you know. In the first place he arranged for the Meehans and us to get Embassy housing there, which initially we were told we were not eligible for, because we were working for an international organization, but as far as we were concerned it was just another assignment, and why shouldn't we be eligible for Embassy housing. So he worked that out.

Then when this happened, naturally I turned to him. I took it (the letter) over to him and said, "Glenn, you know, I..."

Well, he said, "Of course they can't do this. You are supposed to be there for another six months. They don't seem to realize it. You are there under a bilateral agreement with NATO, and before we can pull you out we have to put somebody else in to replace you."

So he telephoned people in Washington. He knew the right people to call. I said, "I am perfectly prepared to go, I am not kicking at all, I'd like to go to Afghanistan. But I want to wait until this baby is born. I don't want to be out there three thousand miles away in a very inaccessible place. Suppose something goes wrong? There is no indication that anything will, but..."

So he fixed it up. It was agreed that I could wait until after the baby was born, which I did, and then my wife would follow in a couple of months with the two children.

Q: He either earlier or later was the sort of administrative chief for John McCloy in Germany.

DAVIES: Earlier, and he of course had become very controversial there because he was accused of having been profligate in building all those apartment houses, which of course you know...the kind of petty...

It was one of the great things that any American administrative officer could have done. We are still using those apartment houses. The value of them now is fantastic.

Q: Yes, in Frankfurt and Bonn.

DAVIES: In Frankfurt and Bonn. You know there was nothing in Bonn, there was no place to live. And the building that he did there was very foresighted, and he did it at a time when it was dirt cheap. The U.S. Government got these properties and did the building for practically nothing, and you know they amortized themselves in a matter of five or ten years, and we had 20 years or whatever of a kind of gravy.

But he was very controversial in those days. However, all I can say is that he was not only an able man, but he was a man who saw the problem - all you had to do is tell him. He picked up the phone, he solved it, and no nonsense, to use a polite word. He was a great guy. He is still around.

Q: Really?

DAVIES: Oh, yes. I don't know what he is doing now.

Q: Did you know that when the child was born...

Was Angus Ward appointed later?

DAVIES: No, he was there, and I was fully aware of all his back and forth business, the business in Mukden (China), and how he came back, the campaign, and the Scripps Howard...

Q: Hadn't he gone to Nairobi?

DAVIES: He had gone to Nairobi. But as a result of Roy Howard's campaign - you know Roy Howard said, "This is an ignoble assignment for this great fighter."

Q: I didn't know that Scripps Howard...

DAVIES: Oh yes, oh yes. I don't know where he'd known Roy Howard, but he was very close to Roy Howard. Roy Howard depicted him as a hero.

Q: Good!

DAVIES: He'd been in prison in Mukden and treated...and so forth.

Q: He was completely out of touch, he was something like the hostages in Teheran now.

DAVIES: Yes, yes. Then he was sent to Nairobi, and Angus Ward didn't take kindly to that. He felt he should have an embassy, and Roy Howard conducted this campaign, and eventually I think not only primarily but exclusively as a result of that campaign he was appointed Ambassador in Kabul, and he had been there at least a year I guess when we arrived, maybe longer than that.

I must have gotten to Afghanistan some time in July - in early July - and then my wife got there in September with the children.

Prince Daoud was the Prime Minister, and his younger brother Prince Nazim was the Foreign Minister. The country was a dictatorship under Prince Daoud, very tightly controlled.

Q: Was there much Russian influence?

DAVIES: No, that was just beginning. That was why I was sent there. The whole rationale was, we need somebody who has had Soviet experience there because there is this threat or danger now.

Shortly after I got there, as I remember it, in the fall - or in December perhaps - of 1955, Bulganin and Khrushchev visited there. I think it was after I got there, but I can't remember now, isn't that funny?

Q: For example was the Soviet Ambassador a very able man?

DAVIES: No, the Soviet Ambassador...he was a man named Degtyar. I would say he was able, he was quite a capable person, but he really knew nothing about the country and was not interested.

After Ambassador Ward left - retired - Sheldon T. Mills came, Shelly Mills, who was a South Asian hand. He had served in Delhi and he'd been in other places too, Rumania among others.

Well, Shelly Mills arrived. He was an enthusiast for language study, despite the fact that he had really very little aptitude for learning languages. He had learned French and knew it very well, and spoke it quite fluently but very ungrammatically with a strong and unmistakable American accent, but he could make himself well understood. He had learned Rumanian in much the same way, and he believed that wherever you were you should learn the language, and he started as soon as he got there to study Farsi, the Persian which is the lingua franca.

Q: Is Farsi the same as in Teheran?

DAVIES: Well, it's mutually intelligible, but it's a different dialect. Dari it's called. He began studying it. He never really mastered it, but he learned some phrases. He wasn't trying to master it, he didn't need to master it. And in those years we didn't have much in the way of social relationships with the Russians. But I got to know some of the people there at their Embassy. I met the Ambassador at a cocktail party once, at a reception of some sort. I saw Ambassador Degtyar across the room, and said to Ambassador Mills, "There is the Soviet Ambassador. Would you like to meet him?"

"Oh, yes, great. Be delighted to meet him."

So we went over. I don't know how much English Deytgar spoke, but anyhow I translated and interpreted for him. There was some small talk, and then Shelly said, "Are you studying Farsi?" And Ambassador Deytgar looked absolutely non-plussed and said, "No, why?"

And I said, "Well, you know, it's the language here, and in order to understand the culture..."

"Oh, my goodness," - Deytgar said - "No, noooo! If I learn the language I'll have to come back here again!" (laughter)

All he wanted to do was get out of there. He regarded it as a most backward country, and of course by comparison even with the Soviet Union it was backward, so he just wanted to get out of there. He hated the place, and he made no bones of the fact that there were no Central Asians in their Embassy. They had had one there, and they had there - I think he was still there when I got there - a man from Tajikistan, and there are Tajiks in Afghanistan. They had sent this man as cultural attache.

Q: To do...

DAVIES: Right. Well, he began to go to the Mosque on Friday, and we all thought, oh how clever, he's blending right into the landscape, and this will convince the Afghans that religion is not prohibited. But the next thing we knew he disappeared from the scene, so we asked and (were told) that well, no, he was just here temporarily.

Well, that was not the case at all, it was quite clear. There was a big cocktail party to introduce him, "Our cultural attache, he speaks Persian," and all of this. And eventually the word sort of seeped around that well, yes, he is going to the Mosque, and he kind of liked that, he liked the idea of going to the Mosque, he hadn't been able to do that back home. So I guess they began to be a little worried as to who was converting whom, so they got him out of there in a hurry, and the Afghans were very keen to seize upon this as a why-are-they-afraid, you know.

Well the Soviets were ham-handed, but they were doing things. They provided the equipment, and the technical assistance. They were paving the streets in Kabul, which was the first time any streets were paved in the country, and they built a flour mill there, a bakery - a big flour mill-bakery complex, which was the first modern food processing installation in the country, and they were helping the Afghans build roads in the North, and we of course were helping them in the South. There was a sort of de facto division. Along the line of the Hindu Kush (mountain range) they were working primarily in the North, although south of the Hindu Kush, in Kabul, they built this bakery complex and paved the roads. And they were also working on Kabul Airport, laying that out, putting in the runways.

The UN, the ICAO, had a mission there under the supervision of which this was being done and the airport was being constructed. It was headed by a Pole, Colonel Waclaw Makowski, a great man, who had graduated from the Kiev Polytechnic Institute just around the time of the First World War. The Kiev Polytechnic Institute was one of the premier pioneering schools in aeronautics in the world. Igor Sikorsky, the man who developed the helicopter, was educated there, as well as many other pioneer aviators and designers.

Q: The early American aeronautical industry was quite populated with Russians: designer Alexander Kartveli, Boris Sergievsky. A whole bunch of them.

DAVIES: That's right. Well, many of these people - I can't say all of them, but many of them - had gone to the Kiev Polytechnic according to my good friend Colonel Makowski, and he had gone there and became a pilot as a result of going there. Then when the War broke out - I guess he was pretty young - he ended up as a pilot, I think, for the Russian forces, and when Russia dropped out of the war then he went to Poland and became one of the first Polish military aviators, and fought side by side with the American Squadron in the Kosciuszki Squadron in the Polish-Soviet War. Some of our people from the Lafayette Squadron who weren't ready to...

Q: I have a book on that downstairs. I won't find it now, but it has all the names of all those people...

DAVIES: About the Kosciuszki Squadron?

Q: Yes.

DAVIES: Fantastic. And you know some of those guys, their graves are still in Lemberg, or Lwow as it's now called. Now it's in the Soviet Union, but it was in Poland in the interwar years, and their graves were honored very ceremonially every year by the grateful Poles with whom they had fought in the Polish-Soviet War. These are things that tend to get forgotten, unfortunately.

At any rate Colonel Wakowski was an aviator there, and he told the story of how one day he was flying over or near Lwow - LWOW - during that war, and he said, "Of course the planes we had we just held them together by baling wire, and we had water cooled machine guns that you really had to be careful that you didn't shoot your propeller off, because they weren't synchronized too well, and most of the time it was better to use a shotgun from the cockpit."

And there was this other plane that came, a Soviet plane, equally ramshackle, and they made a few passes at each other, but couldn't really do much damage to each other, and finally the engagement was broken off, and the Soviet pilot waved, and he waved, and they went back home.

Well, then after the war he became the first managing director of the Polish civil airline, LOT, and of course for many years the Poles had no relations with the Soviets. In fact one of the first contacts they had was in the field of civil aviation.

Eventually Colonel Makowski as the managing director went to Moscow to negotiate the first civil air agreement between the two sides. Being a Pole from the Ukraine he spoke Russian naturally, and having been educated at the Kiev Polytechnic he spoke Russian naturally.

And he arrived in Moscow, and they said General so-and-so will meet you first thing in the morning.

Well, they told Colonel Makowski that the negotiations would begin the next morning. His colleagues, his Polish hosts in the Embassy in Moscow warned him how long this was going to take, you know, that it was like pulling teeth to negotiate with these people, and you'd better settle down here for a long stay. It may take you several months, certainly weeks.

Well, Makowski was feeling none too happy about that, because he'd hoped that he could wind it up and get out of there in a reasonable period of time.

The next morning they took him to the Ministry of Civil Aviation. The whole Ministry was really being run by the military at that time - where this General was to meet him, and they took him into a conference room to await the arrival of the Soviet Delegation, and finally the Delegation came, rather glum-looking gentlemen, and they shook hands all around and lined up on opposite sides of the table and...

Q: Did he have a staff or was he alone?

DAVIES: Who, Makowski? No, he had some people with him, experts, the usual thing, a lawyer, a couple of technical people.

Then the Soviet general came in - the Soviet Air Force general - and was introduced to Makowski, and they looked at each other, Makowski looked at him, and the General looked at Makowski, and finally the General said, "You, you! Why, we met above Lwow in 1920."

And Makowski said, "I wondered why your face was so familiar." (hearty laughter and cross talk)

Q: The Red Baron?

DAVIES: You are the one. (laughs) So that of course in typical Slavic fashion, the old bear hug, and the General said, "Where is the vodka?" "Get the vodka."

So they began drinking toasts, and he said that started the rapidity of the negotiations on both the Soviet and the Polish side, because he and this General just got along famously, they were both from the same generation, they had had many common experiences, or many kinds of experiences in common, and this bond of having met and not killed each other was such that there was no problem in working out the differences between the two sides rapidly.

I met Colonel Makowski shortly after I got there to Kabul, and he said, "Now, Davies, you know Poles and you know Russians a little bit, and I know Americans," because during the Second World War he ended up as Quartermaster of the Polish pilots who were in the RAF, who did provide... I know there is a lot of romantic nonsense talked about this business, but at a crucial moment, when the British lacked not airplanes but trained pilots, these people arrived in Britain, and they were pilots without planes. They were trained pilots and they were put into the Spitfires for which there were not yet enough trained British pilots. And of course their losses were terrible during the Battle of Britain. But whether one considers that they provided a crucial, a vital margin or not...they did, they were an extremely important accretion on the Allied side at a critical moment in the war.

Q: They had a couple of aces in the RAF.

DAVIES: They did indeed, yes.

Q: Witold Urbanowicz.

DAVIES: That's right, that's right. He became a general.

Q: And Boleslav Gladych.

DAVIES: Yes, by golly.

Q: Mike Gladych.

DAVIES: Yes. Did you know these...

Q: Oh I used to do some articles on aces.

DAVIES: Oh, terrific. Well, I would never have known that. Urbanowicz...I recognize the name, but Gladych I didn't know. Hmmm. Gladych.

Well, anyhow, he was there. By this time, his flying days were over, but he was quartermaster of the Poles in the RAF, and of course he never went back to Poland. Being of the Polish former people he decided not to go back.

He's been back since. He was back just recently before the 50th anniversary - was it the 50th? - of the founding of the Polish civil airline, last year or this year.

There were a number of small airlines in 1929. They were all combined into a major airline, the National Airline. And he was invited back because, as the current managing director of the Polish Airline told me when I asked him if he knew Colonel Makowski, he said to me, "Mr Ambassador, we are all Colonel Makowski's pupils."

Q: That's a nice compliment.

DAVIES: Which of course they are. And he's been back several times. But in those years it was impossible for him to go back. So if you asked Colonel Makowski then...in fact, if you ask him now, "Colonel Makowski, what is your nationality?" he will say, "I am Canadian by passport, Polish by blood, and Scotch by absorption." (laughter) Wonderful man.

Well, he said to me, "What we want to do here - we have a situation where the Americans and the Russians aren't speaking to each other, which is silly. You have to speak to people."

Q: Which is a basic precept...

DAVIES: A propos of George Kennan's contention - and it is a rather dogmatic contention - that you cannot do business with Stalin, Makowski said, "You've got to speak to people, you have to talk about these things."

And he said, "What I want is, I want the Americans to put the electronics into Kabul Airport. There's no point..."

He said, "We've got the Russians, and they are going to do the runways. They are fine with the asphalt and the rollers. It's heavy work, and they are heavy people, and they can do that. But the Americans have the radio equipment and the electronics, and I want them to put that in there, so that we really will have a decent guidance system, because it is a tricky airport. You go very high up, and then you come down, you come down into this little valley."

Q: What altitude is it?

DAVIES: Kabul is roughly the same altitude as Denver, but it is surrounded. Whereas in Denver you have the mountains to the West, in Kabul you are really in a bowl, and you come up, usually, through a valley, through a pass. And in those days, at any rate, the planes actually flew in through the pass, not over the pass. And navigating was a little tricky. You wanted to make sure you got the right direction and everything like that.

So Colonel Makowski said, "Well, what about this?"

I said, "Well, I don't see why..." because we had an AID team, an AID mission there.

And he said, "What I want to do is call a meeting, and these guys aren't talking to each other."

He said, "They don't have to talk to each other. I don't care. They could talk to me. Each side can talk to me."

And then what later came to be called proximity negotiations or discussions...

He said, "Will you help arrange it?"

I said sure, I couldn't agree more. I said, "This, you know, makes sense. They are all working on the same project. Just different parts of it."

So without any official foofaraw I spoke with the people at the AID mission, who didn't care, and the Ambassador - Ambassador Mills - and he said, "Sure, this makes sense. The only thing is, you know, I mean we have no objections, but we don't want to be officially connected with it. So let the Colonel get the people together."

And we told the guy who was the head of the American team there, "You know, you are working for the Colonel." Which indeed he was.

So the Colonel convoked this meeting of Russians and Americans. He had the Russians on one side and the Americans on the other. And then he said, "You know, I don't care how we do it, but we are going to work together. And if you want to pass messages through me, that's fine. Or if you want to talk directly together, I can interpret for you. And we'll work this out." And indeed they did work it out.

The airfield was completed, and the radio equipment was installed, and everything went very smoothly from there on, under his very able supervision. He, of course, designed and oversaw the construction of airports throughout that part of the world: in Kabul, in Kathmandu, in various places in Burma and India, Malaysia, Ceylon. He was ICAO's man for that part of the world. He is retired now in Spain.

Q: Sounds like quite a remarkable individual.

DAVIES: Oh, he is another guy, you know. I mean...

And I said to him, "I hope you are going to write your memoirs." He said, "Oh I don't have any time to write memoirs."

Oh, he is kept busy. But he is a man whose life has spanned the century so far as we've gone, and what a remarkable progression from the Ukraine. He's made a real contribution. No matter what one says about the way things have turned out or are turning out, he did some very practical and useful things, and he made an enormous impression on me, as I have indicated. He said, "You have to talk. Sure, the Russians; don't tell me what they are. I

know what they are, I know how they are. But look, they are human beings, and you gotta talk with them. And you'll find some things if you keep talking. Keep talking. They are not ten feet tall, also they are not three feet tall, they are somewhere in between, and you've got to find out what their strengths and weaknesses are, and don't let them take advantage of you, but don't think that you can take advantage of them either."

Well, it's not quite so simple perhaps as building an airport. It's a lot more complicated of course in the field of international affairs.

Well, we spent a very interesting three years there.

Q: Three years?

DAVIES: Yes, three years in Kabul. For me it was the best post.

Q: How many people were in the Embassy?

DAVIES: The Embassy was very large then. I suppose there were...there must have been 100 Americans in the AID mission, and in the Chancery and the USIA perhaps maybe 35 to 40 officers. So principals maybe 150 American principals, and of course families, a very substantial American colony in addition to the Embassy and the AID mission, the Asia Foundation, and a very substantial foreign colony all told.

Q: Are the Afghans somewhat like Ethiopians in that they are pretty darned aloof?

DAVIES: No, I don't think they are aloof. They are cautious, they are concerned... Of course as I say it was an authoritarian regime, the secret police were very active, Prince Daoud kept a tight hand on the thing. But even so some progress was being made. He did take the women out of purdah, which... Oh I don't know, one begins to have mixed feelings about this, but I still think it's a progressive step. Well, it's obviously a progressive step.

Q: But there aren't many Afghan emigres.

DAVIES: Oh, there are quite a few.

Q: Are there?

DAVIES: Oh, yes, oh, yes, a lot in this country.

Q: I didn't know.

DAVIES: We sent thousands of Afghans here as students.

Q: Oh! I didn't know that.

DAVIES: Yes, throughout the ‘50s and ‘60s and ‘70s, and a great many of them married and settled down here, a great many of them married and took their wives back there. That didn't work out so well in many cases, although some of these guys - at least some of the ones who were running the Government there - were married to American girls.

Q: Was Taraki anybody when you were there?

DAVIES: No, he was not. It was only later that he came to work for the Embassy. Unfortunately the people I knew I don't know of. I know one of them, according to what one reads, has been killed in prison, and another I just hope and I pray that he is still alive - a wonderful man.

A lot of very fine people, and I just hope that some of them survive this ordeal. It's unlikely that they will, but...

Q: Would you say that the present Soviet Ambassador would be a much more high pressure type with the real Vietnam-type thing that he is running?

DAVIES: Well, the previous Soviet Ambassador was taken out of there because he was the man who tried to ensure that Taraki would be the unchallenged leader. You know they were trying to force Hafizullah Amin, who was a product of Columbia University's Teachers College - he was sent there under the AID mission program, and he is one of the most brutal of the leaders, the now leader - the plan was to force him out because he was so dogmatic and unyielding, and Taraki then being unchallenged would broaden the base of the Government and include for example the man I mentioned, Nur Ahmed Etemadi, who was Prime Minister under the King for a while and was imprisoned, but now I understand - they say at any rate - he has been killed in prison. He was one of the two people there whom I knew and I was closest to, and a very fine man. I spent the better part of three weeks traveling around Afghanistan in a jeep with him and the then police chief of Kabul, Ataullah Azimi, looking for young Peter G. Winant. Of course we didn't find Peter Winant, but I got to know both of them very well during that trip.

Q: Was Peter Winant the son of John G. Winant?

DAVIES: No, the nephew of John G. Winant. His father...I can't remember now, but I think he must have been a younger brother of John G. Winant - worked for the Agency, for the CIA.

Peter graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary - yes, I think he did graduate - with a degree of Bachelor of Divinity and was religiously very much of a mystic.

He then went to study in Scotland. Of course, Princeton Theological Seminary being Presbyterian he went to the fount. He went to Edinburgh, and from Edinburgh he got on a bicycle and he bicycled to India, and he came through Kabul in what would have been the spring of 1954, I think, or the summer of 1954 - quite a feat from Edinburgh on a bicycle.

We had in Kabul a Protestant - Presbyterian - minister, the Reverend Christy Wilson, who was chaplain to the Protestant community. Christy Wilson I think was two or three classes ahead of Peter Winant, but at any rate they knew each other, and Peter stayed with Christy. Peter went right from the seminary...I don't know... At any rate he wasn't looking for a living, he was trying to sort of find himself at the beginning of this period when young people try to find themselves, and he went to India to an Ashram, and somewhere in India - not at the Ashram, I don't think - he met a beautiful Swedish girl, Gunnel Gummeson, just gorgeous. I only saw photographs of her - a typical Swedish beauty, ash blond, blue eyes, statuesque.

Now Gunnel, who had been brought to India whether by an Indian diplomat or by a wealthy Indian who had been in Sweden, was a trained teacher, and she had been hired as the nursemaid for this Indian's children, or perhaps as a nanny, and she wanted to see India. She was interested, so she went to India, and she and Peter met there. Peter himself was as handsome, tall, rangy, and athletic, a young man as you can imagine, and he quite obviously fell in love with her. She was seeking also I think - she came to India with some mystical ideas or something, I don't know.

But she had got a letter from her parents. She came from I would say the lower middle class, perhaps even a family that was just getting up into the middle class. She had had a good education, but her parents were working people really. But her father wrote to her that there was a job for her. This was the following year. I believe it was 1955, maybe 1956, I can't remember now. Must have been 1956, but I can't remember.

Well, anyway he wrote to her that there was a job for her back in Sweden teaching school. She had taken this other job because she'd signed up but there were no jobs. Now there was a job. Well, now she became very interested: she wanted to go back and take that job. But she had not enough money to get back in time. I guess the only way was to take an Italian ship in Bombay, and I don't know whether it was too expensive or...

And Peter Winant said to her, "Well, we'll hitchhike back." And she said, "Hitchhike?"

He said, "Oh, there's no problem. I came all the way. We won't even spend any money, because the people are very hospitable, and we'll say that we are just hitchhiking."

Well, I don't really know what was in their minds - or rather what was in his mind, because it was he who had this idea - but they came to Kabul. Again they stayed with Christy Wilson. I think Christy was a little appalled to find that these two young people were traveling together in that fashion.

Q: It wasn't the '70s.

DAVIES: No, not yet. All of this kind of thing was really a little, you know...

Q: Premature?

DAVIES: Yes, premature, earlier than...and particularly at a time when... I don't know whether Peter was ordained - I don't think he was ordained, but he was a graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary, and I think - I don't know, we were never able to find out, because afterwards there was a lot of finger pointing and why-didn't-you-tell-them-how-dangerous-it-was - I don't think he did tell them how dangerous it was, he encouraged them. And they stayed several days there. They never came near the Embassy because Christy...well, you know, he wanted to be at arm's length, he didn't want to be too closely associated with us in one way, although he was chaplain of the Protestant community and most of his communicants, most of his parishioners, most of the members of his congregation were from the Embassy.

He was on a contract with the Afghan Ministry of Education to teach English at the English-language high school. There was an English-language high school, a German-language high school, a French-language high school. There were these three institutions in addition to the regular religious schools and the high schools in the native language.

At any rate they left there on their way to Persia. They were expected in Teheran I guess it was, so they left, and then after maybe three weeks had gone by we got a telegram from Teheran saying that these friends of Peter he had been expecting him. He had written ahead and said he would be there roughly at a certain time - but he had not arrived.

At that point we didn't realize that there was anybody but Peter. They said that they understood that he'd be staying with Christy Wilson in Kabul, and could we check and find out when he'd left.

So we checked. We went around to see Christy and said, was he here, and Christy said yes, he was here three weeks ago, or whatever it was - four weeks ago perhaps by that time.

We asked when did he leave, and he gave us the date, and we then said, "Well, he hasn't arrived in Teheran."

He said, "That's peculiar, but of course he is hitchhiking, you know, and perhaps he wasn't able to get a ride, or maybe he got sick or something."

But he never told us about the girl.

So we sent back a placatory telegram to the effect that Christy Wilson says there is no need to be alarmed, and Peter was probably on his way and so on.

Another week went by, and then another telegram came, and still he hadn't gotten there, would you please begin to check now?

Meanwhile we had sent telegrams to various other places, particularly to the western border post, west of Herat, to a place called Islam Qala, the fort of Islam, which was a border point. Well, the communication was so uncertain - we sent a telegram in Farsi - Persian - saying had a person of this name shown up but when you put the name into Arabic letters it doesn't really mean anything, you can't tell.

So this time when we went back there we said, "You know, we have to start looking for him.

Finally he broke down and he said, "Well, he was with this girl."

And we said, oh my gosh, what girl? This was the first we had ever heard of the girl.

He said, "Well, a Swedish girl."

We said, what did she look like? He had a snapshot of the two of them, and she was a smasher.

Q: You mean Christy said all this?

DAVIES: Christy finally told us about the girl, and that was the first we'd ever heard of the girl, and we said, what does she look like, and he showed us this photograph of this absolutely gorgeous girl, wearing a very skimpy costume, and in that part of the world, oh boy, you know... And it had been taken when they were there and they had had this developed. A beautiful girl.

So we said, "Gee, and they were hitchhiking like this through Afghanistan, where women are bought and sold?" or were then. Still are, I am sure. And a Caucasian blonde! There were harems - Zenanas - in people's houses. Oh, boy.

At any rate, as a result of all this, finally we organized a search party with the head of the American Desk in the Foreign Office, Nur Ahmed Etemadi, who was later Ambassador to the United States and Prime Minister, and Ataullah Azimi, a wonderful man, a policeman, a police chief who had been trained in Berlin before the Second World War at the police academy in Berlin, Gruenewald, and a very fine man, tough, like all of them.

And we got into a Jeep and went out to the place where they should have crossed the border and we determined that, no, they had not crossed the border there, and then we tried to trace them back, and we finally found the place where they were last seen.

As far as I am aware the case was never solved. They arrested two brothers, Turkomans - it was in Turkoman country that they were last seen. These men had a bad reputation for womanizing, and I am convinced myself that they saw this apparently masterless man, these Europeans with no money - that's the role they were playing. Actually Peter had plenty of money in travelers cheques, and the girl had some money, too, but claiming that

they had no money - this was incomprehensible to these people. That means that they are beggars. And here is this beautiful girl who is worth her weight in gold, I'd say.

What finally happened I don't know, but when the hue and cry was raised, and when we arrived with a royal rescript - a beautiful thing written in Arabic script - from the King, signed by the King, ALL MY SERVANTS SHALL GIVE FULL COOPERATION TO MY FAITHFUL SERVANTS NUR AHMED ETEMANDI AND ATULLAH AZIMI, of course we were authorized to do anything. Or they were. I wasn't authorized to do anything but report, but they could do anything, they could take the Governor, arrest the Governor and put the thumb-screws on him.

Well, they arrested these two brothers who of course were tortured savagely and never confessed, but when I last checked on the case many years ago the brothers were still in prison. There had never been a trial. Apparently no evidence had ever been uncovered, but the Afghans felt that they were guilty, and that was enough.

I got off the track somewhere there.

Q: That's very interesting.

DAVIES: Oh, I was talking about Colonel Makowski. We got the airfield built. And what else did we get done? Can't remember how I got off...

Q: Sheldon Mills stayed after you left.

DAVIES: Yes, he was still there when I left. He stayed for another year, and then he went on to be Ambassador to Iraq. I think he retired. Was it Iraq or Lebanon? He retired from Lebanon. Yes, he retired from Lebanon.

Q: And you then went back to Moscow? Or did you come back to the States?

DAVIES: I came back to the States in 1958 to work in what was then called the Office of Eastern European Affairs. Ed Freers was the Director, and Butch Leverich was the Deputy Director, and I became the Public Affairs Adviser in that office, and about a year after I joined the office it was split in two - into the Office of Eastern European Affairs retaining the title of the old office, and the Office of Soviet Union Affairs. The old Office of Eastern European Affairs had all of Eastern Europe including the Soviet Union, and the new Office of Soviet Union Affairs just had the Soviet Union, and all the rest of Eastern Europe was in the Office of Eastern European Affairs. And I stayed with the Office of Soviet Union Affairs as public affairs adviser.

At about that time, Vice President Nixon was about to make his trip to the Soviet Union. By that time Jack McSweeney had become the Director of the Office. He just died a couple of days ago here - there was an obituary in the Post. He and I had been in Moscow together.

So the Vice President was going to open the American National Exhibition. It was the first time we had a big exhibit in Moscow. And Herb Klein, who was editor of the San Diego Union, or something like that, came to Washington to be his press chief. And they asked for somebody from the State Department to work with Herb Klein, so I was sent over to organize the press party.

When I got there, Herb Klein said, "You know what this is, don't you?"

And I said, "Well, it's a visit by the Vice President to the Soviet Union and Poland."

"Yes," he said, "but more importantly it's the beginning of the first Nixon campaign for the Presidency."

I said, "Oh, well, uh, I see." (laughs)

And then of course that's what it was. Herb Klein had come there because he had worked for Nixon during his campaign in California. He'd been the head of the California Young Republicans, a very able, fine man, I like Herb Klein.

Q: One of the more decent people during that last Administration.

DAVIES: The only thing I couldn't understand about Herb was how he could stay there. He was humiliated you know, time and time again, and I just didn't understand...

Well, in any case I liked him, and we worked very well together. He was a fine man, highly respected by the press. Of course he was the man who years later, when Nixon ran for Governor of California and was beaten so badly, advised him not to go out and tell the press, "You won't have Nixon to kick around any longer." And of course Nixon ignored him.

Q: Did you ever hear that story - that that was Nixon at his lowest, I mean low in mood and spirit...

DAVIES: Yes.

Q: And he went on a trip around the world some time, and when he got off in Bangkok I think (Ambassador) Graham Martin was there, and he said, "Mr. Prime Minister, I want to introduce you to the future President of the United States."

DAVIES: Oh, that's how Graham Martin...yes...

Q: That didn't hurt him.

DAVIES: (laughing heartily) Right, I'll say that.

Q: That was a bold and sort of highly speculative thing to say, wasn't it?

DAVIES: Well, by the same token - I mentioned Richard Hallock Davis. I am sure it made Graham Martin, as it made Jake (Jacob) Beam.

Jake Beam actually got his sort of gold star in Nixon's book during that 1959 visit through receiving him in Warsaw. Actually the crowds that greeted Nixon then were fantastic. Jake Beam had nothing to do with it, but he benefitted from that, and then - let's see, where was Jake? - when Nixon made one of those visits he took very good care of him.

By contrast Nixon, when he was still a private citizen, and then went to Rumania, where Richard Hallock Davis was Ambassador, and in Bucharest we had - and we may still have, though we were constantly trying to get a new residence - a ramshackle old frame townhouse, sort of gingerbread style, a big thing, which was our residence, and Harriet Davis, Dick's wife, was an avid collector of modern art, and if there's anything on which politicians of President Nixon's generation and earlier generations, on which politicians of any political hue were united, it was their abhorrence of I should say modern art - Hitler, Stalin, Churchill, Roosevelt, none of them, you know...and Nixon.

I think he came there without Mrs. Nixon, which I think was a shame. But of course that's a whole 'nother story, Pat Nixon: she is a long suffering woman, in my opinion.

Anyway, he came there, I guess for lunch. They came in and they had a huge canvas, a sort of Frank Stella thing, just colors, you know, and he looked at it and said, "Dear God, how can you...I think it's terrible, in an American Ambassador's residence, to have such horrible things, and not representative at all of American art."

And Harriet took affront and said - well, there was no implication in the way she replied to him that she thought he might be...(offended?)

She answered him sharply that this was her house, and that she had to live there and she wanted it to be bright, and he was quite wrong, that the Rumanians who came were very interested and impressed, which is true. I mean the intellectual elite in any country is always very intrigued by these faddish art forms I think.

Of course I feel the same way about it as...(laughs)

Oh, dear.

In any case he remembered that, and that was the only sign, and then when he was elected that was the end of Dick Davis' career.

Q: ...happens too often here and there.

Davis: Yes. There was another case I heard about. I can't remember...

In any case Herb Klein said, "Okay, this is the beginning of the campaign."

And I said, "Well, so far as I am concerned I am nonpartisan during working hours, and we'll do our best."

And we did work well together, and the trip of course was an enormous success for Nixon - the picture of him shaking his finger under Khrushchev's nose was worth...

Q: A million votes.

DAVIES: A million votes or whatever. And the argument, you know, the whole thing.

Q: Well, as an aside, when he later went back to Rumania as President didn't a tremendous crowd turn out?

DAVIES: Oh, yes, Ceausescu turned out a big crowd.

Q: And he liked that.

DAVIES: Oh. yes, he liked that very much. Was Leonard Meeker there by that time as Ambassador? I can't remember.

Q: I don't know.

DAVIES: Well, anyway it was a great triumph for him, as I said.

Actually we didn't know when we began the trip that we were going to go to Poland. We were still negotiating on that, and it was while we were in Moscow - while we were in the Soviet Union - that agreement was reached that he could come to Poland, that he was the first American official of that rank to visit Poland ever, and the Poles had some trepidation about it. But it was during the early part of the Gomulka era following 1956, and they were prepared to receive him, and the Soviets could hardly object, I guess because they were receiving him, too.

So while we were in Moscow Bud Sherer - Albert W. Sherer who was then our DCM in Warsaw - came to Moscow with Richard E. Johnson. We have a Richard E. and a Richard G., both of whom have served in Warsaw. And Richard E. and Bud traveled with us on the plane from Moscow to Warsaw, and briefed the Vice President and his party. Of course he had with him Milton Eisenhower and Admiral Rickover.

Q: Rickover?

DAVIES: Oh, yes, and of course Rickover was born in Poland, and as I remember it he went back to his native village during that visit.

Well, Admiral Rickover and George...he was the head of USIA then, and later became head of the Tobacco Institute.

Q: Not George Allen?

DAVIES: George Allen, yes, George V. Allen, and Foy Kohler, who was Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, and there were a number of other dignitaries, and the press party was an absolutely stellar group of people, including Scotty Reston and...which Hearst was it, W.R. Hearst?

Q: Yes, Junior.

DAVIES: And Bob Considine, Jinx Falkenberg...I mean you name them, we had them. Ruth Montgomery...

Q: Who turned into a mystic.

DAVIES: Who turned into a mystic. That was before she was a mystic.

Q: A seer or something.

DAVIES: Yes. I mean, really, all the star journalists of the day were on that trip. It was the biggest thing that had happened for many years.

Well, we arrived in Warsaw. The Poles had been very careful - they were trying to keep down the crowds - not to announce where we were arriving, but we announced it over Voice of America in Polish. We landed at a military airport, which actually is part of the same airport, but on the opposite side of the field from the civilian airport, and as soon as we got outside the gate the crowds began, and people were pressed really up against the sides of the car. Of course the Secret Service was frantic, but there was absolutely no reason for them to be, because the people were simply overjoyed. They were crying. They had to stop the President's car - he was traveling in an open landau type thing - four or five times to clean out the flowers, because they were getting up waist high, and flowers are not cheap in Warsaw. People were buying bouquets of roses to throw in the path of the American Vice President. They didn't know...Nixon? Schmixon? Who is it? American, that was the thing. And they were crying, you know.

I was in the press bus of course; immediately behind the car behind which the Vice President was traveling was a camera car with I guess television - they were taking films in those days, there was no satellite.

I was in the press bus, and I was sitting next to...he is now the editor of the Daily News - is that Ed O'Neill? He is the editor of the New York Daily News, but then he was the chief Washington correspondent. I can't think of his name, but it'll come to me.

And his mouth was agape.

He said, "What is this thing? Why are these people so..."

I said, "These are Poles, they love us." Because of course in the Soviet Union first of all the thing was much better controlled, and in the second place you don't have that kind of feeling.

Well, everybody was just flabbergasted, beginning with the Vice President, because he hadn't realized this.

So it was sort of the beginning of the vogue of Poland. You know, if you are a President, then you begin to think about going to Poland because you know you get a good reception. Well, there will never be a repetition of that.

I don't know how many people, but I would say millions of people were out that day, lining the streets, pressing up, the cars were crawling along, and here in the press bus, which was two vehicles behind, they were thrusting these bouquets through the windows, and applauding, and by the time we got in there, you know...

Marguerite Higgins was with us, Marguerite knew Warsaw. I'd first met her there many years before when she lived in Warsaw in the late ‘40s.

But I mean the people, the correspondents, were touched by this.

Q: But Nixon could handle a thing like this, I mean he always was able to handle himself abroad.

DAVIES: Oh, yes, oh, yes. Oh he handled it very well. But then there was nothing to handle except to receive this adulation.

Well, not much really happened. There were some discussions. The thing that happened was this reception that he was given, and the evident expression of pro-Americanism which equals - or equaled in that case - anti-Sovietism or anti-Russian sentiment on the part of the people of Warsaw.

Q: What effect did this have on Gomulka?

DAVIES: Well, there was no problem as far as Gomulka was concerned, really. Gomulka had come to power three years earlier as the result of an anti-Soviet revolution, really, in the country. That's what it was, and it resulted in the overthrow or the ouster - the peaceful dismissal - of the Stalinist Government, or of the successor to the Stalinist Government, because by that time a fellow named Ochab was Secretary General of the party in succession to Beirut. Beirut had gone, and Ochab had been put in. The feeling was that

Ochab could make the transition, but he couldn't make it, and Gomulka, who was still under house arrest, had to be brought out of house arrest.

And so Gomulka having come back to power under those auspices, there was no problem for him. And in a way indeed it was I think to be regarded as helpful. It did show his Russian colleagues that obviously the United States was not an alternative power center which he could turn to, but there was some kind of balance there, there was an interest on the part of the United States, and obviously the sentiment in the country was evident, and here it was - people turning out for this Vice President - after all, not the President, but the Vice President - whom nobody had ever heard of. Who is he? But I mean just the symbol of the United States was important.

And then in itself - that kind of political demonstration - was useful at that point to Gomulka. Ten years later Gomulka was on the other side of the fence. When people came out into the streets it was against him. But at that time, three years after the so-called Polish October, it was useful to him, and he had no problems, so just so long as there was order he didn't really care how many people came out.

Well, that was the beginning of the campaign, and this was an added dividend, which I think the Vice President and his people had not realized, I kept saying to Herb Klein, "Boy, when we get to Warsaw..."

Well, he didn't quite believe this. Nobody could believe it until they saw it.

So that was an added dividend. The Polish vote suddenly - WOW, you know, here it is. And all of these people had relatives in Chicago - well, not all of them, but nearly all of them.

Q: Yes.

DAVIES: And in Detroit, and in one place and the other.

So that was a discovery to Nixon, by Nixon, in terms of American politics and the way in which American politicians could use foreign affairs for domestic purposes.

Jake Beam was the Ambassador, and this rebounded I think very much to his credit, although he would be the first to admit that he didn't do it. It was a kind of a fact of life or nature, but the mere fact that he was Ambassador there helped his career, I am sure. Well, perhaps we should leave it there for tonight.

Q: All right, why don't we?

***

Here we are. It's nice to have you here, Ambassador Davies. This is our third session, and we will just sort of take up where we left off.

DAVIES: I think we had talked about ex-President Nixon's visit to the Soviet Union and Poland a little bit.

That was in 1959, and then in 1960 Mr. Khrushchev made his visit to the United States and I was asked to work with the group of people who were handling the press. There was an enormous press party which accompanied Mr. Khrushchev around the country, and of course he was met at every stop by sort of double the number of correspondents and journalists who were traveling with him.

There was a good deal of discussion on who should handle the logistics for the press party. The White House had a formal organization which was much better equipped to handle that kind of thing, but Jim Hagerty, recognizing - I think quite correctly - truly all the problems that would be involved, the controversy, the difficulties involved in handling such a huge press party, turned it over to Linc White, and Linc White, whom I knew - and Linc is still around, he's retired, has been retired for many years - and for whom I have enormous affection, was not strong on the organizational side, and there was no reason why he should be: his job was to be spokesman for the State Department.

So he in turn turned this responsibility over to Joe Reap, who again had never handled anything like this. It was a case of people trying to run away from this hot potato.

The big problem of course was that Mr. Khrushchev and Henry Cabot Lodge, who was his guide on his travels after the Camp David talks were over, spent nearly a week traveling around the country. He went, as you remember, to Iowa to the Roswell Garst farm, he went out to the West Coast, he was entertained by Spyros Skouras, in Hollywood, he was taken and shown the filming of the scene from Can Can in which Shirley MacLaine was kicking up her heels, about which he said, no this was obscene, the American pornographers...I thought he quite enjoyed it. I was watching him, and he seemed to be enjoying it, but he had great sport with that.

Then we went up the Coast in a train from Los Angeles to San Francisco.

Well, the point is that there were between 200 and 300 correspondents at every stop, all of whom felt they had an equal right to be in the immediate vicinity of Mr. Khrushchev.

Q: Now excuse the interruption for a minute.

DAVIES: Sure.

Q: Were these routine press people, or were they all analysts like Henry Brandon? Were they Kremlinologists? Were some of them gossip columnists? Was it a mixed bag?

DAVIES: As had been the case with the Nixon visit to the Soviet Union, they were the stars of the American, and for that matter the foreign, press corps: Scotty (James) Reston (of the

New York Times) I think was on the whole trip with us; Richard Rovere was there throughout the trip; Bob Considine...

Q: The Hearst man?

DAVIES: The Hearst man was there throughout the trip, as I recall; Dorothy Kilgallen.

Q: The best people in the journalistic world.

DAVIES: The very best people. Everybody wanted to be involved in this trip, and even those journalists who didn't stick with the trip throughout wanted to be there for the major stops, because at each stop there was something very newsworthy: as I say, in Hollywood going to the stage - the sound stage - where Can Can was being filmed, in San Francisco there was a meeting with Walter Reuther, with labor leaders, and I think Harry Bridges was there. And this was an extremely important milestone in the history of Soviet-American relations, as I hardly need to stress, and the important events had occurred already at Camp David, and would terminate, as I recall, with Khrushchev's first appearance at the U.N., so in Washington and in New York, nevertheless this trip was an enormous media event, one of the great and one of the early great media events which were covered by television and all that.

We had all kinds of stars with us. And all these correspondents felt as I say that they had to be in the immediate vicinity of the principals - Khrushchev and... - and they couldn't be, because you couldn't get 200 or 300 people into that space and have anything but a mob scene, so there had to be a press pool, and that meant that somebody had to decide every day who the members of that pool were going to be. There were roughly 15 people selected to be members of the pool, and the functions of these people were to observe, to be in the immediate vicinity of Khrushchev and the leading Americans who were with him, and whom he met at each stop, and then to go back and be debriefed or debrief to the remainder of the press corps who couldn't squeeze in to be near Khrushchev and his American hosts when there was an event of some sort.

For example, at the luncheon which Spyros Skouras (the President of 20th Century Fox) gave in Hollywood, where many glittering Hollywood stars were guests, you couldn't have 300 newspaper people in the room, so these 15 who were in the room were picked to be representatives of the various branches of the media. The AP and UPI correspondents were there - the AP and the UPI automatically had to be represented - and Reuters had a man there, each of the networks had to have a man there - a man or a woman...(laughs) excuse me, a person - and then a certain number of specials were picked. But since there were - I forget exactly how many events there were, but let's say that during the six days there might have been as many as 20 events, not everybody could be a member of the pool, and that included people who were spending a great deal of money, whom the State Department was charging a lot of money to pay for the hire of the airplane in which they flew around from place to place, and for the provision of the accommodations which the State Department was responsible for reserving at each stop.

So this was an enormous logistical job - a logistical and political job, because when a newspaper spent - I don't know what the final charge was - let's say 5000, 6000, or 7000 dollars to send a correspondent around to cover Mr. Khrushchev, then that correspondent would say, "Now what is my boss getting for his 5-6-7000 dollars? I am in the back of 300 correspondents, I can't see or hear anything, and for that we are supposed to pay 5-6-7000 dollars."

Well, the brunt of this criticism of course Jim Hagerty quite correctly foresaw - and he knew that no matter how well it was handled there would be a lot of criticism, and in fact it was not handled well at all - and he said let the State Department...

Q: ...take the rap.

DAVIES: Take the rap. In the planning of events, in which I participated along with Linc White, Joe Reap obviously, Ed Savage, Bob McCoskey - all the people who were involved in the trip in one way or the other - I strongly urged that we inform in advance the principals of all the correspondents who signed up, the organizations which were paying for their people to go on the press plane. I said, "We must inform them that we will not be the ones who select the pool, that they are going to have to organize themselves to select the pool. That's the only way you can do it, which will get us off the hook, otherwise we're going to be in an impossible situation, we are not going to be able to satisfy these people."

Well, this was kicked around and kicked around and kicked around, and the upshot was that no decision was ever reached, and the trip began, and really Joe Reap - he is dead now, and de mortuis, I believe strongly, nil nisi bonum (nothing except good things ought to be said about the dead), but if you are going to talk about these things you have to say that Joe Reap kind of threw his hands up and said, look, it's going to be a disaster no matter what happens. And Linc White said the same thing, he said it's going to be a disaster.

And I said, "It won't be a disaster, we'll all pull together, we are all in this thing together," which we were - all in it together.

Well, of course, we went up to New York.

Khrushchev, immediately after his Washington visit - I am trying to reconstruct this now - I believe he went up to New York to address the United Nations.

Q: Was that the shoe-dropping scene?

DAVIES: No, no, that happened only later. That happened later when he came back to the United Nations, remember, on the boat.

Q: Some months later?

DAVIES: It was later that year. Let's see, was it in the fall of 1960? I think it may have been. He came back, remember, on a Russian boat, a Soviet ship, and the longshoremen refused to handle her and all that.

That's when the shoe-dropping thing happened, not on this occasion (that we are talking about).

No, he addressed the United Nations then, and it was quite amicable. That whole trip was, up to that point, fairly amicable.

But the first trouble began on the trip up to Hyde Park, where he was supposed to go and lay a wreath at the grave of President Roosevelt. President Roosevelt of course was honored, so to speak, in the Soviet Union, he was a great friend of Russia, and if he had only lived, if he had not died everything would have been honky-dory, and so forth.

So he went up there, and Eleanor Roosevelt was there and received him at Hyde Park, and the trouble began right there. The trip had only just begun. This was the first day of the trip, and the question arose as to who was going to be in the pool, because there was a motorcade organized by the New York State Police - the security was extreme of course - and there was a press car, or maybe two, in which the pool would ride.

Well, I had nothing to do with the pool; that was up to Joe Reap. But there just wasn't room for everybody. People were fighting to get into these station wagons, and it was kind of what the kids call these days a heavy scene. It was not well organized.

And you know, here were Scotty Reston and all the rest, all these great journalists not only seeing this occur but being victims of it, participating in it, so you knew that sooner or later there was going to be a blast from the press about the whole thing.

All right. From Hyde Park - from New York rather...

I think we went directly from New York to Los Angeles, unless I am mistaken. In Los Angeles there was a Mayor...golly, I should remember his name. The Mayor of Los Angeles was a bit of a...

Q: A bit controversial.

DAVIES: A controversial figure, right wing, maybe not extreme, but a right-wing Republican who made some unpleasant noises when Khrushchev arrived, and he sounded very grudging when he said, "Welcome to Los Angeles. We suppose everybody wants to see Hollywood, and we suppose, since you asked to see Hollywood..."

Q: Mayor Norris Poulsen of Los Angeles.

DAVIES: I don't know if you remember. At the time...

Well, I don't want to get ahead of myself.

Then sort of the first thing that happened was - and this developed on the way from the airport to the hotel where Khrushchev was staying - that Khrushchev said he wanted to go to Disneyland.

There was also a rather controversial sheriff - a sheriff or chief of police in Los Angeles - who was in charge of the local security who said, "No, we can't do that quite properly," and who said, "Look, your security man, General Serov, who was the head of the K.G.B., was here on the advance trip, and we discussed this, and General Serov vetoed it."

Q: Vetoed going to Disneyland?

DAVIES: Going to Disneyland, because it would require closing Disneyland a day ahead of time, and then sending hundreds and hundreds of people in there to search it and make sure that somebody was not hidden at the top of a Ferris wheel or someplace with a high powered rifle waiting to shoot Mr. Khrushchev when he came in.

So General Serov himself had vetoed it, he had agreed that this would be impossible. But Khrushchev made great publicity about this, and he was attempting, in what I regard as typical Soviet fashion, to put the Americans on the defensive, and Henry Cabot Lodge - whom I had met and gotten to know a little bit during the few days when he visited Afghanistan and was a very nice man - in this kind of head-to-head confrontation with this very shrewd peasant, this very rough infighter, it took him (Lodge) a while to figure out that he was being attacked, but he was, you know. Initially, he thought, well, he really wants to go to Disneyland.

And maybe for all I know he did. However, my perception of it was that this had been worked out rather carefully, and it was a ploy. "Let's say that you want to go to Disneyland. They of course will say No, it's impossible, and then you have already established your position as a demandeur, whose reasonable request, so far as the American people...the American people will say, why sure, of course, everybody wants to go to Disneyland, if they go out to Los Angeles... (runs words together)

"It's a free country."

So that was the first thing that happened.

Norris Poulsen was the name of the Mayor (of Los Angeles) and I may even remember the name of the Chief of Police at some point.

Well, at the lunch Spyros Skouras of course made a very impassioned speech: he was a Greek immigrant boy who came here with nothing, he spoke with quite a heavy Greek accent, and he preached at Mr. Khrushchev about how America was the land of golden

opportunity, and here he was, a little Greek peasant boy whose family had fled from Turkey before the wrath of the Turks immediately after the First World War, and who eventually had come to the United States, and they didn't have a penny with which to bless themselves, and now here he was...

Q: A tycoon.

DAVIES: The chairman, or whatever it was, of 20th Century Fox.

There were several other speeches in like vein, but Spyros Skouras's was perhaps the most aggressive. It was well meant, but of course there had been no advance planning, and nobody had said to Spyros Skouras we want to handle it this way or that way. But I don't think it would have made any difference if they had said that, so unorganized or disorganized we were.

And then Khrushchev chose this occasion to drive home... No, wait, it was that night. Again I am getting ahead of myself.

It was after that lunch that we went to the Can Can sound stage with Shirley MacLaine, and so far as I could see everything there was great jollity. I think Mrs. Khrushcheva was not exactly enchanted. She was, as far as I was aware - and still is, I think she is still alive - a woman of considerable education, and I would say even culture, not prepossessing looking by our standards, but an intelligent woman, who had contributed enormously, I believe, to Khrushchev's education. She was a school teacher when they were married, he was unschooled, very crude, raw, a peasant boy who had gone to work in a mining town in the Ukraine and never had any higher education, but she came from a slightly better background and helped to educate him. Nina Petrovna - I think she was quite a remarkable woman.

Well, I don't think she was exactly enchanted. There was something very condescending in a way, I think, or at any rate they didn't understand - she didn't understand, she was not quite aware of what this was, and here were these very scantily dressed, charming young ladies prancing about in a fashion which in the Soviet Union with its prim and proper ways would have been regarded as pretty daring, if not actually obscene almost.

So she was not quite pleased by the whole thing - it was evident - but Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev appeared to enjoy it.

Well, then that evening there was a big dinner at the hotel. The Mayor was there again and made what I think Khrushchev, I would say more or less accurately, described as ugly noises. He was trying to make politics out of the whole thing and to score a point or two off Khrushchev, the way Nixon had scored a point, and a very substantial one, during the visit to the Soviet Union, by shaking his finger under Khrushchev's nose as he engaged with him in a polemic.

So Khrushchev then chose this occasion to drive home the...to cap the psychological effort that he had begun earlier with the ploy about Disneyland, and it was then that he threatened to go home, and he enumerated all these things.

First of all, the Mayor in greeting him had been rude, which was not a bad description. But he said to the Mayor, "If this is what you call your capitalist manners, your good manners and hospitality, I want to tell you that we Russians have a different conception of hospitality. When Mr. Nixon came to our country of course we knew that he was not a friend of ours, but we received him properly and correctly, and nobody insulted him."

And then he referred to this obscene spectacle, an affront. He portrayed it as an affront, and in effect said, "You know, Mr. Skouras' speech was an affront, lecturing me as if I were a little boy, why I fought in the Revolution, and so forth and so on, and so forth and so on."

And he took the pose of one who had been offended, and he was indignant, and righteously so, and he said it was very simple, that he had been invited here by the President, but if in fact it were the case that he was not welcome, then he was quite capable..., the plane was standing by, he would have it called there, and he would get on the plane and go right back to the Soviet Union.

Well, needless to say this sent a tremor - a tremor! - through the assembled dignitaries. What does this mean? It's very threatening.

And it was very threatening. It was very threatening. It was very effective, with the result that Henry Cabot Lodge then was on the phone to the President next thing, saying, "What should we do? What should we do?"

I don't know that the President telephoned Khrushchev directly because they had no common language, but through Henry Cabot Lodge the President conveyed his apologies. In other words, Khrushchev had succeeded in putting us in a corner quite adroitly, very well, utilizing our own mistakes.

Well, I don't know whether we could have controlled the Mayor. Actually the way this whole trip was put together it was a matter of competition: Los Angeles wanted him, you know, Hollywood wanted him, and everybody was looking for publicity and for some advantage. And the places he visited were determined on the basis of who would pay for his stay there, in effect, and 20th Century Fox - that Spyros Skouras headed - did pay for the entertainment, and it was not cheap. The State Department did not have the money to do this, and the taxpayers didn't have the money to do this. We don't have the money to do that kind of thing in this country.

Still, it's been worked out a little better since then.

It was a comedy of errors, which however had more serious overtones...

Q: When you started the whole thing rolling, had it had any precedent? Had anyone with that big an entourage landed in this country before that time? There wasn't much precedent, I don't believe.

DAVIES: No, there wasn't much precedent. Of course there had been important official visits, but none which had aroused this interest and had become so huge a media event. Certainly there had been nothing like that before the Second World War, and nothing really before Khrushchev. So we didn't really know how to handle it. We had little experience.

Q: What about the Garst farm?

DAVIES: I am coming to that.

Q: That seemed to be widely exploited by the Soviets. Was it exaggerated or was it a bona fide effective thing?

DAVIES: What do you mean?

Q: I mean that Khrushchev later kept in contact with them and...

DAVIES: Oh well, he'd been in contact with them before that.

Q: I see.

DAVIES: No, I'll come to the Garst farm in a minute.

The upshot of Khrushchev's blowing up that evening in Los Angeles was that he really had us where he wanted us in effect, and stories were written in effect saying how inept the U.S. Government and the State Department had been and were being in handling this man, and that was fairly accurate.

Well, we went up to San Francisco on the train the next day. The reason for going on the train was that he was supposed to see Vandenberg Air Force Base, where they had an early generation of missiles - were they the Jupiters? - and they were visible from the train window. So the idea was - and it's rather simplistic - the idea was, we'll go by there, and these missiles will be up...I don't really know...

Q: Tilted.

DAVIES: Well, yes, they'd be up and he'd see them, and he'd say, "Oh, gracious, these people are powerful, I'd better watch it." As a matter of fact we were much more (powerful). They were way, way behind, they didn't have anything like that.

Well, as a matter of fact when we went by Vandenberg Air Force Base Khrushchev made it a point to be giving an interview to a number of correspondents sitting with his back to

the window through which one could see Vandenberg Air Force Base, and he never looked out the window. In fact one of the correspondents said, "Oh, Mr. Prime Minister, we are passing Vandenberg Air Force Base." And Khrushchev said, "Yes? So?" You know, that kind of thing. He made it a point not to look at the missiles. I mean it was pretty obvious to him what this was all about.

In San Francisco I don't remember. The thing became a fog in my mind. If we got two or three hours' sleep per night we were lucky - we, the people in the press party - because we were up with the correspondents until they had gotten settled, then we got to bed, and then it was a question of bags in the corridor at four A.M., and be downstairs ready to load into the cars and buses at 4.30, because the press party left an hour ahead of the plane in which Khrushchev was riding, so it would already be on the ground before he arrived, and left also an hour ahead when he departed from a place - we left an hour before he did.

So we were on the go long before anybody else, and were up after anybody else, and although as I look back on it now I was quite a young fellow and had pretty good stamina, after two or three days of this, together with the tensions produced by dealing with these hundreds of not only disgruntled but angry correspondents - they were angry because they contended, or some of them did, that Joe Reap was only giving his friends the opportunity of being members of the pool.

Q: Was that true?

DAVIES: Well, I don't really know whether it was true. I had other things to do, I had other responsibilities, but people whom I knew quite well in the press corps were coming to me absolutely livid, to the point that finally in Des Moines Scotty Reston got hold of me and said, "This thing is a disaster," and I said, "Well, it looks fairly catastrophic to me too from that point of view." And he had a big story the next day, all based very largely on what I had said, and I said it's a disaster because Jim Hagerty - I don't blame the guy - passed the buck to Linc White, and Linc White passed it to Joe Reap.

I shouldn't have said those things to Scotty Reston, but I was just hanging by a thread, my nerves - I confess it - were shot. I had not had enough sleep.

Q: How many days had this been by then?

DAVIES: Well, by that time Khrushchev had already been in the United States four or five days, maybe longer, because he had arrived, he'd spent a weekend with President Eisenhower at Camp David, and then as I remember he went back there at the end of his visit. So it had already been four or five days with very, very little sleep, and trying to take care of all the details that had not been taken care of beforehand. It was just one calamity after the other.

The thing that broke our backs in Des Moines was that the press party arrived there at about 6:00 a.m. Khrushchev was supposed to arrive at seven or eight, or something like that, and

those in the pool stayed at the airport to welcome him, and the rest of us went into Des Moines, and we went to the hotel, where our rooms were booked, only to find that there was some kind of farmers' convention going on there, that the farmers were having their final session that morning, and that they would not be out of their rooms until noon - that was the checkout time - and we would not be able to check in then until after the rooms had been made up, so it was a prospect of two or three o'clock in the afternoon before these people who were dead beat, could (get into their rooms). All of us were (dead beat). We had been going on all 12 cylinders for days on end, and all they wanted to do was get into their rooms and lie down for a while until the first event took place - I don't remember when it was, around noon - and get a shower and shave, and there was no possibility of doing so.

Well, we had a guy - I can't even remember now who it was - from the State Department there, as an advance man, and this poor guy nearly had a nervous breakdown right there in my presence, and I had to send him off and get somebody to give him a sedative because there was no way he could (function), he was just beyond being useful to anybody, least of all himself.

There was a colonel there from the Iowa National Guard. I don't remember the man's name. You know, the kind of thing that gets me about this country... - this guy had no real obligation or responsibility, but he performed so beautifully. I mean you find people who step into the breach. This man did have a role to play, but it was quite a subsidiary role: he was supposed to ensure that the facilities at the airport were available. Well, in fact he did so much.

In the first place I said, "You know, this is impossible, Colonel. There are no rooms, and these guys are absolutely about to eat me alive; we've got to find rooms for them."

He went to the Des Moines Chamber of Commerce, and he said, come on with me.

We tramped across the street, and went to the Des Moines Chamber of Commerce, and those people said, "We've got a list of boarding houses and people who will take boarders." And in a matter of an hour we parceled out these guys and said, "Okay, you go to such and such a street, number such and such, and there is a lady there who has two beds, and you can check in there and come back here by three o'clock this afternoon, and we'll have the hotel room for you."

This Colonel set up a pressroom. No pressroom had been set up, because this convention was being held there. Well, you know, the convention had been scheduled long before anybody ever knew that Khrushchev was coming, and the hotel hadn't been able to cancel that.

The Colonel managed to get a room somewhere and set up a pressroom in a matter of a couple of hours, with the help of the Des Moines Register - or the Tribune - the Des Moines paper. I mean he did everything, and frankly we were no help to him, all of us were on the verge of hysteria, we were just absolutely bushed.

Anyway this Colonel, whose name I forget, is one of the unsung heroes, and I'll never forget the guy as long as I live. We were there less than 36 hours perhaps, but he was A-1.

Well, Khrushchev arrived, and as I say the first event was some kind of civic luncheon, I don't know what it was. Then we went out to the Garst farm, which was a matter of 120 miles away from Des Moines.

Q: You went by car?

DAVIES: No, we went by bus.

Q: It was a long bus ride.

DAVIES: It was a long bus ride, but down there in Iowa it's laid out in these quarter sections. There are roads running...

It's a most impressive state, and seeing it from the vantage point of Russians - because one thing they don't have is any kind of decent roads, and here the state, the entire state, or at least all the arable part of the state, is just one grid - you look at it from the air - of roads. Every quarter section - I don't know how many acres it is - is surrounded: there would be the main macadam roads, and then there are these very fine, excellent dirt roads, dividing the quarter sections, and you can go anywhere in the country with a tractor or a wheeled vehicle, which you cannot do in most European countries, and much less so in the Soviet Union.

So this was enormously impressive.

Garst - Roswell Garst - had been in the Soviet Union several times, attempting to interest not Khrushchev - because I don't know that he had ever seen Khrushchev before; maybe he had, but I don't know - but the Ministry of Agriculture, in growing corn, maize. Garst himself was not only a corn raiser but also a breeder of seed corn, and a sort of geneticist, and he had his own company which raised and sold seed corn, and he had a particular variety which he thought would go well - I don't know. He was a very enterprising man; he and his sons had this beautiful farm and a terrific seed company.

So he had invited everybody out to the farm, but like everybody else he hadn't counted on this absolute mob, in the literal sense, of 250 or 300 wild correspondents. I can't remember the name of the little village near which the Garst farm is located, but the only provisions that had been made there to feed the correspondents involved the ladies of the local church chapter making some I should say rather meager sandwiches, which they were selling for rather fat prices, something like a dollar a sandwich, which in those days for a piece of bologna between two pieces of Sunshine bread was regarded even by people who were on expense accounts as a little steep, you know, and 25 cents for a bottle of Coke, which in

most places cost a nickel. And particularly out there in this little Iowa crossroads it appeared to be steep, so that was another cause for complaint.

I missed the bus somewhere. I was always missing the bus. There was always somebody who had left his or her bag behind, and it was just one thing after the other. I never succeeded in getting on the press bus, but every place - again I speak of these Americans who just impress the heck out of you. This Colonel from the Iowa Air National Guard - he was an airman - got hold of an Iowa State trooper, who had a beautiful late model car - I don't know what it was - all fitted out with sirens and flashing lights and things, and he said, "Look, Mr. Davies here, this is very important, he's got to catch up with the press bus." Well, I never had such a ride in my life. This guy would turn on the siren, and we set off at 110 miles an hour down these beautiful, straight Iowa highways, and going around corners at 80 miles an hour on two wheels up these dirt roads between the quarter sections, trying to find the press bus, and we finally caught up with the press bus, just as it reached the Garst farm. So we could have taken it easy, there was no hurry, really. (laughs)

I didn't even know where I was going, but I was walking such a fine line, that I don't know why, but for some reason it seemed so important that I catch up with the press bus. Well, the reason it was so important was, I felt, now the next catastrophe is about to happen, and I've got to be there. I couldn't prevent it, but at least if I was there I would know what was happening. (laughter)

So we got to the Garst farm, and Roswell Garst was appalled. He said, "Gosh, nobody told me you were going to bring all these correspondents." And I said, "Gee, Mr. Garst, you know, Mr. Khrushchev is fairly well known and..."

And he said (shouting), "Well, they can't come on my property," says he.

I said, (laughs heartily) "Mr. Garst..."

At that point I was hysterical, and I said, "Mr. Garst, you tell them, I ain’t gonna tell them. You tell them. You'd better say something."

He said, "Well, I'll get the dogs out here."

I said, "Now, Mr. Garst, now really, please. There's Scotty Reston here, and Bob Considine, and your name will not be Garst, your name will be Mud from here on."

And Roger Mudd was on the trip. There were all kinds of people around.

At any rate, with ill grace - and I don't blame him - he said, "I don't want them, they'll tramp down my corn."

I said, "Well, they probably will, but..."

So Khrushchev got down in this silage pit. It was a new method that Garst had devised for making silage: they hollowed out the side of a slope, dug it out with back hoe or a bulldozer, and then there was a continuous belt which carried the corn cobs in there, and these corn cobs were heaped up - the corn was dry, it had been dried I guess - and then they threw it into some kind of a machine that stripped the kernels off, and then it chopped the cobs up to make silage. There was a big hole there, and the cobs went in there. If anybody had slipped in there - and I was afraid somebody might - we would have had some AP reporter in among the silage.

But here all these guys were crowded around this pit, which was just made out of earth, there was no bracing or anything, and we were trying to keep them back from the sides of it. And that was the famous scene where Roswell Garst started throwing corn cobs at the correspondents.

Q: I never knew that.

DAVIES: Oh yes, that was a great scene, and Nikita joined in, you know. He thought it was all great fun. (laughter)

Q: But Garst was serious?

DAVIES: Oh, yes, he was mad, he said, "GET BACK!" And he was quite right - it was dangerous. If the earth had caved in, somebody could have broken a leg, and he could have been sued. I don't know, whatever...

But the whole thing was fairly hilarious. Looking back on it it was hilarious. At the time with all those State Department people who were there it was...

Foy Kohler was sort of leading the State Department group and advising Henry Cabot Lodge.

Well, somehow we got through that, and then we went to Pittsburgh, and went to a steel mill. Perle Mesta was our hostess.

Q: In Pittsburgh?

DAVIES: In Pittsburgh. She owned a steel mill you know, and we went and looked at her steel mill. And there were some Polish-Americans in the steel mill, and they spoke in Polish or Ukrainian or something, I don't know what, to Khrushchev, and he was a little surprised by that. And the security people were not too happy to hear that, with good reason.

But by that time this traveling three ring circus had settled down to a level of what I would call routinized catastrophe. I mean something went wrong every day, but by that time we all expected something to go wrong. And finally we got back.

But there were constant stories all along the line about the catastrophes, and about how badly this was handled. You know the way the press is when they get on to something like that. It was regarded as a scandal, and it was a scandal certainly.

So when we got back to Washington I was so furious with the whole damn thing that I wrote a memo - I can't remember to whom I wrote it now, maybe it was to Foy Kohler who was sort of in charge of this, maybe it was to somebody else - complaining, saying, damn it, it could have been handled better; and it could have been, with a little more planning and a little more forethought, and a little better organization. But Joe Reap had just really thrown up his hands on the first day and said there's nothing any of us can do about this, and hadn't tried.

Q: It was bigger than both of you.

DAVIES: Well, it was, it was big, but it could have been handled a little better, if he had made himself accessible. Hell, he'd get into the hotel and go to his room and lock himself in and wouldn't answer the phone, he'd take the phone off the hook. And the correspondents who wanted to complain about not being designated to be members of the pool, he wouldn't talk with. He was inaccessible to them. And you know, in this country you can't run a thing that way, it's just impossible.

Well, I don't know, you have to put it down under the heading of Education, but in terms of the kind of political objectives that we had hoped might be accomplished - of impressing Khrushchev with this country - his visit was an abysmal failure, because he and his advisers figured out...they succeeded in getting the upper hand almost from the outset, and they never relinquished that advantage.

I remember when - I believe this was when we came back to Washington, I couldn't swear to that, but anyway that's my recollection - he gave a press conference, or I should say he went to a National Press Club luncheon.

Q: Khrushchev you mean?

DAVIES: Uh-huh, and did the usual thing there: he gave a little talk, a little speech which was on TV, and then he answered questions. Golly, what was the name of his interpreter, he had an excellent interpreter.

Well, this young fellow, this interpreter interpreted the speech and interpreted the questions. He was staying at Blair House, and I was in Blair House, waiting for him to come back there. There was going to be a meeting. I can't remember now who was coming to call on him there. It was the Mayor or the Chief Commissioner, I can't remember...

Anyhow people were going to come to call on him at Blair House, and I was waiting there for him to come back from the Press Club and help with the press arrangements for these meetings that he was going to have later that afternoon.

I think I was probably the only American there when members of his entourage turned on the TV to watch his appearance at the National Press Club, and he did very well there: he scored heavily on some of the questions, some of which seemed to me to be fairly naive. But he scored heavily there, and every time that happened and it was clear that he had made a point, these members of his entourage were just tickled pink, you know. It was a contest, and they recognized it as a contest, and they would clap. There was nobody there, I was in the background, and I don't think they were really conscious of me, but they were just thrilled by his performance there, which was very, very carefully thought through and very, very well performed.

So the whole thing to me was a lesson in the ineptitude or the (lack of foresight) of (the persons concerned). You really have to plan these things very, very carefully; you have to have somebody clearly in charge; nobody was in charge of the whole thing. Henry Cabot Lodge was in charge, but Henry Cabot Lodge was up in Boston and didn't come down until a day or two before Khrushchev arrived, and he wasn't that interested really in the details. Foy Kohler was sort of an adviser to him, but Foy Kohler didn't have responsibility for the press side of the thing, and it was a typically fragmented organization, or rather lack of organization which was the cause of this fairly catastrophic failure of the trip to perform a positive function, which it should have performed. There should have been very careful thought given to where he went, and ways worked out so that the press did not dominate the whole thing the way it did and get in the way and turn it into nothing but a media event.

Well, so much for all that.

Q: Now as to the Los Angeles aspect of the thing, the Mayor was apparently not very sympathetic to the visit. Would it have been the White House's job or the State Department's to approach the Mayor and say, "Now look, can you cool it a little?"

DAVIES: Well, our point was - my point, the point I kept trying to make to anybody who would listen, Foy Kohler in the first place, and he tried, although without success - that the White House has to be responsible for this. They had the logistical means of handling this whole thing, and if the President or, for that matter, Nixon, or somebody in authority - as you remember I think Christian Herter was Secretary (of State) by that time, John Foster Dulles had died, and Christian Herter was a fine man, but he didn't have the kind of clout that was needed. Maybe if he had talked with people there it would have worked, but nobody did it, nothing was done.

I think if the President or Nixon - of course Nixon wasn't going to do it, Nixon was not going to call this Mayor who was his political ally and tell him don't be a nasty anti-Communist, don't try to score political points, this is not the time for it.

Nixon wasn't going to do that, and the mere fact that it was decided, I think very injudiciously, to let 20th Century Fox - and you know, as far as they were concerned it was an opportunity to advertise Can Can, great publicity, I mean holy smokes, fine, I understand that, but not at the expense of the political objectives that we should have had of impressing this guy with our ability in the first place, if nothing else, to handle such an event, and in the second place to expose him to some serious people who would have been capable of standing up to him in argument and of making some points that might have sunk in, because he was not a stupid man, and even more of a point in my view, Mrs. Khrushcheva, his wife, was a very intelligent woman, who I always felt when the day was done or when the trip was over would kind of sit down with him and say, "You know, Nikita...did you notice this? That was interesting."

Actually I think she was handled much better by and large than he was.

Q: Who handled her? Did they have someone special?

DAVIES: Well, on the trip itself Mrs. Emily Lodge as I remember was involved with her, and Phyllis Kohler, and Pat Armitage, the wife of Foreign Service Officer Jack Armitage who is now retired, who was active...

Q: And they worked with her?

DAVIES: They worked with her, and they enjoyed her, and it was apparent that she was interested and asked the right questions.

She had a separate program: she was taken to supermarkets - the kind of thing you'd expect - and she asked, from what I heard, intelligent questions. And I think we did succeed to some extent in getting across some of the points we wanted to with her.

We did with Khrushchev, too. He was taken out to Greenbelt, and he was very impressed with that; he was very impressed with the Garst farm, with the roads in Iowa, with the road network generally, the highways - there weren't that many inter-states - and the thruways in Los Angeles, and the architecture. He was impressed by these things, and I think was quite honest in saying so, defensive to some extent, but... He was impressed with the steel mill in Pittsburgh - he understood that much better than most of the other stuff.

So it wasn't a complete bust - by no means - but it was a very mixed...the result was a very mixed one, much more mixed than it should have been, or in my view could have been, if there had been the kind of careful, thoughtful planning and preparation that there might have been.

But I don't know.

As you said - and you are quite right - it was unprecedented. We'd never done anything like that before, certainly nothing on that scale, and we were all kind of learning by doing.

Q: How many were in Khrushchev's entourage?

DAVIES: Oh, there were quite a few. There was the Minister of Agriculture, there was - unless I am mistaken - Gromyko, who was then Foreign Minister, and still is Foreign Minister...

Q: Did he have more than 100 people?

DAVIES: Oh, no, no. Russians? No, no. He had all told maybe 30 people. Then there were a bunch of Soviet correspondents. There was quite a large group of Soviet correspondents, and I took care of them, too - the Soviet and the (other) foreign correspondents.

There was quite an argument at the outset as to whether we should permit other Communists - correspondents from other Communist countries, like Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany - to come, and I said sure, why not, what the hell, if we are going to let the Russians come, why keep these other guys out?

So we had quite a group of East European and West European correspondents, from Le Monde, from Figaro, from the Neue Zurche Zeitung, from the Frankfurter Allgemeine, the London Times, the Guardian, the Italian papers and so forth and so on, the Egyptian papers.

It was certainly the greatest traveling crap show, crap game, in which I've ever been involved. Golly, once in a lifetime is more than enough.

Well, then Nikita went back. You remember the great spirit of Camp David. The great spirit of Camp David, yes.

Then there was supposed to be another meeting, you remember, in Paris, and then the U-2 came along. Well, there were a number of things, but the U-2 came along, and the Deputy Assistant Secretary who was in charge of Soviet and Eastern European Affairs was Richard H. (Hallock) Davis - he is dead now, he died about ten years ago - who had also served in Moscow twice at least.

Dick Davis was involved in the U-2 thing in the State Department. He was constantly attending meetings with various people about the U-2, and he'd come out of these meetings and I'd be waiting at the door, and he'd give me what had obviously been decided in the meeting, what should be said.

And of course Nikita meanwhile was back in Moscow. First of all he made a speech; some announcement had been made about an American plane being shot down, but they didn't say where - or an American plane going down, I don't think they even said shot down, but they didn't say where.

So Dick Davis went hastening off to a meeting, and I said, "Well, you know, Linc White has to say something about this. In the first place, is it true? Has an American plane been shot down or been lost? Is one of our aircraft missing, and if so, what kind? And what was it doing?"

So Dick Davies said, "I'll get the answer for you."

I said, "Well, he needs it by noon, for the noon press briefing."

No, no, no, no.

So Dick Davies would trot off to the meeting, and I'd trot off behind him, but I couldn't go into the room - I'd stand outside in the corridor and wait for him to come out with a little slip of paper or an envelope or something with a formula written on it, and I would then trot that down to Linc White, you see.

Of course initially they said yes, it was true that a weather reconnaissance aircraft which had taken off from, I guess, Adana in Turkey, and was flying over Eastern Turkey gathering weather data, had not returned to base.

Then the next thing we knew -

We asked what kind of an aircraft it was, and it was an RB-47 or something like that, because at that point the very existence I think of the U-2 was classified, and nobody knew that there was such a plane. I mean there had been some stories in Aviation Week, which has everything, you know. There had been some stories about a mysterious black...

Q: High altitude, silhouette, sort of...whatever.

DAVIES: But at that point nobody was connecting those stories with this story.

Then Nikita got up as I remember at the Supreme Soviet, and gave a speech about the whole thing. No, this was not over Eastern Turkey; this was over Sverdlovsk. I think it was on a Saturday morning that he made that speech. I was down in the Department, and Linc White came storming up to my office - I had a big map of the Soviet Union in my office - and he said, "That's impossible. How can it be over Sverdlovsk? There isn't any plane with that range to get to Sverdlovsk from anywhere and get back to anywhere, outside the Soviet Union. So it's impossible."

So we were there with our rulers, measuring the map and comparing with the scale at the bottom. You know, it was a very scientific effort on our part to figure this thing out, looking up in various handbooks and calling up people in the Aviation Division to ask, "Hey, have you ever heard of a plane with this kind of range?" "Nope, never heard of such a plane." "Well, thanks."

So Linc said, "It's impossible, the guy is lying." Then he turned to me and he said, "Don't you think he is lying, Dick?"

And I said, "Well, I don't know whether he is lying or not." (laughter)

Meanwhile Dick Davis was off at a meeting. What to say about this? What to say about this?

He came out with a statement, which in effect confirmed everything that Nikita had been saying, but said that the President - because that was one of the questions that had been asked, Did the President know about this? Already it had been asked - that the President knew nothing about it.

So we worked this up, and Linc went out...

At about two o'clock in the afternoon - I had a little FIAT, I don't know what they call it, but it was the tiniest FIAT, you know, with the engine in the rear that you could pick up with one hand - Well, I had this little FIAT, and I started home Saturday afternoon in my little FIAT. It had a radio in it, so I turned on the radio. It was just a minute or two after two that I got out of the State Department garage and turned the radio on - I think that was right, it was two o'clock - and somebody, a White House correspondent, was saying that the President, who was up at his farm at Gettysburg (Pa.), had acknowledged and had given permission and approval, thereby cutting the ground right out from under Linc White, who barely two hours ago had been saying that the President knew nothing about this. And here the President had taken the responsibility for it. So...

I don't think Nikita...

Maybe in that speech to the Supreme Soviet on that Saturday morning he had admitted - he had said, not admitted - he had said that they had the pilot, because he'd dribbled this out, you know. I mean he did it very cleverly, so that we made statements on the basis of his incomplete account of the moment, and then he came along afterwards with a fuller account which contradicted what we had said.

Q: This raises a very interesting point about the approval process. Was Richard Hallock Davis aware of these flights? He was aware of them.

DAVIES: Oh, yes.

Q: The State Department...

DAVIES: Oh, yes.

Q: And they had been approved by some National Security Council mechanism?

DAVIES: Yes, they had been approved by a National Security Council mechanism. I forget now all the back-and-forth on this. I knew it intimately at the time, but...

But I am not sure that the President had given approval for this specific flight. I know there had been questions raised, because it was coming so close to the Paris summit. There had been questions raised: should we go ahead with this?

I guess the President did...they did take it to him, or if they didn't it was cleared very high up the line, and the decision was that there would be one last flight before the Paris summit. And they were quite accurate there - there was one last flight before the Paris summit. (laughs) In fact one last flight, period, over the Soviet Union.

Of course it was a great technical feat for its day. It was a terrific technical feat.

Q: And it was producing stuff totally unavailable otherwise?

DAVIES: Oh, I mean you know it - those were the days before we had these earth satellites. I don't think we had any at that point. Of course, we weren't able to launch them until later.

And with these U-2s, which were marvels of aeronautical design and American engineering...

Q: Plus the camera.

DAVIES: Plus the camera, which was a marvel.

Q: It was a revolution.

DAVIES: And we are still... I think we are... I don't know... I don't want to talk...

But Aviation Week I believe them. (laughter)

Okay, so this was a bit of a debacle: we'd been caught with our hand in the cookie jar, and we didn't really know how to handle it, I mean there really was no very good contingency plan. Nothing succeeds like success, and by the same token nothing fails like failure. (laughter)

Dick Davis was getting the word from the people who...and he was contributing to that.

If the President had denied responsibility, I suppose...

But it would have been a mistake. He did the right thing. And he couldn't - he couldn't deny it. He just couldn't.

(quotes remarks that might have been made)

"You mean to say that you, Mr. President...? I mean these things are very costly, and you didn't know...?

"You know, there is an implicit risk of war in flying over somebody else's territory in this fashion, and you didn't know?"

It would have been the height of irresponsibility, and President Eisenhower recognized that fully, and took responsibility. I don't think he could have done otherwise. I think Christian Herter made the announcement, as I remember. He'd been up at the farm with him.

But Linc White - this is a kind of a sidelight here - this destroyed Linc White.

Q: Really?

DAVIES: Well, it destroyed his credibility. Linc White is a man from East Tennessee. I don't know whether you know, but they seceded from the Confederate States during the Civil war. They were Republican, and they tried to be an independent state within the Confederate States, but didn't succeed, and of course they were beaten down, but they are very independent people.

Linc White is a very fine man. I really...well, Peter, you know, as you go through life there are some people who are father figures, and I felt very much that way towards him. He was a man 20 years older who had been in the State Department under the legendary Mike McDermott, who was a great spokesman there in the old days before the war, and Linc had spent years and years there: he was a career civil servant, not a Foreign Service officer.

He was a career civil servant, and he did a beautiful job. He was trusted by the correspondents. It was a simpler day out of which he grew, all-in-all.

To him it was a point of honor never to lie to the correspondents. That isn't to say that he always felt that he had to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. No. But knowingly to lie, or to be asked to lie, he felt was beyond - and it wasn't a matter so much really of ethics. But it was professional ethics, not absolute morality. It was professional ethics. He'd say, "You know, if I lie to these guys..." - and he told me this a number of times - "if I tell one lie, if I am caught in one lie, that's the end of me, they'll never trust me again, they'll never believe me again."

And there is a very deep truth in that somehow.

Bobby Burns said it, "Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive!"

One lie is not enough, then there is one after the other.

And that really destroyed him. He felt that it destroyed him. I don't know whether it did nor not, but he felt that...

Q: He'd been let down.

DAVIES: He'd been let down, and he'd let them down, and he had a personal relationship with so many of these people which had gone back for so many years, and in effect...well, it wasn't that they were no longer his friends, but ever after that...

Q: The air was not the same.

DAVIES: Ever after that, when he said something that was perhaps a little difficult to credit or that was not or didn't seem to be quite straightforward to somebody, one would say, "Yes, Linc, is this another U-2?" And you know, he just couldn't stand that.

So he finally left, shortly thereafter, and went out to Australia - I can't remember whether it was Melbourne or Sydney - as consul general, and was there for three or four years, and then he retired. I think he got sick after that. I've never seen him since.

Q: But he is still alive?

DAVIES: So far as I am aware. I saw a picture of him, I think, coming back from there in a wheelchair, and I didn't know what he'd got. But that destroyed him, as in fact that trip with Khrushchev destroyed Joe Reap. I hope I didn't contribute to that. Joe Reap had many children - the Reaps were an Irish family, and he had eight or nine kids. Well, Joe lived on for many years, and he died here two or three years ago. I saw an obituary in the paper. He was working in the Department right up until shortly before the end.

But Linc really couldn't face those guys after that. He just couldn't face those guys.

Q: Well, that's a credit to him.

DAVIES: Well, I felt it was, and as I say it was a simpler world, and he had an attitude which grew out of that world, and in fact after that he'd shake his head and say, "This is something that's totally different from anything that I've ever been used to."

Q: He wouldn't have been prepared for the duplicity of later times.

DAVIES: No, he felt he had to get out of there. I had always a great affection for him, and I had real respect for him, because he did try by his lights to do an honest job.

But that was a fascinating period for me and for all of us. It was obviously a great turning point in the relationship between the two countries, apparently for the better, the dawn of a new day and all that kind of thing, despite the fact that Khrushchev was bellicose in many ways, and I realize now, looking back on it, that he was an aberration in the Soviet system.

He was trying to change it - undoubtedly incautiously in some respects - and eventually of course that cost him his job, but at the time we didn't see that: he was behaving very belligerently in a way, and of course then he broke up the Paris summit. I think by that time he no longer had the support that he had had earlier in the Politburo for a kind of detente policy which he was trying to develop, and indeed the U-2 episode was utilized by those who were opposed to that to say, "Well, you see, you can't do business with those guys, because they are trying to take advantage of you even as they are talking, even as Eisenhower is talking about this spirit of Camp David, and trying to straighten things out in Europe, he is signing the authorization for the U-2 to fly."

So you have to understand what your principal objective is - it's a question of priorities - and say either that the most important thing is military preparedness and, in order to proceed with that as we should, we have to have as much information as we can about what the Soviets are doing inside the country, we need those photographs, or...(detente).

But again you can't blame people for it. We were trying to follow both objectives simultaneously and they conflicted, and we were unable to prevent their collision and the destruction of one.

Q: Who was the American Ambassador in Moscow then?

DAVIES: At that point I suppose it was Tommy (Llewellyn) Thompson.

Q: Did he take a buffeting after that?

DAVIES: Oh, yes, very much so, because he was very close to Khrushchev. He was a remarkable man. Of all the ambassadors we have had there - you know, underneath all those Brooks Brothers shoes there are feet of clay to some extent, no matter how...

He had his weak points, but he was a remarkable man, I think, head and shoulders above the other ambassadors: George Kennan, Chip Bohlen.

I think Foy Kohler came closer. I put Foy Kohler second, but Tommy Thompson was head and shoulders above the other.

Q: And he came from simple origins, didn't he?

DAVIES: Yes, out in Colorado. Great poker player, really a very able poker player - I suppose that was part of it - but he was also a man who... Well, in some ways he was a consummate diplomat. He felt always that you've got to talk with people, that you've got to try to find a little (common) ground, and he did.

He spent quite a lot of time with Khrushchev, he had a privileged position and could see him at almost any time. He didn't particularly understand, in my opinion, the Soviet

political process - and I don't know that he was particularly interested in trying to understand that, but that's another question.

And of course during the Cuban missile crisis then he was here in Washington, and he played I think a very important role, not a major role, but maybe the most important subsidiary or minor role in giving what I think was the right advice at the time, trying to find some way to handle this thing without bringing it to the kind of pitch at which...well, we all felt that the missiles could fly. I was in Moscow then, on my second tour. Foy Kohler had arrived, Tommy Thompson was there when I arrived in 1961.

I might just mention before going on to that - or maybe we can leave the Cuban missile crisis for another time, as a matter of fact I've got a little piece of paper I wrote shortly after that on how the Embassy...about the part that the Embassy played, which was a subsidiary one, not the major one by any means, because that took place right here in this town: for once in this postwar period we were in the driver's seat; it was quite clearly from that point of view the very apogee, if you like, of the two decades, which Henry Luce liked to think constituted an American Century, just two decades, and there were some good things that he said about them.

At any rate, before we go forward I might just mention the last few months of my stay in Washington. I was as I said in the Office of Soviet Union Affairs, Public Affairs adviser there, a fascinating business, and I came into contact with many outstanding people. I've mentioned some of them. Andy (Andrew C.) Berding was Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs - he is still around this town - and an outstanding man in my opinion, one of the real professionals. He was the adviser on Public Affairs to (John Foster) Dulles and (Christian) Herter. Really an outstanding guy.

Then I knew we were supposed to go back to Moscow in the summer of 1961. Well, along about February or March - oh I don't know, when was it, April? - there was, perhaps you remember, this incident with...was it a Venezuelan or a Brazilian ship, or a Portuguese ship? It was taken over by...

Q: The Portuguese anti-Salazar.

DAVIES: Anti-Salazar, Hector or Heitor Somebody.

Q: Pina or something like that.

DAVIES: Yes.

Q: (Hector Pina Pinero) who had been the military attache in Washington.

DAVIES: That's right, and he was quite a character. I rather admired the guy. He took the ship over.

Q: It was one of the early hostage type things.

DAVIES: Yes, one of the first if not the very first or any.

Q: Perhaps it was.

DAVIES: Well, he took the ship over, and he was sailing around the Caribbean. This was just after John Fitzgerald Kennedy had taken office, and of course in the State Department - and I am sure this was true generally, and I think it was true generally in Washington - Kennedy's advent was greeted...I mean people felt after the Eisenhower Years this guy is...

Q: After such gloom...

DAVIES: Right, (people felt) that he really was going to do something and so forth. And we in the State Department had felt that way very much, and I think the reality proved to be very disappointing, because he had no more use for the professional Foreign Service and the career people in the State Department than any other President had had. So it was rather disappointing. We thought maybe he would, but he didn't. (laughs) And one of the things that confirmed his low opinion was the fact that when this ship was sailing around down there somewhere in the Caribbean, he called - who was it, the Venezuelan Desk officer or somebody who was supposed to be following this, around six o'clock in the evening one evening, to get a report. Of course that was not how it should be done: I mean he shouldn't call the Desk officer, he ought to call the Secretary, go through channels, damn it! I mean what the hell...why have we got these channels? (laughs) Lots of people have a lot invested in those channels.

But no, he called the Desk directly. Well, they had gone home - at 5.30 you leave and you go home, you know, and there are people even in the State Department, even in the Foreign Service, who go home on time, even in those days; well, all the more so in those days - and so he was pretty upset, and the next morning he said to Dean Rusk, "Hey, what kind of outfit are you running over there? I tried to get hold of the Desk officer at six o'clock, and I got nobody." Then apparently he had asked the operator in the White House to get him at home, and he wasn't home - I don't know, but he hadn't been able to get through to anybody.

As a result of that it was decided to form what they called the Operations Center. This was a new thing, and oh my, the tremors. I spoke about tremors before, but the tremors that went through the bureaucracy in Foggy Bottom - I mean in the State Department Building - when it was announced that this Operations Center was going to be set up were fearful, because people said, what is this going to do? Is it going to preempt the authority of all the people below? You know how those things are.

And Theodore (Ted) Achilles, who was a senior Foreign Service officer, a very distinguished member of our service, was picked to be the head of the Operations Center and to set this thing up. In fact it was based on a paper that he had written some time ago, before the case of the Anzoategui - was that the name of that ship?

Q: Maybe.

DAVIES: Yes, something like that. Well, before that case had ever come along he had written a paper saying, "This is the 20th century, and we shouldn't just close up at 5.30. We should have some means of carrying on during the hours of darkness. We are a world power now. Something might happen after 5.30 somewhere, and there ought to be somebody who..."

Q: Boy, does it happen regularly now! After 5.30.

DAVIES: Right, and you know I think there were people in the State Department who felt that if you had something set up then you could be sure it would happen, but if you didn't have something like that set up, maybe you could keep things within business hours.

Well, at any rate Ted Achilles was named to head this up, and he got hold of three Foreign Service officers: John Stutesman, who was...

Q: I remember him.

DAVIES: I am very fond of him. Galen Stone, who is now our Ambassador in Nicosia, Cyprus, and myself - three of us. We were available for one reason or another. I was available because it was just a couple of months before I was supposed to go to Moscow, and I had broken in my successor, and for some reason this had happened well ahead of time, and it was possible for the Office to spare me. That doesn't happen any more, but it did happen in those days. Galen was available because I don't remember why, and John Stutesman was picked because he was a great administrative genius: he could organize anything, a great organizer.

And we were called Achilles' Heels. Ted Achilles... The four of us set this thing up, and John Stutesman indeed did organize the thing - oh boy - in a matter of 48 hours. He'd gotten some people out of some offices up on the seventh floor, right near to where the Operations Center is to this day, in fact in that very area: he'd managed to winkle these people out and move them elsewhere, which was no mean feat, and then he'd organized furniture and done all of the administrative things that usually take a long time. But we had a mandate from on high, "Set this thing up, the President doesn't want another Anzoategui incident where he can't find out what's going on."

Also, in an absolutely precedent-breaking move, people were going to sleep there overnight, so...

We had a young administrative assistant, Jim Fazio - he was an Italian - a very nice young Italian fellow, an Italian-American who was an administrative assistant, and John Stutesman said to him, "Jim, I want you to go down to Kann's Department Store, and get a

double decker bunk and move it in here. We are going to sleep here, we are not kidding now, this is for real."

And he gave him some money or a check and he said, "Go down there and get the bunk, some mattresses and some sheets and pillows and all the stuff you need."

So Jim trundled off, and the next day or two days later he came in to John Stutesman and said, "Mr. Stutesman, I've got the bunk all set up in this room back here."

So John called Galen and me, who were nearby there, and he said, "Come on, we'll go back and take a look at the bunk."

So we went back there, and Jim had bought a very nice rather expensive rock maple - it was made out of rock maple - double decker bunk, one of these wooden things that are actually two twin beds.

Q: On top of each other.

DAVIES: Yes, one on top of the other, there are little pegs there that you stick in. And he'd gotten very nice box spring mattresses and sheets and pillow cases, and then he'd gotten some very nice chenille bedspreads with little pompoms hanging down the sides. And of course the idea of the Operations Center was that this was going to have representatives from the Pentagon, from the C.I.A., from all the agencies of the Foreign Affairs community also working in there.

So Jim Fazio said, "Well, what do you think of it?"

And John Stutesman looked at it, and then he looked at him, and he said, "Take it back."

Jim said, "What do you mean? Isn't it nice?"

John said, "It's beautiful, it's very dainty, but when those bastards come over here from the Pentagon and from C.I.A., they are going to say...they are going to point to the pompoms and the chenille and they are going to say - (in a high, ironical tone) - "Oh, isn't that sweet? We <u>knew</u> it would be like that."

He (John Stutesman) said, "Jim, you take it back. We are going to exchange it. Get one of those cast iron things, you know..."

Q: The military type.

DAVIES: The military things, that you screw together somehow - they are dirty black cast iron - and the box springs we'll keep, because we can cover those up. And get some Army blankets, OD Army blankets."

And Jim said, "No bedspreads?"

(in a mock severe tone) "NO, NO BEDSPREADS. We'll just put the Army blankets over."

And Jim was so crestfallen. I never saw anybody so crestfallen, but John Stutesman was right of course, he was a man who knew exactly how to do that sort of thing.

Q: He knew the community.

DAVIES: Exactly. So Jim went down, turned this in, and he came back with olive drab (blankets), quite adequate for sleeping overnight.

There was no water closet there, no water pipes, you couldn't have any toilet facilities.

Usually there were people in what we called the Secretariat, which was right next door, where they handled the incoming papers and prepared them for the Secretary and other people, until about ten or eleven o'clock at night. And we were locked in there. But the main feature of the room was that we had then an early secure phone, with cards that you put in, coded cards. It was a safe, and you put these cards in; every day you had to put a new card in, a new code, and you had to be within earshot of that secure phone, because if the President called, that's where the call was going to come. I can't remember that he ever called. I think he was quite discouraged by the Anzoategui, and he had other people call. But that was the way the call was going to come - on that phone - and you had to be within earshot of it, because, by golly, if that phone rang one of us was going to answer that phone. I mean there was no way that he was going to call there and not get an answer. So somebody had to be there.

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Q: Good evening, Ambassador Davies. It's nice to be back again, and here we go for our next session.

DAVIES: We were talking about the establishment of the Operations Center in the State Department, and I might just mention two occurrences that involved the Operations Center.

We were supposed to set up, and we did set up, task forces to handle the two principal problems which the still new Kennedy Administration confronted at that time: one the problem of Cuba following the debacle at the Bay of Pigs, and second the question of Vietnam.

As I mentioned last time, there were three of us assigned to work with Ambassador (Theodore) Achilles: John Stutesman, Galen Stone and I.

Then as we were getting ready to set up the Vietnam Task Force, Ben Wood - Chalmers B. Wood, who had been up to that point Vietnam desk officer in F.E. in those days, the Bureau

of Far Eastern Affairs, and the political adviser to the Commander-in-Chief Pacific, CINCPAC, whose name was Sterling Cottrell, known as Cot, who had been a politico-military officer for many years, had worked closely with the Army in the Pentagon, and eventually ended up as political adviser at CINCPAC - Cot was brought back to be the administrative director, a kind of executive director, of the Vietnam Task Force. Ben Wood was assigned to the Task Force as an expert adviser, because he had served in Vietnam and knew the country and people.

Vice President Johnson, with Carl Rowan and Maxwell D. Taylor and several other prominent people, had been sent by President Kennedy out to Vietnam to look over the ground and to come back with recommendations.

The issue at the time was whether we should sharply increase the number of advisers - military advisers to the Vietnamese, we didn't have any combat troops there yet...

Q: Who was the Ambassador to Saigon then?

DAVIES: I don't even remember now who the Ambassador to Saigon was. I did know at the time. He was a career officer, I think. Fritz Jandry was out there at one point as DCM. And I knew several of the people who were out there, but I can't remember at the moment who was Ambassador.

At any rate, this task force was being organized, and Ben Wood wrote what seemed to me a very trenchant memo. As I said the issues were, should we sharply increase the number of advisers, and greatly increase the volume of weapons and other supplies. In other words, should we begin a quantitatively new phase in our support to Mr. Diem (the President of South Vietnam).

Ben Wood, who had spent many years in Saigon and in Indochina and knew that part of the world well, believed strongly that it would be a great mistake if we did that - if we provided a vastly increased level of assistance without obtaining some firm political understandings with Ngo Dinh Diem first. And he wrote a memorandum to Sterling Cottrell, who was a senior officer - I don't know whether he was a Foreign Service Officer Class Two or perhaps even One, and the rest of us of course were relatively low-ranking officers, Fours and Threes, and Ben I think was a Three, or maybe a Four, I really don't remember - Ben wrote this memorandum in which he pointed to the situation in the country and said that the success of the Viet Minh depended upon their ability to fulfill the strategy that had been laid down in Hanoi, that is that the Viet Cong should be able to swim like fish in the sea in South Vietnam, which was composed primarily of peasants who were disaffected or at any rate not unfriendly to the Viet Cong.

And Ben pointed to the work that Wolf Ladejinsky, U.S. agricultural expert, had done on land reform. Wolf Ladejinsky had had a great effect in South Korea along those lines, and had of course been in South Vietnam and had pointed to this problem of the peasants, who did not feel that they were...who didn't really feel a commitment to the Government in

Saigon, and felt that they were enemies of that Government or were at any rate neglected by the Government.

So Ben pointed to these things and said, "If we are going to decide to send more advisers and to give more aid, we must make sure before we agree to do that that Diem agrees to institute land reform and that there is a connection between what we will deliver and a timetable in accordance with which land reform and other reforms - but principally land reform - would be instituted in South Vietnam."

So he sent this memo to Cot - Sterling Cottrell - and it seems that he didn't hear much about it for a while.

Meanwhile the task force was set up. There was the usual struggle for power - who would control it?

Chester Bowles was still Undersecretary, although his power was waning - he was soon to leave for India again - and he did try, and we tried, to ensure that the State Department would have a leading position in this task force, but we lost that battle, and Admiral Heinz - inevitably known as "Pickles" Heinz, although I don't think he was any relation to the Heinzes who manufactured pickles, ketchup, etc.

Q: Is that H.E.I.N.Z.?

DAVIES: Yes, H.E.I.N.Z., spelled the same way, but...I forget his first name.

At any rate Admiral Heinz became the chairman of the task force, and after it had been set up Ben and some of the others of us asked Cot at a staff meeting, "Well, what about this memorandum?" And in effect Cot indicated that he was not going to send it anywhere, and that was the end of it. Which was too bad. It was just another of the many mistakes that were made on the road to our increasing involvement in what eventually turned out to be - although certainly none of us thought that it was then - a no-win war in Vietnam.

And I have always felt that that was the time, if somebody somewhere - probably somebody of a rank above the level of authority of Ben Wood, who however was probably the only person on that task force or connected with it who knew anything about the country - if somebody higher up the line had only seen some of these things, maybe things would have been different, and it would not have come to a situation in which we were quite happy in fact to see Diem assassinated not too many months later.

The other thing that happened - it was a matter of two or three months that I served in the Operations Center there - was the setting up of the Cuban Task Force, coincident with the establishment of the Operations Center. In fact the first day we reported for duty there - I believe it was a Monday, unless I am mistaken the invasion of the Bay of Pigs began on a Sunday or a Monday morning, and I remember by Wednesday it was all over.

So a Cuban Task Force was set up as a result of that, and I was named to be a kind of honcho, sort of an administrative officer in charge of informing people when meetings would occur, and so forth.

Ambassador Achilles called me in and said, "Go down to the Latin American Bureau, the American Republics Bureau - A.R.A. - and get their files on the Bay of Pigs."

So I went down there, and Wym Coerr...

Q: Oh, Wymberly Coerr, C.O.E.R.R..

DAVIES: Right. He was Acting Assistant Secretary. Tom Mann had just been appointed Ambassador to Mexico, and that past week in fact I think had relinquished his duties as Assistant Secretary.

I went down to the A.R.A. front office and asked to see Mr. Coerr, the Acting Assistant Secretary whom I had met on some occasion, and a secretary sent me in. He was standing at the window overlooking 21st Street, I guess it is - the corner of 21st and C - and since he didn't pay any attention to my entry into his office I went over and stood beside him and looked out, and there was a man and his wife - apparently his wife, a man and a woman - and a couple of children walking across 21st Street from the State Department, obviously in the direction of a car, and he said, "You see that?" And I said, well... And he said, "That's Tom Mann and his family. They have just been down here getting their shots to go to Mexico."

Then he turned to me and he said, "The lucky son of a bitch!" (laughter)

Which wasn't at all like Wym, who is a very gentle person, but he was kind of...

So he said, "What do you want?"

And I said, "Well, Ted Achilles sent me down to get the files on the Bay of Pigs."

He looked at me and looked at me and didn't say anything, just looked at me disgustedly, and then finally he said, "Follow me."

So I followed him. He went out of his office and went across a corridor into the office of the Public Affairs Adviser to the Bureau - I can't remember his name now.

This officer was in there, and Wym Coerr just led me into his office without a by-your-leave to him, and went over to a table which was up against the wall, on which were stacked copies of the Miami Herald going back - there may have been almost a year's worth, I suppose - big stacks of newspapers in chronological order. And he pointed at them and he said, "Here."

I said, "Oh, gee, that looks like the Miami Herald."

He said, "That is the Miami Herald."

I said, "Well, yes, but what I want is..."

And he said, "That is the file, that's all we know. You can take it."

I said, "You mean there is no piece of paper?"

He said, "There is no piece of paper here, and the way we've been keeping up with this is by reading the Miami Herald, in which there has been a great deal of course about the subject, all leaked one way or the other from unidentified sources."

So I went back up to Ted Achilles and I said, "There ain't no file, nothing."

Oh, Wym Coerr did say that he understood that the Secretary (of State) Dean Rusk, had seen a piece of paper on this question shortly after the new Administration had taken over, and he may well have discussed that piece of paper with Tom Mann (Thomas Clifton Mann), but that was the extent of it, there had been no further consideration of the plan by anybody in the office.

Well, of course the absence of files does hamper one inevitably, but that doesn't stop you from setting up a task force. And the mandate we had came from Bobby Kennedy, who said that he wanted, within a relatively short deadline that he gave us, a plan of how the United States should deal with Cuba over the next ten years. And then Dick (Richard N.) Goodwin...

Q: I remember him.

DAVIES: A speechwriter over in the White House, yes. He came over to kind of brief us on this, and it was quite apparent that Dick Goodwin was not on the same wave length as Bobby Kennedy.

Bobby Kennedy in those days was very hawkish. His attitude as it was transmitted to us was that if we don't invade them now we'll have to do it next year, or two years from now, and you guys, you pantywaists from the State Department, had better come up with something pretty hard hitting.

So Dick Goodwin came over from the White House in effect to argue against that point of view, but obviously since it had been transmitted - I can't remember now who told us this, but it was a fairly official sort of thing, not that Bobby Kennedy had any legal or administrative justification for telling us what we should write, but he was the President's brother and he was sort of throwing his weight around a bit, and Dick Goodwin in effect, who I think did know something about Latin America, I don't know where he got it from

but he had some background - well, he came over in effect to try to allay or to mitigate in some fashion this militant approach which Bobby Kennedy was taking, but to do so without of course laying himself open to being accused, as the word got back - as presumably it would - of undercutting Bobby Kennedy or of being soft on Castro or what have you.

I never did stay there that long. Shortly thereafter, despite the short deadline - I mean it was ridiculous, Cuba in the next ten years - they were still working on the paper when I left for the second time to go to Moscow.

Q: Don't you think this scenario is possible, that this was a very complex political matter, and the first severe jar to President Kennedy, because he had inherited this program from Eisenhower, which had been approved and was sort of upon him almost before he took over the reins?

DAVIES: Yes.

Q: And then when it was a fabulous debacle Bobby Kennedy felt very protective of his brother, and wished it had succeeded, and he really became very vindictive, the same way he was about Jimmy Hoffa in the domestic field? He became very anti-Castro and very determined to get after this villain who had damaged his brother's start as President. And haven't you heard since that Kennedy pursued that anti-Castro line?

DAVIES: Oh, yes, of course.

Q: As long as he was around, and backed certain anti-Castro people that were still around.

DAVIES: Oh, yes, that he indicated in one fashion or the other to Dick Helms of course that now something should be done, and that was the beginning of allegedly later plotting to...

Q: Exactly, yes.

DAVIES: ...plotting to assassinate or can't we see how we can get rid of Castro.

Certainly I think that that is the explanation. I think Bobby was young, he had I wouldn't say a McCarthy background, but he had been one of the counsel on that committee, not on the Republican side, on the Democratic side, but nevertheless he had been exposed to all that, and was rather more action-oriented than Jack. Jack I think tended to be somewhat more contemplative and a little more studiously inclined to delay, and thank goodness for that. And Bobby was extremely protective and very resentful, and not only resentful of Castro. I mean I think he recognized what the problem was there, but I think the resentment was even stronger in terms of his feeling that his brother had been betrayed by bad advice, that he had gotten in the Administration, and by the failure of people - I think probably this was the beginning of a certain amount of mistrust of Dean Rusk and of the C.I.A., which lasted

pretty much throughout the rest of Jack Kennedy's Administration, both on his part and on Bobby's part.

It had an effect for example in their failure to be prepared to credit John McCone's very wise and perceptive - as it turned out - suspicions about what the Soviets were going to do at the time of the Cuban missile crisis. So it had an important effect. It was just too bad that somebody didn't raise a hand and say, "Look, either we are going to do this 100 percent and there is not going to be any holding back, or we are not going to do it. You are not just going to throw these people up on the beach and then let them sink or swim."

Q: You are going to give them full air support.

DAVIES: Exactly, full air support.

Q: As in the original plan.

DAVIES: Exactly, exactly. It's got to be one way or the other.

And of course the consequences of the debacle were enormous, not in terms - not only in terms of the fact that we still have this problem with Cuba, but even more importantly in terms of the encouragement that that gave Khrushchev to put the missiles into Cuba. And the fact of the matter is that we came within an inch of a nuclear holocaust, I am convinced.

Q: What do you think of the premise that...let's say the Bay of Pigs...they got the air support and they were able to take Havana and so forth - would an outside regime, or whatever you want to call them, implanted there...it might have been too late to appeal to the people, they might have been overturned even if they had gotten into Havana. Cuba was ripe for a change, wasn't it?

DAVIES: Certainly it was ripe for a change, certainly, certainly.

No, I don't deny any of that. And incidentally I feel very strongly that it is extremely dangerous...

I think we were lucky in a way in Guatemala, we were lucky in Iran. Lucky? Well, we got what? We got 20 years. We bought some time. Now what we did with the time, that's another question, as we now see.

Q: Yes.

DAVIES: However, you can make the argument that well, 20 years of good relations and 20 years of Arabian oil and all this, makes the effort worthwhile, but there is no action without a reaction somewhere. Politics don't follow the same laws as physics. But you do pay in some fashion eventually, one way or the other. And of course we are paying in Iran now, and we paid in many other ways.

You can make the argument that part of Castro's success in fact resulted from or derived from his ability to play on what we had done in Guatemala.

You start with the colossus of the North.

Q: The Big Bad Yankee.

DAVIES: The Big Bad Yankee, which we had had some success I think - you know, a little bit under Franklin Roosevelt - in allaying that image, with the good neighbor policy and one thing and the other.

Well, my own feeling is that it is extremely dangerous to fool around in other people's domestic affairs, because you have no way of knowing what the eventual result is going to be.

Nevertheless, I think in Cuba - and I think you can see, when you see somebody like Huber Matos, whom Fidel put into prison. You had a lot of different people in that revolution. Whether we would have been wise enough to be able to get enough of the right ones - the ones whom subsequently Castro cast into the outer darkness because they were more social-democratically inclined rather than communistically or radically inclined - who knows? Who knows?

We did succeed, more or less you know, I would say, in the Dominican Republic. There again the situation is not ideal. It's not ideal in any of those countries. It would not have been ideal in Cuba, but if we had had enough wisdom to say, okay, now you guys are going to have to take this thing over, don't keep looking to us.

That's the big danger of course of getting in and putting a government in: you create a whole series of assumptions on the part of everybody concerned, most of all the people whom you've put in, who say, well, Uncle Sam will always bail us out.

That would have been extremely difficult to overcome.

Nevertheless I felt very strongly when the Bay of Pigs began; when the invasion began I said, "Now you've got to go all the way, you can't start something like this and then back out of the thing."

And there were other people - my colleagues in the Department - who were saying, oh this is a terrible mistake. And I said all right, maybe it is a mistake, but we've begun it, and now you can't content yourself with half measures, you've got to carry it to a conclusion.

Whether we could have done that successfully and what the outcome would have been, that's another one of those great if's that...

Q: But what about this premise that after it didn't work and so forth and a certain amount of time elapsed for bitterness and hostility, would we be better off if somebody had made a forward gesture and tried to recognize Castro and not engage in this economic blockade?

You have had experience in working with hostile countries and in diplomatic relations: do you think somebody could have...I mean would it have been profitable to have relations with Castro and try to deal with him? Would that have appealed to his ego instead of being isolated or...

What is your opinion of that?

DAVIES: I think it would have been very difficult. You know he was prepared to reach some kind of understanding under the Eisenhower Administration. He came here, he did want to talk with us. He said subsequently that he had always been a communist. I frankly don't believe it. I mean I think that he was an opportunist and is still an opportunist. You used the right word - he has this enormous ego. I think we could have struck some sort of deal with him at the outset. I think after that it became progressively more difficult.

In the first place, he needed to have us as an enemy. That has been his mainstay.

Q: He profited from that.

DAVIES: Absolutely, for all these years. Now given that situation, could we have played it very cleverly and deprived him to some extent at any rate of the ability to use us as the bogey man, by adopting a softer line? Well, I think it would have been terribly difficult. Remember Che Guevara and these other people really were trying to stir up revolution throughout the hemisphere.

Q: But I meant if we had diplomatic relations with him, or some closer connection, could some of that have been thrust aside or blunted, or...

DAVIES: Well, perhaps so, perhaps it could have. Perhaps so, perhaps so. I am torn: I'd like to think we could have done something. I am pretty pessimistic about it, though.

Q: Would it have taken a remarkable personality of an Ambassador or...

DAVIES: Well, I think more than that. It would have taken a remarkable personality of a President to be able to play this game, because really the problems involved were domestic political problems, and one sees those in something like last fall's flareup over the question of the Soviet brigade. This is very close to the surface, people in this country feel very strongly about this. So whether a President could play this game successfully without being tarred, as for example John F. Kennedy was being tarred before the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, with the brush of "appeaser" - remember the Republicans were making great play of this - and that was all involved in the missile crisis as it arose, Senator Kenneth B. Keating

made those famous ten speeches accusing the Administration. And of course Kennedy had done the same thing himself in running for office - he had accused the Republicans of letting Castro establish himself.

So unless you had a situation in which both parties would agree that, well, we are going to try to outfox this guy and declare a kind of moratorium on the domestic political use of Castro and Castroism, I think it would have been terribly, terribly difficult.

Q: One more question before we leave this subject.

DAVIES: Sure.

Q: He is not, in the context of history, another two-bit dictator. He is a rather remarkable force in our times, Castro.

DAVIES: Sure.

Q: With his pluses and minuses, don't you think?

DAVIES: Oh, yes.

Q: He is a pretty effective personality.

DAVIES: Well, he is as a personality, but you know Cuba's economic situation is terrible, as we see the 10,000 people who have crowded the Peruvian Embassy.

Q: Yes.

DAVIES: People are leaving all the time, as is the case in all these so-called socialist countries, and by so-called socialist I mean those that are run by communist parties. They are not successful in raising production. They can during short periods of time, through the expenditure of very substantial amounts of investment capital - if they can get the investment capital, either through taking it away from people inside the country and putting it into building up agriculture and industry, or through getting it from outside - increase production, for short periods of time. But this doesn't work over the long run. So they end up to where there is perhaps greater equalitarianism in an economic sense in those countries, but...

Q: Nobody has anything.

DAVIES: That's right. They are dividing up a small pie which is not increasing as rapidly as it should, and in many cases is not increasing at all. Last year in Poland they had a negative growth rate. Gosh, the population is still growing, but their gross national product, which is the way they measure their economic success, declined by two percent in real terms.

I think it's kind of hard for us to...

(Aleksandr) Solzhenitsyn has got this very interesting article in the latest Foreign Affairs, where he is talking about life outside Moscow, which is so true. Moscow is the showcase, and Leningrad - they are the showcases; the capitals of the Republics, too, to a lesser extent. But when you get out into the provinces, into the villages, it's the way it must have been in this country a hundred years ago in the villages. There are very few paved roads - primitive by modern standards.

Cuba is still a monocultural economy - sugar. They have not done too well there. Fortunately the Soviet Union - or the socialist camp - buys all their sugar, in addition to giving them substantial subventions.

So Castro's success is political, but not economic, and it's a very unbalanced kind of thing, with the result that he ends up getting into the mercenary business, as he has done.

He failed in Latin America.

Q: He didn't make too much headway.

DAVIES: He didn't. Nicaragua you can say is the first success. So far it's a qualified one, but I would say yes, it is a success. Certainly he was backing the Sandinistas. Here again I can't help blaming us, damn it! I mean we should have known what was going on down there.

I always hark back to Arthur Bliss Lane, who was a much maligned man in many ways - one of my predecessors, a man who had been Ambassador to Poland just before I got there the first time. Arthur Bliss Lane was Minister in Nicaragua in the 1930s. He was an American Minister - we didn't have an Ambassador there, we had very few Ambassadors in those days - under the last Liberal Government, before Somoza's father took over. We had created the National Guard - the Marines had been there, and we had created the National Guard - and Somoza's father ended up the head of the National Guard. It's not quite true that he was really picked by the Marines, but he was one of our...yes, sure.

Arthur Bliss Lane was approached by the President of Nicaragua, who was the father-in-law, I believe, of Sevilla Sacasa, who used to be the dean of the Diplomatic Corps for so many years. No...Sevilla-Sacasa...I don't remember.

Sevilla-Sacasa was married to a relative of Somoza - Somoza's sister, but maybe his mother was Sacasa.

Probably the sister of the then President. You know it's such a tiny elite there.

And President Sacasa came to Arthur Bliss Lane and said, "Look, Somoza is going to try to take over here, he is going to stage a coup, and everybody in this country thinks the U.S. is behind it, and the only way we can stop this, if you want to stop it, is if the Government in Washington - the President, the Secretary of State, or even the Assistant Secretary for Latin America - will make a statement..."

Have I said this here before?

Q: No.

DAVIES: (Sacasa speaking) "If he will make a statement, or just put out a press statement, saying, `We are in favor of constitutional government in Nicaragua, and we are not in favor of the National Guard, we are against the National Guard taking over.' That's all it will take. If you will give us a clear signal, there are plenty of people here, but now they are afraid, they say no, the Americans are behind it..."

So Arthur Bliss Lane started sending telegrams to Washington, telephoning and doing everything, and he could not get them to move, they wouldn't do it.

I forget the guy's name now, but there was a guy here in the State Department who said, "Ahhhh, it's not necessary," and it never even got to the Secretary. They didn't pay any attention to it.

In the meanwhile Somoza's father invited Sandino to that famous dinner, after which he had him assassinated on the way home, which began the whole damn thing. (laughs)

And Arthur Bliss Lane at that point was sure. He said, this is it, you know, it's just a matter of time now.

Well, the State Department finally removed him. They said, this guy has become a monomaniac. And Arthur Bliss Lane maintained to the end of his days that in fact all it would have taken was two paragraphs. If the State Department spokesman had issued them, he didn't even have to say them - just issue them, here is an official statement - then the people in Nicaragua, who knew what was going on, would say, aha, the United States does <u>not</u> want Somoza to take over.

And this would have been a signal for them to rally round the constitutional (government).

Well, I mean, these if's...

Q: And we get boxed in for years to come.

DAVIES: That's the thing, you know.

Q: There is a sort of a complex, like there is a line in Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953), in a poem or a limerick or something for children,

"Always keep a hold of Nurse,

for fear of finding something worse."

DAVIES: Absolutely, that's it exactly. But really you kind of despair. It was evident to me just reading about all this, and Lane of course, well, he was a bit of a maverick.

Q: He was a career man.

DAVIES: He was a career man, but he was not just a careerist. He insisted on swimming a little bit against the current, and the result was, in this case at any rate, that he made himself thoroughly obnoxious to the people in Washington who said, well...

The next man who was sent there to replace him encouraged Somoza, and we were saddled with that. Now actually the father wasn't too bad, and even the oldest son, because they did let the rest of the elite play some role, but little Tachito, the one who was just kicked out, turned the thing into nothing but a Somoza Mafia.

Anyway we are way off.

I don't really know anything about that, except through my studying Arthur Bliss Lane.

Q: But that's really interesting.

DAVIES: Oh but I feel that it is so dangerous when we get involved in kingmaking or internal affairs: we just don't know enough about what goes on; it's rare that we know enough about what goes on in a country to be able to pick the right people. Golly, it seems to me you are playing God. People don't want to be killed, and they'll be killed inevitably anyway, and certainly you ought to use your influence where you can, but it is such a delicate business all this.

Q: I asked Ambassador Fereydoun Hoveyda, the brother of the Foreign Minister who was the Shah's man at the U.N. for seven years, "What if the agency and John Foster Dulles had not interfered with Mossadegh at that time, would Iran have fallen into Soviet hands?"

And he said, "That's a very interesting question. I don't think so. And some of the reforms that the Shah failed to make might have taken place. It's a question."

Some of the things that they're worried about now might have taken place way back then and it probably wouldn't have fallen into Soviet hands.

DAVIES: Yes. Yes. Well, I felt at the time that, gee, here is British Petroleum, which was in many ways the mover and shaker there and well, it was awfully good business for them but - in any case...

Bobby Kennedy was terribly interested in - well, he was rather aggressive at that point. But he learned and by the time the Cuban missile crisis came along, he had changed quite a bit. And I think we have him to thank - at least I think it was the right decision - that finally the decision was to blockade or quarantine rather than to begin with the bombing. So he was capable of growing. And well, he was a young guy and he should have been.

But I'm ahead of my story because at about that point, I left Washington to go back to Moscow to the embassy there again. Tommy (Llewelyn) Thompson was there. The interesting thing that happened - that was in the middle of 1961 - I was in the internal political section; I was first heading that - and we had the 22nd Party Congress, Soviet Party Congress at the end of that year, at which Khrushchev attempted to put through his de-Stalinization effort again, as he had at the - on two earlier occasions when he made the famous secret speech and then at the Party Conference that had been held a couple of years earlier.

Ambassador Thompson - Tommy Thompson - had a remarkable relationship with Khrushchev who liked to see Western ambassadors and conceived what I think was a personal rapport or affection insofar as that can exist under those circumstances between the two. He believed that Khrushchev was thoroughly in command, that he was Number One without any qualifications.

Kenneth A. Kerst, who was for many years in the Bureau of Intelligence Research in the Department, head of the Soviet branch there - he's now retired - was there working with me in the internal political section. We had been there earlier, in fact, in 1951 to 1953, when Stalin died. So we were back there and we didn't think that Khrushchev was unchallenged inside the Party, and we believed that the course of the Congress showed that, because they did publish the speeches and some of the debates. It was possible to form from them, by close analysis, an idea of the outcome; that it was clear, to us at any rate, that Khrushchev was asking the Congress to pass measures which would result in a thorough investigation of the so-called crimes of the Stalin era. Of course, being Party Secretary, he would have been in a position to insure that the people he didn't like were those who were tried, one assumes, and that he himself would not be. But he did not succeed in that. He did succeed in some things such as having Stalin's body moved out of Lenin's tomb. And then there was a commission established, in fact, to investigate the crimes of the Stalin era but it never reported. It was a dead letter before it got started.

And there was also some kind of resolution to consider building a monument to the victims of the cult of personality, and nothing ever came of that either. These were all obviously abortive efforts on his part to create a situation in which he would be able to enhance his power by moving against, or at any rate, by threatening people who were, perhaps, more

culpable than he, or whom he would be able to accuse successfully of having stained their hands with blood during the Stalin era.

It was a time of enormous ferment. Again, as whenever this subject arose, we went around Moscow. They had these public lecture sessions put on by various societies: the Society for Spreading Political Knowledge. And we used to go to their lectures and for a matter of a month there, all these people who had been released from the concentration camps in 1956, the period after Stalin's death but particularly in 1956 and thereafter, rehabilitated - these older people, many of them bearing on their persons the marks of years not to say decades that they spent in hard places like Kolyma and Siberia and various places, were showing up at those meetings and making fiery speeches demanding that justice should be done and that there should be retribution. A lot of them, of course, had been perfectly good communists in the twenties and thirties, many of them, I suppose, idealistic communists who then had been purged by Stalin or others for little or no reason except Stalin's tactic of using terror to establish himself.

And they were demanding that the things that Khrushchev was arguing for should be implemented. And the people who were running these meetings and lectures were very much on the defensive, making all kinds of promises, saying, "Well, the Congress had passed a resolution and this would all happen in the fullness of time, comrades."

And these older people were saying, well, frankly, they didn't have the fullness of time to wait because, you know, after 20 or 25 years in the places they'd been in, they didn't expect to be around much longer and frankly, they wanted to get their pound of flesh or whatever, the weight of retribution, which they judged was owing to them, before they left, shuffled off this mortal soil. There were some moving scenes. It gave you a real appreciation of how explosive an issue this was on which Khrushchev was playing, quite calculatedly for his own political advantage.

Well, Ken and I tried to make these arguments with the Ambassador and he really just wasn't buying any of it. He would not admit that there were divisions in the leadership. So far as he was concerned, Khrushchev had the whole thing very well in hand.

So it was a very interesting time to be there. You remember, of course, that in 1958, Khrushchev delivered the ultimatum on Berlin. Ever since, he'd been trying to deliver on that ultimatum. He talked at first about, I don't know, six months or a year. Then he kept extending this one way or the other. In the summer then of 1961, actually shortly after I got there I believe it was - I think it was the summer of 1961 - he had put up the prices for milk, meat, butter. There had been quite a riot in Novocherkassk on the lower Volga down towards the Black Sea. He was beating the drums at the same time about Berlin. He had troubles inside the country. We pointed all these things out, or tried to, but we didn't get very far.

Then in the summer of 1962, Ambassador Thompson left.

Q: For what reason?

DAVIES: Well, he was reassigned back to Washington and Foy Kohler came. Let's see, was that Tommy Thompson's second tour? I guess it was just at the end of his first tour. He'd been there a long time.

Incidentally, I think that of all the post-war ambassadors we have had, despite the fact that he didn't agree with our perceptions which I think were quite correct and borne out of course by what happened afterward, he was far and away the ablest - and if for no other reason than that after he came back, when the Cuban missile crisis developed, he played a key role there as an expert, so to speak. For that alone, I think, in that advice he gave, he showed how wise he was. I always felt he was far and away the ablest of our post-war ambassadors.

So Foy Kohler came in the late summer or early fall, September I guess it was, maybe August, and I began to go around with him and make all the calls on various people. It was in that period, of course, that - it must have been the middle of September that Khrushchev called him. I think on that occasion, Jack McSweeney went with him, the DCM, Deputy Chief of Mission, who died here not too long ago, less than a year ago. And Khrushchev, of course, told Ambassador Kohler not to worry about Cuba, that the Soviets had no intention of putting any offensive weapons in there. And after the election, there would be time enough to talk about those things. But after the election, it would be necessary to try to resolve the Berlin crisis. However the talk was very reassuring.

Of course, the Ambassador reported all this. Meanwhile, - yes, well, of course, the Vienna meeting between Kennedy and Khrushchev must have been the previous summer. So then at the end of September, - I wrote some of this stuff up a long time ago - I made a copy of it which I can leave with you - there was a U-2 incident when I think it was a U-2 overflew Sakhalin on August the 30th.

We had gotten a note. By this time, I had become Political Counselor. The Political Counselor, Boris Klasson, had come back here to the State Department, and I moved up. We got this note to deliver in response to a Soviet protest. The Soviets protested this violation of their air space in a note of September the 4th. Well we got this note about 6 or 7 o'clock at night and it said to deliver it immediately to the highest ranking - it was one of these things, you know, that betrays a lack of knowledge of the way things work. (Laughs) Obviously the President himself had been involved in this. The instructions made it clear. It said, "The President wants this delivered immediately to the highest ranking available official of the Ministry." And sort of "Return receipt requested." "As soon as you've done it, let us know."

So we had to do something about it. I telephoned. By this time - you know, they work from 9 to 5 and literally 5. I mean, you know, it's 4.49 : 4.59 : 59 and everybody's out of there, you know. The last one out turns out the lights.

But there was a duty officer on there and I had the phone number for the duty officer. So I called the guy over there and I said, "Hey, we've got this note in and it will take us a little while now to type it up in the proper form but I should have it ready for you in a couple of hours, or maybe sooner than that, an hour and a half; as soon as we can get it typed up. And then I'll bring it over."

And he said, "Aw, deliver it tomorrow morning when the mailroom opens at 9."

And I said, "Well..."

He said, "Well, if you can get it here by 9 o'clock tonight, deliver to the mailroom, that's fine." But we couldn't make it. By that time, it was 7.30 or 8. We had a girl stenographer-typist coming in to do the work, the duty stenographer. And I said, "Well, this is a hell of a note. I mean, after all, we have instructions and..."

He said, "Oh, well, you know, it's not civilized."

The instructions said DELIVER. So as soon as it was typed up I got a driver - and all these drivers, we didn't know, but they certainly were trusted. [They were] cleared. Whether they were colonels in the K.G.B. I doubt, but maybe some of them were.

Well, I got a driver to take the note over to the Foreign Ministry, and he was back in about ten minutes - we weren't that far from the Foreign Ministry - and he said, "Well, you know, the mailroom is closed, there was a major, I think, of the militia, a police major guarding the main entrance of the Ministry, and he refused to accept it; he said he had no authority to accept it, and consequently we have to bring it back tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock."

And I said, "Damn it, the instruction says..." And then I said, "Come on, we'll go back and we'll get it in."

He pleaded with me and said, "Please don't try to do that," and I said why not? I have been told to deliver it, it's an official communication.

In fact I am not sure whether it was a letter from the President or not, or whether he'd enclosed a letter or not. I don't remember. Anyway I said we had instructions to deliver the damn thing, and he said, uh, well...

He took me back there in the car.

Q: Back where?

DAVIES: Back to the Ministry, and I went up to the door - they had these great big double doors of glass, monumental doors - and here was this major. I succeeded in getting him to open the door - you know, very gruff...

"What do you want?"

"Well, I have instructions to deliver this note tonight. I have to deliver it now and report to Washington, and I have done so."

He said (imitates stentorian voice), "I am not allowed to receive any official communications. I am just in the police, I am not in the diplomatic service."

Well, it was obvious - big uniform, very nice.

And I said, "Well, I understand that, but there is a duty officer here. Call the duty officer."

"Oh, no, I can't call the duty officer."

"Why can't you call him?" And we went on like this, and getting more and more heated.

Finally I said, "Look, this is ridiculous. When I was in Washington, at any hour of the day or night your people in the Embassy would call up, and I would go down there and open up and take anything they had to deliver."

"Oh, well, you do it your way and we do it our way."

So I tried to...to slip it into...

He was wearing this greatcoat, and I tried to slip it into this, tried to shove it there.

I said, "All right, I am going to leave it on the floor here, right in front of the door. So far as I am concerned it has been delivered. I am going to go back and send a telegram and tell my Ministry that I have delivered the note."

Then he got very agitated (and said), "Oh, you can't leave it on the floor! That's an important state document." (hearty laughter)
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I said, "Yes, that's right, it is an important state document, that's why I want you to take it. But if you won't take it..."
By this time the chauffeur had come in, and he was pleading with me. He was saying, "Oh, please, Mr. Davies, don't. Let's not make a fuss."

I said, "Oh, I am not making any fuss, I am just trying to deliver the note."

So the upshot was I did leave it on the floor. The police major - the militia major - wouldn't touch it, but he was shouting at me, "You can't do that, you can't leave it on the floor!"

When we got back into the car the driver was saying, "Oh, go and pick it up, it's an important document." And I said oh, I have a copy of it.

So we went back to the Embassy.

Well, it became clear that somebody had picked it up - I think the Major did, obviously - because the next day in Izvestia or Pravda - they published a translation of it. It was an apology, it expressed regret. In fact I think the President had given orders, and he was pretty sore that they found out this plane a little before it had overflown Soviet territory.

But I went back and sent a telegram.

Well, all this by way of prelude to the Cuban missile crisis, which we really knew nothing of. I don't think Ambassador Kohler knew anything about it either, until - I can't remember whether it was Saturday. No, it was Sunday, October 21st, I've got it down here - we received from the State Department the text of the President's speech that he was going to give the following day at 7 P.M. Eastern Daylight Saving Time, his famous speech on the discovery of the Soviet missiles on Cuba. And we were instructed to deliver the text of the speech under cover of a letter from the President to Chairman Khrushchev to a high official of the Soviet Ministry for urgent transmittal to the Chairman at precisely 6 P.M. on Monday evening, simultaneous with the briefing of Dobrynin. Dobrynin was going to be given a copy of the speech by Dean Rusk in Washington.

So at the same time, parallel with that, we were to deliver.

There was only one problem, and that was that 6 P.M. Eastern Daylight Saving Time was 1 A.M. Moscow time the following day, and we had all this fuss.

So we talked about this, and finally it was decided that I would go over and see the deputy head of the American Section of the Foreign Office - a fellow named Sergei Kudriyavtsev, who subsequently became Ambassador to Cuba, he served in Asia in various places and had a very good career in the service, and he was a fellow I knew as well, perhaps even better, than most of the guys over there, he had even been at our apartment, which was very unusual, he and his wife, for dinner, and I kind of liked him, he is a very clever man and very flexible by their standards - and it was agreed...Ambassador Kohler and Jack McSweeney, the DCM, said "You go over, and without intimating to them that you are really going to have anything to deliver, talk about this problem in general terms: what are we going to do if we get an important message that has to be delivered after the mailroom closes at 9 P.M. and before it opens again at 9 A.M.? This is the middle of the 20th century, and we can't be dependent on bureaucratic habits."

Of course the whole thing had been just the opposite when Stalin was alive: they never started work over there until 6 P.M. in the evening, and they worked until 4 A.M. in the morning, because Stalin worked all night long, Stalin slept all day long.

But now they were back to normal hours, and nobody was going to make them break them.

So they said, "Talk about this in general terms." And I said okay.

I went over and saw Kudriyavtsev, who was very understanding, and I said, "Look, this is ridiculous. If something should come in, if there should be an emergency, we should be able to call somebody and deliver something, if need be, in the middle of the night, if it's really important."

I said, "Look, don't worry, we are not going to be sitting over there trying to figure out reasons and pretexts for coming over here in the middle of the night. Not at all. We don't want to do it, but if we have to there should be some arrangement."

Well, he made no commitment - this was Monday morning - but he said, "Well, we'll look into it."

So that evening - meanwhile during the day we had the text of the note typed up, and of course by that time already there were rumors back here and some word on the wires, an atmosphere of crisis and this that and the other, so they were forewarned to that extent, although they didn't know, I think. I think we did. I think we had the advantage of surprise...

So at approximately 5.30 or so I called the duty officer, because by that time the offices were closed.

Well, it was after the offices were closed, between 5 and 9. I called him and I said, "Look, I will have a note to deliver to you. My instructions are to deliver it at 1 A.M., which is 6 P.M. Daylight Saving Time. Will you come down to the front door and receive it?"

He said, "Yes, I'll be there." I forget his name now. He was a nice young fellow who worked for Kuznetsov, the Deputy Foreign Minister, who was Deputy Foreign Minister for years, and now is president or one of the chairmen of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet or something like that, who incidentally worked in Pittsburgh in the steel mills in the 1930s, and was trained in the United States.

So at 1 A.M. I took the note over there with the President's speech, and this very nice young fellow was there when I arrived and he received it, and he was quite concerned, it was clear. He was very polite, and he said, "Oh, this is bad news you have for us."

I said, "You'll have to decide for yourself, but it's serious business."

Well, that was the beginning, at 1 A.M. on Tuesday morning, and it was a very satisfying week, needless to say. It was the most pleasant time I ever spent. I got practically no sleep, but we had them on the run from the beginning, we were in complete control of the situation.

Seymour Topping, who was the New York Times correspondent, came in along about Wednesday very disconsolate and he said, "Dick, this is a terrible situation. I can't get any

stories in the paper, because everything is happening in Washington, and no sooner do I get something written and sent in, it's been overtaken. They call me from New York and say, we can't use that, Sy, because there has been this and that."

Needless to say we were all pretty concerned because it was a serious business.

I don't know whether you remember, but I think it would have been on Tuesday - or maybe it was a little later in the week - that again a U-2, or an American plane at any rate, blundered into Soviet air space, but it was obvious when that happened, when we heard about it - that was the occasion when I think the President made the statement, "There is always some poor dumb son of a bitch who doesn't get the word" - it was obvious that the attitude of the Soviets was totally different from that they displayed on the occasion of the plane that violated Soviet air space on August the 30th. They played it down, they were very concerned not to make anything of it. One could envisage the instructions that had gone out when they got word that this unidentified aircraft was approaching. They undoubtedly ordered all the aircraft gunners and missile people to be kept a minimum six feet away from their weapons, don't shoot it down!

They were scared to death. They were scared to death. So it was very satisfying.

Then on Tuesday, I guess it was, we got the instruction on the blockade, the order which we had to deliver, and there was a provision for certification of the vessels. There was this list of forbidden items - offensive weapons, beginning with missiles and aircraft and various other types of weapons systems and offensive munitions, which were contraband, were forbidden - and I took this over to the Foreign Ministry. It must have been at 6 A.M. in the morning, and they received me there. They were there, and the lights were burning late and early over there, just as they were in our chancery.

There was a provision for inspection of a cargo by officials, by officers of the Naval Attache's Office.

If an American naval officer were permitted to go aboard a ship in the harbor from which the ship was about to sail, and make an inspection at the time just before the hatches were closed, then he could write a naval certification - a nav cert - which said that it contained no contraband, and with that naval certification the master of the ship would be passed through the blockade. Of course this was high impertinence, but I took the thing over there and said, "We'd like to make arrangements."

This was before we knew whether they were going to respect the blockade. I said, "We'd be glad to make arrangements for Captain So-and-so" - I can't remember the guy's name now - "and for his subordinates in the Naval Attache's Office to go up to Leningrad or down to Odessa or to Vladivostok."

Of course they never let us into the harbor areas in any of those places - certainly not people from the Naval Attache's Office - but I explained this with a straight face to them, and they took this all in and asked some questions, and I left it there.

About an hour later I got a phone call, and they were never so polite. That week was such a pleasure, because they were so polite. They would call up, and in great contrast to the usual brusque - at best brusque and often rude - treatment that they gave everybody, they were gushingly polite. They would call up and they'd say, "Mr. Davies, how is Mrs. Davies? How are the children? How are you feeling? Is everything all right? Are you happy in our country?" (laughs)

And at that moment I was very happy there, so I had no problem.

But they called me up about an hour later, very politely, and said, "Could you come back over? We know it's an inconvenience, but could you come back over here again?"

I said certainly, what is it about?

They said, "Well, it's about this document you left an hour ago."

I said, sure, I would be right over.

So I went over there, and they gave it back to me, very politely. They said, "We are sorry, but we can't accept this."

And of course it was a bit insulting - I mean from their point of view - that we were telling them that we would be glad to inspect their ships and let them through, and that was the only condition under which their ships could get through the blockade. (laughs) And they didn't recognize the blockade.

It was on one of those trips over there - I think it may have been on that one, I can't remember - and it was early in the week, Tuesday or maybe Wednesday, and I forget which floor the American Section was on - it was the 10th or 12th, and with these rickety old elevators they had - but they always met you at the door and you were always escorted inside the door, and I was escorted up there, and just as we got off the elevator a man who walked very fast - he was almost running - passed in front of the elevator. We stepped out, and this fellow from the American Section who was with me looked neither to right or left as he was heading for the office to which he was conducting me, but I saw this guy, and this guy had a gas mask on. It was an old, sort of World War Two canister type hanging at his hip, you know, a gas mask, and it looked as though they had gone down in the basement, maybe not in the building, but in some basement - it was rusty, you know - and found some of these old, disused gas masks. Maybe it was just an empty can, I don't know. But quite clearly - I had no doubt of it at the time, but even less now - it was staged for my benefit, because inevitably they knew that I had to go back to the Embassy and report it.

Well, you know, they were getting on the war footing in the Foreign Ministry. They were taking this seriously.

Of course this was a response to the fact that we on our part were very much getting on a war footing and making no bones of it. Troops were streaming into the Southeast, SAC was on the alert, the submarines, POLARIS's, were at sea sending their messages in clear back and forth.

Q: On purpose.

DAVIES: On purpose. And they didn't dare do anything like this, because they were afraid, and with great justice, I am convinced, that there would have been panic in the country.

So how to respond to this, without really being able to respond to it?

Well, so when Davies comes over the next time you have a guy with a gas mask, an old disused gas mask, disappearing around the corner, so don't give him too good a look at you, but...(laughs)

So of course I went back, and we were supposed to send...Golly, what was the acronym? Anyhow (we were supposed to send) a flash message, any indication of preparation for hostilities. There was a certain name for it, but I have forgotten it now. (CRITIC)

Q: They change every few years.

DAVIES: They change every few years.

Q: It's the maximum.

DAVIES: The maximum kind of thing. So I sent that. I mean I had to, because according to the regulations...

Q: It fitted them.

DAVIES: It fitted exactly, I had to send it, but at the same time we sent also flash precedence, a message saying that well, this was so obviously staged that that should be taken into account. Or maybe this was in the same message.

Nevertheless that was...

And of course they did many things. For example we had people traveling in the country, and they ordered all foreign diplomats to return to Moscow, again in an effort to show that they were serious, but without unnecessarily alarming their own people. We had the Robert Shaw Chorale traveling there - a wonderful success they had. Among other things they sang the Bach B Minor Mass, and it was the first time since before the Revolution that the Bach

B Minor Mass had been sung in the Soviet Union, and my gosh, we went to Tchaikovsky Hall in Moscow and it was packed with people sitting in the aisles, just jammed, following the score - there were a lot of music students with the score - and many people just weeping over it. It hadn't been performed in nearly 50 years, 45 years.

So the Robert Shaw Chorale was going around, and we had one other thing. What was it? We had another traveling orchestra or something, and they didn't bother those attractions that were taking place.

Oh, the New York City Ballet - George Balanchine - for the first time was there. Those two. Enormous success, of course. For the Russians to see what had happened to ballet in the West...

Theirs of course was, and still largely is, a museum of ballet - ballet frozen as it was in 1910. No development.

Q: A set thing. Certain set things.

DAVIES: Certain set things which had been carried out. There are some new ones, like The Red Poppy - so-called revolutionary - and Spartacus, but basically it's the classical pre-World War One, the classical 19th century ballet that they have preserved there. And Balanchine very correctly said when he came, "I can't understand this adoration of Soviet or Russian ballet. We in the West are the ones who have developed ballet." And he said this to everybody. Of course it wasn't published in the papers, but...

So that was an enormous success. There was no interference with either of those presentations, because they were following schedules, they were going to different places in the country, they had been sold out for months, there were no tickets to be had - the tickets were going at fantastic prices. In fact most extraordinarily they scheduled an extra performance of the Robert Shaw Chorale in Moscow. They had to find another theater, but the demand was so enormous for people to see these things.

And at the same time you had this fantastic crisis going on. You would have thought that the people would have (stayed away). But no, people came, they were applauding.

In the press and in the Soviet media they were doing everything they could to play down the immediacy of this thing.

It was an enormous debacle for Khrushchev, and it was certainly the beginning of the end for him, no doubt about that. Thereafter it was two years I guess, but it was all downhill as far as he was concerned.

There were many other things involved, but that was the principal thing: he lost the gamble, and this gave an opening to his enemies, of whom there were many, and he just didn't last that much longer.

Q: What was Khrushchev specifically ethnically? He was not a pure Ukrainian, was he?

DAVIES: No, he was Russian. He was born, like so many - you know it's a very mixed area - in a village which is on the borderland between the Ukraine and Russia, he worked in the Ukraine in a coal mine. But again it was a mixed region. But he was a pure Russian. The name is a very ancient one. There was a noble family, Khrushchev, which the last major representative of - they were counts or barons, I don't know which - was living in Rfo. A count. And presumably Khrushchev's family came from one of the estates belonging to this very well known family, and that's where he got the name.

Q: Khrushchev's manners were a matter of style then, weren't they?

DAVIES: A great actor.

Q: He wasn't a rough-hewn peasant who didn't know how to use a fork?

DAVIES: Well, he was, he was very coarse and could be even coarser if he wanted to, and he did frequently want to. As I think I mentioned, his wife - Nina Petrovna - was not from the gentility, but she was an educated woman and she worked on him and tried to refine him a little, but he was so exuberant that he was hard to refine. He had very little formal education. All the education he got was in party schools after he had joined the party.

Q: What about his use of language? Was it just prosaic or was it pretty colorful?

DAVIES: Very colorful.

Q *But not erudite?*

DAVIES: No, not at all, not at all. He was a very intelligent man, and he was nobody's fool, by no means, but very colorful and coarse. I think I mentioned to you when he was speaking with Nixon the barnyard language that he used that so embarrassed the interpreter who came from a refined, aristocratic Russian family. He could do that, he could carry on the way he did at the U.N., pounding on the desk with his shoe. But these were calculated things. A great deal of that was calculated. He was a very excellent actor, and of course you have to be if you want to be a Soviet leader, to survive you have to be able to put on a front. As for example he did with Eisenhower in Paris. That was a great Academy Award winning performance, calculated again.

Q: When he first met President Kennedy in Vienna wasn't that a bulldozer performance?

DAVIES: Oh, without a doubt. He attempted to cow him, and he did cow him, or at least he thought he'd cowed him. It was a combination. I mean he attacked him on the Bay of Pigs ferociously, and to the point that Kennedy really finally said, "It's been a terrible mistake." And he wouldn't let go of it, because he was intent upon establishing this

psychological superiority, gaining the psychological upper hand. They put a great deal of importance on doing that. And he did. He got the psychological upper hand over Kennedy, and it was a terrible mistake that somebody - I don't know who might have done it - didn't warn Kennedy.

Q: That this was a ploy?

DAVIES: Well, that it's a ploy and you've got to go in there.

But of course Kennedy wasn't that way, he was quiet and understated and self mocking, kind of, when he was dealing with somebody so different.

From that meeting Khrushchev took away the idea that this was a man who could be cowed. I mean he had the Bay of Pigs evidence - "Well, you know, a guy who doesn't really understand these things, he won't go all the way..."

Q: "He'll cave..."

DAVIES: "He'll cave." And then he had the evidence in Vienna, "Well, this young fellow, you know, I can master him."

Because of course the Soviets at that time were very much weaker than we. They did not have the power, they did not have the missiles, there was a missile gap, but in the opposite direction. They were very much weaker than we, and that was why Khrushchev tried to put intermediate and medium range ballistic missiles on Cuba.

Yes, Khrushchev. Well, he was a gambler, and he gambled and lost.

But that whole Cuban missile crisis was such a beautifully conducted crisis management operation, right from the outset.

Q: Following one that was so badly managed.

DAVIES: Following one that was so badly managed.

Q: Who were some of the people who get credit for pursuing it in such perceptive detail?

DAVIES: Well, I think Bobby Kennedy had a lot to do with it the way I read it. You know, when you read the accounts - I don't claim to have read them all...

Elie Abel wrote an excellent book. I spoke with him. I was back by then, and he interviewed me and he talked with everybody. I thought it was the best account.

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. wrote a very good account. Of course most of the time - that is beginning October the 22nd, the Monday, when Kennedy gave his speech - he was up in

New York working with Adlai Stevenson, so he wasn't there the week of the crisis itself. He was there before that. But then again he wasn't a member of the executive committee.

Ted Sorenson's book is very good. And Elie Abel's. And Bobby Kennedy's book itself is excellent. But they were all parti pris, they all had preconceived opinions. Inevitably they couldn't be objective. You can't be, particularly when you are involved the way both Sorenson and Bobby Kennedy and to a lesser extent Arthur Schlesinger were.

Then Elie Abel came along and wrote, and he put all this down I thought very well, as somebody who was outside - a correspondent - but close enough.

But I think out of that come two or three things: Bobby Kennedy forced these high officials to really look at the options. Two parties formed. There were two parties: one that believed in going in and doing the bombing, and the other which believed you should start with the blockade, which I think was clearly the right thing to do.

As it was it's remarkable when you look back on it. There was a lot of skepticism - the British press, and the world press generally was very skeptical of the American position - because we didn't go out with photographs immediately. If we had come out with photographs I think it would have made a big difference, but nobody thought that that was necessary, until it became clear that for example in Britain there was a lot of skepticism.

Then in a couple of days you remember Adlai Stevenson used them up at the U.N., and they were published in all the papers. Then a lot of people were convinced, as they should have been.

I think Bobby Kennedy, (Robert) McNamara - I mentioned Tommy Thompson (Ambassador Llewelyn Thompson) and I think he played a big role. Dean Acheson was always for going right in there and bombing.

Q: Did the military?

DAVIES: The military wanted to do that, too, you know.

Q: Were there any less-than-hardliners among the military?

DAVIES: Well, I don't think so. Paul Nitze was a hardliner, as you would expect, although finally when the decision was made I think it was he who worked very closely with Ted Sorenson or Abe (Abraham) Chayes (State Department legal counsel) - I can't remember who it was - drawing up the blockade declaration.

But you know I think everybody who played a role in it comes out of it pretty darn well, even though there was a lot of backbiting afterwards.

Stevenson in particular was accused of having wanted to sell out and give them the missiles, the Jupiters in Turkey, and give them Guantanamo. And he did mention these as possibilities to the President at some point.

But I think everybody played a pretty creditable role.

And finally the President.

I mentioned Bobby Kennedy. Bobby Kennedy kept saying, in contrast to the hawkish position I thought he displayed at the outset - "We'll have to invade them, if we don't invade them this year we'll have to invade them next year...' - he argued from the outset against the bombing, saying that we cannot be the ones, it's not in the American tradition, we can't be the ones who go in there and..."

You know, you talk about surgical strikes. Well, it turned out that when they pinned the military down they said, well, of course, between 10,000 and 25,000 people... will be killed, and they won't all be Russians, either, there aren't 10,000 to 25,000 Russians there. So it will be a lot of Cubans who'll be killed.

Bobby Kennedy said, "You can't do that. This President can't do that. We can't be the ones to mount a Pearl Harbor. We may have to do it sooner or later, but we've got to start with something that is not so threatening and build up to it, if we do, gradually. We just can't first crack out of the box and go in with bombs."

So I think that spoke very well I would say for what he'd learned in the short space of one year, because I am not at all sure he would have felt that way if all this had been happening a year earlier. I don't know.

Q: So it sort of...

DAVIES: Yes. The way the whole thing was done, judging by the accounts one reads, was very intelligent, I thought. Getting the principals together - getting the principal people together - and making them argue this thing out, until really finally when the President decided that the blockade, or the preventive quarantine or whatever they called it, was the way to do it, all the rest were pretty much in agreement. There were still those who felt, well... Dean Acheson for example never reconciled himself to anything less than the bombing, and I think he was wrong. But you know, he was a crusty old coot. A wonderful man, but thank goodness he didn't prevail on that occasion. And then of course he did a beautiful job of going and talking to DeGaulle and Adenauer.

So I think... I don't know...

None of it was planned. Jack Kennedy did not like big meetings. They only had one meeting of the National Security Council, one formal meeting just before - I can't

remember now whether it was on Sunday or Saturday - to ratify the decisions that had been taken by this executive committee as they came to call it.

But certainly the way the whole thing worked was a model of the way - anyway from our vantage point in Moscow, as Seymour Topping said, those people were way behind the curve throughout the whole thing, scared to death, literally scared to death, afraid that they had been caught and that they were going to be very heavily punished, which they weren't in fact.

Khrushchev had talked about a meeting with the President, and he said he had told visitors there - including a lot of Europeans who visited there - that he would come to the United Nations after the American election, and he told us that nothing would be done until after the American election. And then of course he did intend to spring this. I think he would have come first to see the President, and as somebody somewhere wrote - I think Michel Tatu, in the famous beautiful book that he did, because there are two books I think, Elie Abel's and Michel Tatu, and Tatu has a long treatment in his book Le Pouvoir en URSS (Power in the Kremlin, as it was translated here) on the Cuban missile thing. He and I were there, he was in Moscow, and we spent a lot of time afterwards talking about all this. He has a beautiful treatment I think of that whole thing, seen from the Soviet angle.

Well, Michel said that as it turned out Kennedy showed the pictures of the Soviet missiles in Cuba, but Khrushchev's plan was that he should show the pictures to Kennedy, (laughs heartily) at that meeting presumably in November.

Q: His pictures or our pictures?

DAVIES: Well, they would have been his pictures, not our pictures.

Q: Yes.

DAVIES: It would have been his pictures, and he would have shown the pictures and said, "Well, Mr. President, this is what we have there."

Q: [Inaudible]

DAVIES: That's right. "And now can we talk about Berlin?"

And again I think it's Michel Tatu - or maybe it's Elie Abel, I can't remember now - who says that they were put there not to be used, but to be traded for something. And the trade would have been for something in Berlin. That was what Khrushchev wanted, and of course he failed to get it.

So it was a great gamble on his part which failed.

Q: The Vienna meeting had occurred before.

DAVIES: Oh, yes, that was the year before.

Q: When Khrushchev had sized this guy up as a weakling or a pushover.

DAVIES: He thought so, yes.

He told Robert Frost - Robert Frost came there about a month before all this, in the fall of 1962, it must have been September, a wonderful man, my gosh, we met him there -

Q: A white-haired man.

DAVIES: Yes, you know. Another great actor, obviously. He loved to have people sort of sitting at his feet.

I think he went down to the Crimea to see Khrushchev - I can't remember now - and Khrushchev told him, he said, "Oh, you Americans are too liberal to fight."

And Frost was very disturbed that this was the perception that Khrushchev had. Of course none of us realized then that what was in his mind - in Khrushchev's mind - obviously that was part of it.

He formed this incorrect perception, and he tried to exploit what he thought he saw to the limit. Certainly it was a turning point in the postwar era. A turning point in a way which...

After this was over, on November the 6th, Kosygin gave the annual speech just on the eve of the November 7th holiday, and it was clear, in that speech he talked quite clearly about the necessity for building up Soviet strength, and that was the beginning of the buildup that has resulted in the present balance of missilery. I can't remember now whether it was before that or after that that Spike Dubs (later Ambassador Adolph Dubs, assassinated in Kabul) the head of...

The political section was divided into two parts - internal political and external. We used to call them "intolerable" and "extraneous" or something like that. But in and ex were the abbreviations.

Well, Spike Dubs was the head of the external political section, and he drafted a telegram - I think it was perhaps after Kosygin's speech, which I thought was excellent, and we tried very hard to get... and Jack McSweeney agreed to it and we tried to get Foy Kohler to send it and he wouldn't - proposing a summit meeting on the heels of this experience. We thought that, at such a summit meeting, the American President would have a great deal of clout, and that he'd be able to make some proposals about disarmament, and control of nuclear weapons.

Well, of course a year later...

No, it was two years later, in the summer of 1964, that we got the first test ban agreement, but we thought then that it would be possible to make some proposals on control of nuclear weapons and strategic arms.

Q: This was thinking ahead of his time, wasn't it?

DAVIES: Well, it was. We didn't really know what you could do, but we said from the political point of view we've got them now at some disadvantage, and if we were able to put this politically in a way that would attract public attention...

You remember that Bertrand Russell had been very active during the crisis itself, making all kinds of crazy suggestions for summit conferences, and we said okay, let's follow up on this, and try to turn some of Earl Russell's anti-American suggestions - because they were primarily anti-American - to our advantage for a change.

But Foy Kohler wasn't prepared to send those out. I don't quite know why: he just felt that they wouldn't get very far.

And when I got back to Washington a year later - in the summer of 1963 - I spoke with David Klein, who was then in the National Security Council staff working on European affairs, and he'd been very much involved at the working level - not at the policymaking level - in the missile crisis and in the aftermath in particular. And I told him that we'd drafted this message and wanted to send it in and we couldn't, and he said that it wouldn't have made any difference because everybody here was so relieved, because they felt we'd come so close, everybody was so relieved to have the thing over that nobody was prepared to contemplate any kind of major political initiative at that point.

And it was only a year later that President Kennedy made his American University speech. Of course that was again... You look back on these things and...

He began his Administration with a rather aggressive stance - no place we won't go and nothing we won't do, in defense of freedom. Laudable sentiments, but...

And then by 1963 he had, as a result of the Cuban missile crisis, come to the view that he expressed in the American University speech, which was one of recognizing that you have to try to find some political settlement of these problems.

So there was kind of an evolution there.

But that was a matter of what, four months before he was assassinated, so that that was the end of that initiative.

It's a big problem in our country: four years - and he only had three years - four years is not enough for a President to introduce a policy and carry it through. And yet if he has to run for re-election, that takes six months to a year out, so I don't know.

Well, it was a fascinating thing to live through.

There were people in the Embassy who had their bags packed, and we really kind of laughed at them, and we said, "You know, where you are going if anything happens you won't need to take a bag with you, you'll go straight up (laughs heartily while speaking) no baggage! Your baggage will be vaporized!"

Spike Dubs was a very religious guy.

Q: Was he? He was later killed in Afghanistan.

DAVIES: Yes.

Q: He also served in Yugoslavia?

DAVIES: That's right. He was kind of the heart and soul of our little (group). There was a Catholic priest there - an American Catholic priest, an Assumptionist Father.

Q: Wasn't that Father Bissonette?

DAVIES: Yes, Father George Bissonette, a wonderful man. And then we finally got a Protestant chaplain there, and Spike was really the heart of the Protestant group. He played the piano beautifully, played the organ, sang very well, wonderful.

But after the crisis was over he and his then wife and my wife and I had a small dinner, the four of us. I'll never forget, he began by saying grace, very eloquent, just giving thanks that we had all survived it, that it hadn't happened.

Q: Was he a Protestant?

DAVIES: Yes, his family came from the Volga. They were Volga Germans.

Q: Was he a Lutheran?

DAVIES: I suppose Lutheran, I don't really know what precise denomination he belonged to. Perhaps even Mennonite. But they were very devout people, and they had emigrated from there in the early years of the century.

Q: With all your years in Moscow, what is your opinion of the caliber of foreign diplomats there? Because the Soviet Union was a superpower did Japan, Italy and everybody else send their best people, or did some country say, "What a drag, we'll just send anybody to

Russia?" I mean were there really top-notch people there from all countries, or didn't they impress you that way particularly?

DAVIES: By and large they were good people. Yes, by and large they were. Other countries did have good people. The Canadians have always had excellent representation. In fact Ambassador Ford - who has been there now for... I think he is now in his second term - they arrived shortly before we left, in 1962 or 1963, so it's really 18 years or something like that. It's fantastic. But he is a real expert.

Q: They once had a man called Wilgress, didn't they?

DAVIES: Yes: (Leolyn) Dana Wilgress, very good. Now I am trying to think of the name of the guy...Arnold Smith. Top-notch. He was there the first part of the... He then went to be Secretary of the Commonwealth. You know they set up a kind of a commonwealth committee or council in London, a sort of permanent organization for the commonwealth, and Arnold Smith who went there was picked to be the first executive secretary. Just an outstanding man. I suppose he is retired now, but really outstanding.

The Norwegians have always had good people there. The Finns, outstanding people. The Swedes... I don't know.

The Ambassador who was there for so many years...

You know, it's a mistake - I don't know how Ambassador Ford... By and large it's a mistake to keep people for such a long period of time. They get into ruts, I think.

I believe very strongly that if you have experts, if you build a service with regional expertise as a principle, you should not leave people too long. I'd say three years or four years is the maximum. Then take them away, use them somewhere else, take them back to the capital, send them to another area, and send them back after between five and ten years.

Q: That's what you did, isn't it?

DAVIES: Well, it is what I did. And you know there is always a temptation to think that the way you did is the right way, but I have seen just too many cases of people who retired in place. After you are there for a while you've seen it all. There is this terrible attitude of deja vu, you know. Sort of "Yes, well, of course, but it really doesn't mean anything. They always talk that way. It's all propaganda," or something like that.

You've got a hundred reasons for not being serious about what happens or analyzing it carefully, and unless the home office is very demanding - and you know the way bureaucracies are - you fall into a rut. So I think that there should be a constant process of rotation. I mean you do need fresh blood, you do need people coming in and taking a fresh look at the place. And it's important of course too that the people who come there have some background, whether they served there before or not - you can argue it either way - I

think it's useful to have a mixture, a certain number of people who have served there before together with younger people who haven't served there before, so you get different points of view expressed.

But other countries? The Japanese, very good, outstanding. They you know have huge embassies, they are very highly specialized, and they do very well.

The Chinese I suspect are also quite good, if rather narrow from some points of view. They were good in Warsaw. They do develop experts and keep sending them back. They rotate them between the country in which they are an expert and Peking.

The British of course have a long tradition. The French, the Germans - I would say by and large good.

The Latin Americans are very mixed. It's such a political thing...

Q: It's not quite so important to them.

DAVIES: It's not quite so important, although even there you find some people who are pretty good.

Some of the Southern Europeans, a little mixed. The Italians usually pretty good. The Greeks - well, they had a good man there at that time, when we were there.

Q: What about the caliber of military attaches? Did everybody try to send the top people?

DAVIES: Yes, very good.

Q: Who would learn everything they could?

DAVIES: Yes, very good, really excellent. We had some top-notch people there, and so did the others, at least the major powers.

Q: Did they compare notes?

DAVIES: Oh, yes, they were constantly meeting. And indeed the Western Ambassadors, the NATO Ambassadors, had a regular meeting. In fact there were more meetings of the Ambassadors, the DCMs, the political counselors, the economic counselors, everybody was getting together, and they still do there, because you can have a division of labor and pool the results of that division of labor very effectively. And there is a lot of work to be done, a lot that can be learned. Travel is terribly important, so when somebody goes out and makes a trip it's useful to find out what they saw and what their impressions were.

Well, one thing that came out of this whole Cuban missile crisis of course was - I started by talking about the difficulties of delivering notes - one thing that came out of it was the

hot line, and that came out primarily because the White House and the President got very disturbed by the length of time it took to get the notes that we received back to Washington.

Typically we received - as I said and as Sy Topping pointed out, the initiative was with Washington, and we kept giving them communications, to which they responded, only much later, so that it wasn't until Tuesday afternoon - the President gave his speech on Monday evening and it was late Tuesday that we got a response from them. It was 5 or 6 o'clock. And that was the typical pattern. They weren't able to get us anything during working hours, the pace was so hot and rapid.

Then all the Russian language officers in the Embassy would get the different notes. They were in Russian and they were lengthy, and we'd parcel them out, a page or two to each officer, and he'd go off and translate them, and then we'd get the English translations together, and two or three of those who had had the most experience with Russian would sit down and try to edit the thing into a more or less unified document.

It would take three or four hours to do that, and it would be nine o'clock - maybe ten o'clock - before the telegram would get out, and there was already an eight hour or more time difference. So it took a long time for those things to get back, and the White House was very upset by this.

I never felt the slightest guilt. We were criticized in fact publicly. The President expressed his displeasure with this slowness. I never felt the slightest guilt, because when we got the darn things we translated them as quickly as we could. On the other hand, these were important documents, and you don't want to make a mistake in handling a document like that, so we did check them twice before we sent them out.

And I never felt in the slightest apologetic for the way we did it.

But the President said, "My gosh," and this again is a kind of a 19th century hangover.

And of course then towards the end of that week the Russians were using all kinds of alternative channels. You remember that John Scali who used to be an AP correspondent was used at one point, and they were getting messages through.

But towards the end of the week they were going on the air almost simultaneously with their delivery of the note to us, and broadcasting the text in Russian, which was then being picked up by monitors in London and translated there and wired back to Washington. I don't know whether they managed to beat our time or not.

We were getting the notes. It was interesting. The notes that came to us towards the end of the week - in one case I remember the guy delivered a note and there was no seal on it, and ordinarily there is a rubber stamp, without which nothing is valid, in the European tradition, and he apologized profusely. In the first place it's completely unprecedented that in a capital the Foreign Ministry delivers a note to the Embassy. No, they call you up and ask

you to come over and pick it up. But no, they were sending them around, and these guys were not coming from the Ministry. And this young man, when he delivered the note to me he said, "Please excuse the fact that there is no stamp, no seal on this, but I came right from the Kremlin, and I was instructed to come right here and not to bother to go by the Ministry and have the seal put on it."

And it was even more striking I think in the famous note of Friday, when it was all jumbled up: there were corrections made in green ink, in the same hand as that of the signature, N. Khrushchev. Ordinarily they were most meticulous, as everybody is - you type it, it's clean, no mistakes, no erasures. But no no, here words were crossed out, and other words written in. Obviously these things were being edited and changed right up to the last minute, and they didn't have time to retype them.

And the young fellow who brought that again was very apologetic.

And these guys were really rather admiring. "You are really keeping us moving very fast." (laughs) A little pressure on them.

So that was the origin of the hot line. The President said after this whole thing was over, "We can't go through this kind of thing again."

Q: Wasn't it also the origin of... in addition to the hot line didn't he say, "Now look around quickly. Who can distribute these cables faster or better," or something, and so State relinquished their communications overseas to the CIA for the actual communicators and so forth, and State maintained their communications records, but the people doing the machines and everything were the Agency, and that persisted up until about now, when State is trying to get back, because there were many debates about the privacy of communications, and what guarantee did an Ambassador have if he had just an exclusive message...

DAVIES: Well, I have never understood.

The way it works now, Peter, is that the communicators are Agency people, but the code clerks are State.

Q: That's true, but...

DAVIES: There is no question of privacy, the message is encoded by a State...

Q: Before it even goes into the machine?

DAVIES: Sure.

Q: But somehow I think some people felt that it wasn't as private as they thought, and I know there's a debate going on now, and...

But anyhow, to get back to your point, the time that Kennedy pressed for the hot line he also made this particular pitch.

DAVIES: He did? Could be. I wasn't aware of that.

Q: But that was the first of the hot line?

DAVIES: That was the origin of the hot line.

Q: Which is exactly what?

DAVIES: Well, the hot line is a terminal in the Pentagon, and there are terminals in State and in the...

Q: White House Situation Room.

DAVIES: White House Situation Room. But the principal terminal is in the Pentagon, and initially there was just...now let me think, I think there was just a land line, yes. Well, it went by cable, an undersea cable, and across Finland, and as a matter of fact a couple of times it was cut by farmers in Finland, I don't know how, plowing or some damn thing.

But now there is a satellite link as well. There is a redundancy there, so that if you haven't got one you've got the other, and it is not a telephone. People sometimes have the impression that it's a telephone link, but of course there is no point in having a telephone link because 99 times out of 100 there is no common language, so there is no question of Brezhnev talking with Carter.

But it is a teletype machine, which probably is scrambled on the way. There may even be a code.

Q: With a mutual...

DAVIES: Oh, yes, so that... But it comes out here... I've been at the machine, you know, and they send test messages on a regular schedule - once an hour, I don't know - and they transmit it. The Russians send English, and the Americans send Russian, something like that. And they have transmitted all the Russian classics seven times over now, and the Russians have sent Jack London - I don't know - several times over.

Q: But it is a way for Carter and Brezhnev to talk to each other on urgent matters?

DAVIES: Absolutely, yes, without having to go through... Each terminal is manned by language trained personnel, our terminal by people - Army military personnel - who know the language.

Q: And it's strictly an emergency thing? It isn't used for holiday greetings or anything of that kind?

DAVIES: No, it's strictly an emergency thing, and it has been used a number of times.

*Q: Now if President Carter felt very indignant about Afghanistan he might use that to express his indignation, or would he go through more conventional channe*ls?

DAVIES: Well, it would depend upon the urgency. If it were something that "we've got to get this over to Moscow right away" he could use that link. If it's something for which 24 hours or 48 hours aren't going to make that much difference, then you don't use it, because you are supposed to reserve it for time urgent situations.

Q: And it's really only for chiefs of state, isn't it? I mean people on a lower level can't...

DAVIES: No, no. It's reserved strictly - in fact the agreement provides, the agreement sets out in great detail who will use it. It's messages between the top leaders on either side.

Q: Now is that a completely exclusive thing, or does West Germany have a hot line, to Moscow?

DAVIES: I don't know, I don't think so, I think it's just between the superpowers, and it arose because there was a recognition then - I said how scared they were and we were in Moscow, and Dave Klein told me when I got back here how scared everybody was there, and with absolute justice, because we did come within an ace...

You know, two or three funny things happened.

I mentioned the airplane, and that was a great revelation to us, how the Soviets took that, they were very careful not to let that disturb them in any way, shape or form.

But we had - I forget whether it was a UPI or an AP ticker in the office there, and along about Wednesday on this ticker there was a little three or four line item from London that said, LLOYDS OF LONDON HAVE INCREASED THEIR INSURANCE RATES FOR SHIPMENTS TO THE CARIBBEAN BY SUCH AND SUCH A PERCENT. (laughs heartily)

Oh, you are darn right! Lloyds was taking it seriously too. But you know, typical - Lloyds of London had increased the insurance rate in the midst of all this.

But I think it was a close-run thing.

We were waiting, and of course those ships were steaming closer and closer to the line that had been designated to the Soviets, and finally of course the word came that they were hove to in the water, steaming in circles.

And eventually they turned around and went back.

Boy, oh, boy.

We felt that a lot of it was bluff on the Soviet side, but you can't be sure.

Of course the idea of the hot line is that if you ever get into a situation that is as close-run as that again, you will not be constrained by the difficulties of transmittal.

One thing we were never sure of - because our stuff went through the Soviet post office. I mean we had a wire from our communicators - several wires, telephone wires - to the post office, and they'd sit down and play these things out on a code machine and it'd come out, and now we had the punched tape, and that's put into the machine, and that's transmitted to the post office. But we were never sure how rapidly that went through, whether they didn't hold it up for a period of time. You couldn't be sure, and I am still not sure. I think at least one of those messages may have been held up in the post office. It wasn't clear to me.

So this obviates that. This is an instantaneous thing. Or nearly instantaneous, because obviously there is a certain lapse of time, but you can be almost immediately in contact and you don't have to worry about language problems, because you have got language trained personnel at either end, the link is constantly being tested, the language capabilities of the people at either end are constantly being perfected, so it effect you've got as close to instantaneous communication as you can have between leaders who don't have a common language. It's not like the President talking with Margaret Thatcher or Giscard d'Estaing, who speaks beautiful English, or with Schmidt, who speaks beautiful English.

If something happens it won't be because you are not able to get through.

Q: It might be, "This is it, Joe."

DAVIES: Yes. (laughs) Well, that was a fascinating episode.

Well, nothing really so interesting occurred during the remainder of my stay there.

Q: You stayed there how many more months?

DAVIES: That was in October, and I stayed until July or August, and then Mac Toon came and replaced me as political counselor.

Q: That was August of which year?

DAVIES: Of 1963.

Q: And you came back?

DAVIES: I came back and went to the senior seminar for a year.

Q: Was that State Department or Interagency?

DAVIES: State Department. There were guys from the Army-Navy-Air Force.

Q: That's what I meant - it was sort of a...

DAVIES: Yes. There were 25 or 30 people - it was small, it's been kept small - and 12 or 15 were State Department officers, then there were a couple of guys from the Navy, Army, Air Force, one Marine, a couple of guys from the CIA, some from the USIA.

Q: It was a pretty valuable course, wasn't it?

DAVIES: Oh, outstanding.

Q: How many months did it run?

DAVIES: Well, ten months. It began in August or September...

Q: With outside speakers?

DAVIES: Outside speakers and a lot of travel, primarily in this country, for a kind of redomestication.

Q: So it was really valuable.

DAVIES: Oh, terrific. And it continues, it's going on, it's really an outstanding course. I thoroughly enjoyed that.

Then I went over to the State Department and worked for six months for Ben (Benjamin) Read. He was the executive secretary, and I worked as his deputy.

Q: For Rusk.

DAVIES: For Rusk, yes. Then Carl Rowan, who was the director of USIA, asked me to come over and be the head of the Soviet and East European Section of USIA, which I was delighted to do because I'd always been involved one way or the other with what they now rather portentously call public diplomacy, you know. Propaganda I always call it.

Q: What is your opinion about USIA? It's been such a football as far as leadership, with all kinds of people...

DAVIES: Terrible.

Q: Ed Murrow, George Allen, Carl Rowan, Frank Shakespeare - and you can name dozens of others - they have suffered a lot as a career service from that type of in again, out again leadership, haven't they?

DAVIES: Yes.

Q: What would your recommendation be? How should that be handled?

DAVIES: You know, I am so reactionary on nearly all these things.

I felt very badly about the separation of USIA from the State Department. You remember, it was in the State Department and it was largely as a result of the McCarthy era and all the criticism, how these people will smother the activity, and finally it was taken out under Eisenhower.

But I really look at it from the opposite point of view. It's true - the State Department prefers not to say anything, which I think first of all is nonsensical, because you can't get away with it any longer, as we see from these press briefings that they have down there.

But taking this function out of the State Department meant that you gave full rein to the State Department's lapsing into what it had a strong proclivity to lapse into anyway. It wanted to ignore this whole aspect of dealing with the rest of the world. The public information, or the propaganda - call it what you will - aspect, the actual tendency of people in the Department is to ignore that, and moving the information function out let them indulge that proclivity to their hearts' content.

For a while things worked well because you had Andrew (Andy) Berding there. In the first place you had John Foster Dulles there, who was a great natural propagandist, and his press conferences were masterpieces of it. He had a point or two that he wanted to get across, and he got them across very well. You might disagree with the point, you might disagree with his policy, but he knew how to use the media, and his Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, Andy Berding, was a master in this field, excellent, outstanding, and he knew how to get the message across overseas.

When Andy Berding left and when Kennedy came in then Bob Manning, who is now I guess the editor of The Atlantic Monthly, came in, and the whole emphasis changed. Andy Berding knew that you had to deal with the American press, but he also knew that there was a whole world out there, and that what you said for domestic purposes might well be different from, or have a different accent, than what you said for foreign consumption, or obviously you say the thing, and you've got to present it in a slightly different way for the foreign audience. He was always conscious that there were two functions here.

When Bob Manning came in the thing changed radically. The emphasis was strictly directed towards the domestic press, and the foreign information function tended to be

forgotten. Since there was the institutional separation, USIA began to grow more and more apart from the Department. For a long time the director and the deputy director of USIA - you know, so long as Ed Murrow was there, terrific guy; Don Wilson, a very able guy, outstanding, they attended Secretary Rusk's staff meetings and they had an in at the Department. They could go to the top and get approval for what they wanted or make suggestions.

But gradually, as time went by, the bureaucratic separateness of the two institutions began to take, in my opinion, a very heavy toll. For a long time, too, we had an interchange. Foreign Service Officers were involved in the founding of the Voice of America; Foy Kohler - what was his name? - Ed Kretzmann - oh, there were a number of them. And for many years, up until the time I served there, and perhaps even beyond - I think that was really sort of the end, though - we had Foreign Service Officers going over to the Voice of America. They were interested in that, a certain number of them, and serving in the agency proper.

But that's fallen off, largely because the State Department - now, I put the blame primarily on the State Department - didn't make room within its structure for an exchange. And you can't expect an agency to keep accepting personnel from another agency without any quid pro quo.

Now, of course, you've got into this using the directorship not only of USIA but also of VOA for political reward. Well this is ridiculous. It weemed to me first of all - George Allen was a man who had some knowledge of the way people overseas react. Ed Murrow did. Carl Rowan. John Chancellor, who for a while was head of the Voice of America.

Q: He's almost forgotten, not on TV but...

DAVIES: No, no. He did a very good job. Then you began to get these people who had no experience except domestic experience: Leonard Marks. Actually, I thought Leonard Marks did a good job. He knew his limitations and he said to us, "Look, I don't know what you should be telling people in that part of the world. You tell me what you think you should be telling them. I may disagree with you on occasion but I'll pick the best advice I can get around here. And if that seems right to me, go ahead."

He gave a great deal of autonomy to the professionals who were running the various parts of the agency. But then Frank Shakespeare comes along, you know, with his very idiosyncratic, provincial - in my opinion - approach. Personally, I liked Frank very much. I never worked for him. But he was dogmatic. He did a lot of things. He got a lot of people around him: Teddy Weintal had some rather strange prejudices. Teddy Weintal was a heck of a good newspaper man but that didn't mean that he was the best - he regarded his work in USIA as an opportunity to give full vent to his prejudices, I'm afraid.

And then they got into the habit of making the head of VOA - choosing someone who ran some domestic radio. But you don't need somebody - the technical knowledge is not what

you want. What you want is somebody who says, "Well look, this idea or this policy is going to be difficult to sell there. The Africans aren't going to like this, or the Europeans aren't. We're going to have to package this, then, in a little more palatable way for this part of the world or that part of the world." But there's no consideration given to that any more.

I'm terribly disappointed. You know, the agency costs - I don't know what we're spending on it now, a hundred million or more dollars a year, and I just don't think the American taxpayer is getting his money out of it.

VOA still does a pretty good job, by and large, but the rest of the outfit is - I mean, it's bad.

Q: Public affairs officers are usually USIA people, aren't they, and then they have cultural affairs officers...

DAVIES: Well there are many good officers still, although there tends to be a change there, too. Some of these younger guys have the idea that they're there not to - I use the word propaganda. I believe in calling things by their names. Propaganda is a perfectly neutral word which means spreading information, spreading some kind of knowledge. Now, it's no good if it's not true; if it's not as close to the truth as we humans can get, it's no good. If you're going to lie, it's no good, because it will catch up with you.

I wrote a little article once where I said the best good deeds are the best propaganda. Good policy, correct policy is the best propaganda. Without that, forget it. Actions are the things that count, not what you say about them. If you've got the right actions, then you can find the right thing to say about them, and sometimes that helps to accentuate the correctness of the policy or the effectiveness of the policy. It should and it can. It doesn't mean you're going to change the minds of millions of people overnight. No, it doesn't work that way. It's the Chinese water torture method: it's drop by drop.

But there are a lot of things about this country that we ought to be telling the rest of the world instead of - you know, our newspapers are just full of, inevitably, the conflict, the crime, the difficulties, the bad news. Which doesn't mean that what you do in propaganda is give the good news. No, you give the bad news. But you try to put it in a context for the foreign audience. Everything isn't the Mafia. Everything isn't what Playboy, or what have you - a lot of these things are surface phenomena and there is a country here of millions and millions of people who are still - remarkably - very safe and sane, going to church on Sunday, or even if they're not going to church on Sunday, trying to do the right thing. This is a difficult thing to get across.

Q: Isn't one of the strongest suits of USIA the exchange programs, bringing talented - well, you mentioned the Robert Shaw Chorale - talented things are brought, the best we have to offer and then giving talented people in a country like Portugal or something a chance to go to the States and exhibit their wares - isn't that a build...

DAVIES: Well, I have kind of mixed feelings about a lot of this...

Q: Or should that be done by Sol Hurok?

DAVIES: Well, I think it should be done, as much as possible, by private impresarios. Now, costs have gotten so prohibitive these days that you can't send symphony orchestras around the way you used to. It just costs too much. So I think here there should be something like the - what is it called, the Foundation for the Humanities or...

Q: The National Endowment.

DAVIES: The National Endowment - to make it possible for the Los Angeles Philharmonic or the New York Philharmonic or the Metropolitan Opera, and not the whole damn thing because that just costs too much.

Q: It cost so much to bring it to Washington.

DAVIES: Absolutely. You know, it's almost prohibitive.

There should be some subvention. Clearly, there has to be. But it should be done on a commercial basis as much as possible. And then you may find opportunities to stretch that out a little bit, as we used to do with Eastern Europe.

I mentioned the Los Angeles Philharmonic. They came on a privately arranged tour of Western Europe and they said to the State Department, which at that time was still handling the cultural exchange thing - they said, "We're going to Western Europe. We'd be glad to make some other visits if you can work out the details."

So the Department sent a notice around and we went to the Polish concert agency, State concert agency. They said, "Yes, we want to have them come."

And we worked out a deal in accordance with which they got a Polish plane to pick them up in Zagreb, Yugoslavia, and bring them up to Warsaw. They played two or three concerts in Warsaw and a Polish plane then took them to Italy. That was handled by the Polish Concert Agency, so there were no transportation costs. They took care of their quarters and food while they were in Warsaw and then we were able to come up with some dollars because, needless to say, the business manager of the Los Angeles Philharmonic said, "That's funny money you've got there." This was before the dollar was quite so funny. "That's no good to us. We need dollars."

We managed to come up with the minimum of dollars from the State Department that they required by way of a fee. And this worked beautifully. We wouldn't have been able to do it if it had been on a commercial basis, strictly commercial basis. But this way, we were able to do it. But they were coming to Europe in the first place.

However, you know, these cultural attractions - I mentioned the New York City Ballet and the Robert Shaw Chorale - they were terribly important at the time in the Soviet Union. I like to see things like that go to the Soviet Union or China for that matter where they've been cut off for so long. But what really counts, I think, are the other kind of thing you mentioned: that is, exchanges of scholars, principally students. I'm terribly disappointed that here, the President, in an effort to get back at the Iranians, kicked out these military students, half of whom were probably on our side or more than that.

Anyway that's a mistake. Now admittedly you look around the world - in the teahouses of Afghanistan they say...they asked us before this business got quite so serious, "Tell us how is it that all our young Afghans who went to the Soviet Union and studied are anti-communists, and all the ones who studied in the United States are pro-communist?" (laughs heartily)

So you do run that risk! You have to pick people fairly carefully.

But people who come here and are serious and study and are intelligent, by and large they do go away pro-American. There is an effect on them. That I think is the more important thing.

And the other thing I think that we don't do nearly enough of is, we don't publish enough, we don't get the word out. The radio is not bad. RFE (Radio Free Europe) and RL (Radio Liberty) are excellent. But serious journals - Problems of Communism is excellent, it's highly prized around the world.

USIA was putting out a magazine called Dialogue.

Q: I remember that. It was high quality.

DAVIES: High quality.

Q: It wasn't allowed to be shown here, was it? I mean Dialogue can't be sold or distributed.

DAVIES: No, it can't be sold or distributed.

Q: But that was a high quality thing, wasn't it?

DAVIES: Well, it is a high quality thing, but unfortunately they are changing it for the worse, I am sorry to say.

Q: And was it Abe (Abraham) Brumberg who was the editor of...

DAVIES: Of Problems of Communism, yes. He is no longer there, but the magazine goes on and it's a very good magazine. We used to have quite a few people in Warsaw who...

Q: But aside from these substantive things what would you recommend about USIA?

DAVIES: I think there are two or three things. In the first place you have to put people at the top of the agency whose primary qualification is not...is not that they are being paid off for some kind of political debt, but that they know how to talk to a foreign audience, and know what the interests of that foreign audience are, so somebody who's had some experience, I don't care whether it's as a diplomat, a foreign correspondent, or whatever, but somebody who's had some experience abroad. This makes all the difference. And there should be somebody like that at the head of USIA, and at the head of VOA, which although it's part of USIA is a huge organization all its own.

Then there should be in the State Department somebody - whether it's the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, or I don't care what the title is - whose job it is to keep saying to the Secretary of State, to the top officials of the State Department, and ultimately, together with the director of USIA, to keep saying to the President and the White House, "Look, we in the United States are very important to ourselves and everybody else, I am sure, but there are billions of people out there to whom we have to talk, and don't think that this is not a political game. It is a political game, which the Soviets and a lot of other people are playing very hard, and which we are simply not competing in."

It's sad. I mean, if you look at the situation now - we were talking about it before. The President has no conception of this. Nobody around him has any conception of it, apparently. (Cyrus) Vance has no conception of it. There is no place in the United States Government now. It should be done presumably by the director of USIA, and there was a period when Ed Murrow sat in the Cabinet and in the NSC, but that no longer happens, so USIA kind of goes its merry way, doing sort of cultural things. It's a little bit like the British Council. Well, there is room for that, but what about telling the rest of the world what we are doing and telling the President - I just heard it last week for example. This is something the USIA did for years, and it's stopped doing it some time ago. The White House asked USIA, "Say, haven't you got some polls that show how people in Europe look on our policy towards Afghanistan?"

Well, we are not doing that any more, and yet it's the simplest thing for them to do. It costs a few thousand dollars to get the British Gallup Poll, the German Gallup Poll and the French, but they are not doing it any longer, which to me is symbolic of...

Q: Of neglect.

DAVIES: Neglect. And again I think it's come because of this growing distance between the two agencies, which is unnecessary and unfortunate. It should not have been allowed to develop, but since nobody in the State Department cares, and since, as C. Northcote Parkinson has shown us, any agency once you set it up its principal aim becomes...

Q: Multiplication.

DAVIES: To continue to thrive with the least interference and interaction with the surrounding environment that it can get away with, you know.

So I would say, damn it, I don't care whether it's an Ambassador or a distinguished correspondent like Ed Murrow, who was worshiped by the people at the agency - he was not a great executive, but he did inspire...

Carl Rowan again was not a good executive, but did a pretty good job.

Q: He had at least had some glimpse of experience.

DAVIES: Right, he'd served abroad, [and] in the Department.

Q: Good correspondent.

DAVIES: Yes, he had some idea. But since then...

Q: But wouldn't you say they are doing 30% of their job maybe now, but with inflation and other crises and the preponderance of emphasis elsewhere that the few good things they are doing are probably going to be cut?

DAVIES: Oh, I have no doubt of it. I have no doubt of it because here again you've got to keep...

Another unfortunate part of the whole thing is, the product is invisible, the product is...

Q: Hard to measure.

DAVIES: It's impossible to measure, and there is a great deal of skepticism up on the Hill. These are hardheaded people who if you are going to spend a buck say, well, where's the product.

So you've got to keep convincing them that you are accomplishing something, and that's my other concern. You are not going to be able to convince them that what you are doing is worthwhile if you are dealing in sort of cultural manifestations.

I mentioned this magazine Dialogue, which is an excellent magazine, top-notch - we published a version in Polish, we published a version in Russian, and people there just couldn't wait to get their hands on it, it was the kind of thing the European intellectuals eat up, the French, they loved it - now they are turning it into a kind of cultural review. Well, that's a mistake. It shouldn't be primarily cultural. It should be about ideas.

Q: Not reviewing movies and art shows.

DAVIES: Yes, I mean that's fine, but let other people do that.

We've now got a popular culture - it's American popular culture - that encircles the globe in a certain way. We don't have to work on that. You know this modern art, that's so modish. Let people who are interested in it find out about it themselves. We don't have to sell that.

But there is an ideological conflict going on. I am not talking about going back to the Cold War, no, but by golly, if we haven't got something to tell the rest of the world about ourselves we'd better think about where we are and where we are going.

Q: Dialogue didn't lambaste any Marxist theorist...

DAVIES: Not at all. It presented different points of view, the kind of plurality and catholicity of American intellectual life, and as I say in Warsaw if an issue were late, golly, we'd get 20 phone calls immediately. People would say, where is my Dialogue? They were indignant, and some would say, are you sure my name is still on the list? That kind of thing.

They'd ask me at parties. They'd come up to me, and I'd say, Oh, I'll make a note. Then I'd go back and find out it was late, as usual, that there had been some shipping problem.

Q: What about that America, that Russian language picture magazine?

DAVIES: Well, that's another thing. I've got to look into that. I heard last week that they are cutting down the format.

Q: Making it a pocket thing.

DAVIES: Yes.

Q: Was that effective through the years?

DAVIES: I think it was very effective.

Q: Was it professionally done?

DAVIES: Beautifully done piece of work. Now you know there was always a lot of questioning. There was even - and probably there still is - a rumor that each new issue went directly to a pulping factory in Moscow. Well, that wasn't true, it was not correct.

On the other hand of course not all the copies were sold on the newsstands first come first served, no. We did know that copies were sold at newsstands - the newsstands attendant stuck them underneath the counter, and had a list of 15 or 20 people who had given her or him a little extra money to keep a copy every month for them. But most of the copies went to libraries or went to party functionaries, or high muck-a-mucks.

Q: Made nice coffee table stuff.

DAVIES: Well, sure. And people would then say, "Well, you know..."

I say, "Heck, that's fine, that's fine. You mean we don't want to reach those people? Sure we want to reach those people."

And I am not talking about convincing functionaries of the Communist Party to be pro-American, no, but expose them to this. Maybe the guy will look at this and say, gee, this is very interesting, because again there were some very good articles in the magazine. Professionally there were people who said - and I believe them - that this was one of the best, if not the best magazine produced in the United States in terms of the quality of the content. They had excellent articles, beautiful photography, and was beautifully put together. And it had an enormous impact. Now I am not at all averse to sitting down and saying, okay, the thing has been going now for...let's see...

Q: For 30 years.

DAVIES: Yes, it's been going now for 30 years: do we need to think about changing it or abolishing it or doing something else? Let's sit down and think about it, but let's do it very carefully, and not jump to conclusions. It is an expensive product, in contrast to Dialogue, which was very cheap. It was all reprints, and sort of the principal costs were for those translations done mainly by staff translators, and the printing job was not that expensive - but America magazine cost a good deal.

Q: Color...

DAVIES: Color and everything. Then the question is, do you still need this? Let's think about it.

Well, instead of that they are reaching a kind of a typical bureaucratic solution, cutting down the format and making it correspond to the Horizon magazine that they turn out for other areas of the world, including the content, that is, I don't know, something like three fifths of the content or perhaps more will just be the standard content.

The objective is to have one magazine for the whole world.

Well, I say why? Why have one magazine for the whole world? We are a very rich country, and you can't tell me that I can't go up on the Hill and convince the Appropriations (Committee).

John J. Rooney, who was a tough son of a gun (former Representative, New York State), we convinced him on these magazines, and he was not an easy man to convince, and once you convinced him, then by golly he'd fight for the appropriations.

You've got to do that.

Congressman John M. Slack now, from West Virginia - he just died - he was a hardheaded guy, and he was convinced.

Sure you've got to keep selling this and reselling it, but it's worth the effort in my opinion. And you know these things do go from hand to hand. One magazine, one issue, one copy is seen by a number of people, and you can't measure the impact of it. That's the problem - you can't measure the impact. (You can't say), let's cut it down and save money here. Cheese-paring. Cheese-paring.

Well... You've got me off on some diatribes here tonight.

Q: Why not?

DAVIES: Oh, I can do that. I can go on by the hour.

Q: Well, in future sessions we will follow your career back to Warsaw and so on and so forth. It would be useful to have your opinions on the Foreign Service, the future of the Foreign Service, its weaknesses and strengths and things like that.

I hope we won't be submerged by this dismal political situation which is besetting us now.

DAVIES: Gosh. I don't know...

Well, I might just say a word or two about the senior seminar. I went to the sixth senior seminar after I came back from Moscow in 1963.

As it was then called, the senior seminar on foreign policy - they changed the name, and I forget what they call it now - was I thought an excellent course.

Q: It lasted about a whole year, didn't it?

DAVIES: It began in August and went through until June, I guess. It was about ten months, and they had about 30 people.

Perhaps I did mention that there were about 30 people of whom roughly 15 or slightly more were from the State Department, and then there was an officer there from the Department of Commerce, one from Treasury, one from C.I.A., an officer from each of the military services - the Army, the Air Force, the Marine Corps and the Navy, in fact there were two naval officers - and then there were a couple of others from around the Government, I can't remember, perhaps from the Department of Defense, and a civilian or two.

We had an excellent group of people, and I felt it was far preferable for us to go to that senior seminar than to go to the War College - to one of the service war colleges - because

the course dealt so intensively in a kind of re-Americanization process, and they spent at least half the time talking about what was happening in the United States.

And then we did a great deal of travel in the United States. We went to Chicago to look into urban developments there, and we saw Mayor Daley and he gave us a little talk. And we went to the Police Department. At that point Professor Wilson - I can't remember his first name (* Wilson, Orlando Winfield [interviewer's note]) was the Chicago Commissioner of Police - he is a famous criminologist and I guess he is back at Harvard now. And we went with the police in their squad cars on patrol one night. They took us - two of us went with two policemen to the South Side, and all the others went out with policemen on their patrols. It was two by two.

I mean they attempted to incorporate into the course practical experiences. It wasn't purely theoretical, it wasn't just lectures.

We went to the Central Valley in California and saw how the irrigation system there was organized. In San Francisco they were then setting up a free port in San Francisco, and we saw that. We went down to Atlanta, we went to Puerto Rico. The trip to Puerto Rico in February was a kind of a traditional thing, and was greatly appreciated. That was a very interesting trip, too.

Q: This was all the sort of thing that (Ambassador) Angus Ward never got.

DAVIES: Yes, exactly, it was the sort of thing that he didn't get. Nothing like that existed before the war.

Q: How did they work this with the wives? Did they attend some lectures, or...

DAVIES: No, at that point the wives were not included in any way. Subsequently they worked it out so that the wives could come to all the lectures which had no classified element. Very few of them were (classified), but there were a couple that were.

We went for example to Sandia in New Mexico. But now it's arranged in such a fashion that the wives can not only attend the lectures, provided that they are not classified, but also go on field trips if they can get away - that's up to them of course - which is a great improvement obviously, because many of the wives felt that, well, you know, this is kind of a very nice thing for you, but I am stuck here with the kids, which was indeed the way it was with my wife and other wives. (laughs)

But the thing I think that was so good about it for us was that particularly for officers in Class 3 and Class 2 who had spent most of the early part of their careers outside the United States, we did get as you correctly pointed out, in contrast to the older generation of American diplomats, a chance to come back and find out what was really going on in the country and what the problems were, and what the concerns of people throughout the country - not just on the East Coast or in Washington - were. We went up to New York as

well, and we spent longer than a day at the United Nations, we were received by the Mayor, and looked at New York City Government. I can't remember whether we went to New England or not.

Q: Do you remember if there was any relic of McCarthyism or any harassment from this person or that about "You So-and-so were speaking before..." or any question or any censorship of speakers? I mean, not once they arrived, but saying, no, he can't speak?

DAVIES: No, it was very good in that way. We had some people who I think were picked precisely because they were far out in terms of the accepted Establishment view and they came and sort of shook us up and aroused a good deal of controversy and questioning. It was very, very well done from that point of view.

Stanley Hoffman for example. We were now getting into the Vietnam War period, and Stanley Hoffman came down from Harvard - he was a critic. And other people who were critical also appeared. We didn't have Henry Kissinger talk to our group, but I know he spoke to other senior seminar groups.

So I think it was far preferable to going to one of the war colleges, the principal purpose of which - and very properly - is to give military service officers an exposure to world problems. Well, we'd had the exposure to world problems! Now what we needed was some exposure to American problems.

But as usual... - we've talked on and off about the problems of the service - the Foreign Service, and for that matter the Civil Service - and I have continued to think about that - as usual, although we were told that we were a picked group, and there was a certain element of that, in fact of course most of the people were the kind of people who could be spared, people who were sort of between assignments.

However, among all the people in the State Department who were picked to go to higher training courses, I think ours was the superior group. There were others of course in the National War College, at the Army, Navy and Air Force war colleges, and in the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. But I think ours was intellectually in one way or the other the superior group, and that was recognized by the services. They picked intellectuals from their officer cadres to come over and be part of the group.

But typically once you were there - and this didn't pertain solely to the Foreign Service people, but to all of us, including the people from the military services - you were very much on your own, you were sort of out of sight out of mind, and nobody was concerned about you, you got this big buildup at the outset - "You know, you are handpicked, this is a great thing," and so forth and so on - and you inevitably felt that well, this should be good for my career, and I should get a good ongoing assignment.

Then along about halfway through the year you began to look around and to sort of ask the people in personnel who were looking after you, what's next for me, and they sort of stared

at you blankly. In effect you were in the same position you had always been in - you had to go and find a job yourself, and if you didn't, well, there was no ill will involved, but it was just that it was up to you.

And the same as I say was true of the military personnel involved. We had two very bright naval...

No, I take that back.

One of the naval officers was and is very bright, a very able man. The other was not. I should say he was strictly naval aviator, and he eventually did end up commanding I think a small carrier.

But the fact is that they - not just the naval officers - were in the same boat, and only one of them advanced to fly rank. Only one of them made general. The Army officer did leave and went out to Vietnam, and I guess he retired as a brigadier. Maybe a major general.

But the point is that these were not guys who were marked out in their own services as really going places. They were bright, but they weren't quite somehow the gung ho types that were going to be following in the footsteps of such stellar performers as General Westmoreland, let's say, or somebody like that.

So (Brig. Gen.) Dick Lee made it, but none of the others did. None of the others got beyond the field officer rank that they held. They were all at the colonel and naval captain level.

Q: Detached duty is always a veiled threat, particularly for the military.

DAVIES: Right, you are out of the mainstream. It was true, we all were.

Q: Particularly if the director general of such-and-such an agency writes the most complimentary letter, it doesn't in the military framework...

DAVIES: Precisely. Not at all.

Well, with this group, out of the group -

I am just trying to think how many people on the State Department side went on to become ambassadors. I am inclined to say that there were two. Bill Witman (Ambassador William Witman II) who is now dead, who was the senior State Department officer in the group, did go on. In fact he had had an ambassadorial post before that; he'd had a post I think in West Africa somewhere, and I am not sure he ever did go out again.

I am just trying to think. I have a roster and I'd have to go down the roster, but my impression is that perhaps I was the only one afterwards who did go on, which seems to me that there is something the matter. I mean you ought to be able to identify people.

But this is the problem. This is the problem, and in thinking about it I see what the difficulty is. Strictly speaking you should identify people, there should be a constant process of evaluation and re-evaluation, and an attempt to identify people who are going to be or should be appointed to the top jobs.

In fact that doesn't happen. It does not happen. Why doesn't it happen?

Well, you know, you have this egalitarianism, what some people call - I think perhaps a little too generally, not quite specifically enough - this democratic attitude, but it is a kind of an egalitarian attitude.

Q: Would you say that Wristonization laid some more emphasis on that, or... This was 1963, and when was Wristonization, ten years before?

DAVIES: Oh, Wristonization was ten years earlier, yes.

I don't think Wristonization had anything to do with it particularly. I think that it's a problem that's endemic, and I am pointing to the military services as well, because it's the same kind of thing there. It's different obviously there, but you know, you cannot in an American service of this sort have a system which identifies by whatever criteria you want to use outstanding people, which singles them out and says, okay, this is a group that...there will be exceptions, but by and large ten percent of this group is the one that is going to go ahead and be the leadership.

You cannot do that. You certainly can't do it in this day and age, when personnel practices and records are 90 percent out in the open, because no sooner had that been done than the word would get around, and you'd have a lot of people complaining.

Q: Suing now.

DAVIES: Suing, exactly.

Q: But isn't there also a sort of a thing that you can be a brilliant political reports officer and a very fine Foreign Service officer overseas, but once you get back in the maelstrom you are supposed to be a sort of manager/administrator and have other people under you?

DAVIES: That's right.

Q: Whether that's your talent or not.

DAVIES: That's correct, that's correct. There is a failure to sort out the functions and to say, we need different kinds of people to do different kinds of jobs at different times in different places, which leads me back to the point that I always felt we made a mistake in our service - or a mistake was made - when in 1924, I guess it was, they passed finally the first piece

of career legislation, and amalgamated the consular and diplomatic services. That was the beginning if you like of this trend towards leveling, towards making everybody equal, and sort of saying no, no, you can't have a second class service of people who just do the administrative and consular work.

Whereas in fact of course any civil service or bureaucracy is a hierarchy, and does, and should, and has to embody principles of determining which are the best people in the elite. It's not supposed to be some kind of democracy. And if it's going to be an effective instrument it will provide a mechanism for singling out the people who can do the job best, and testing them early you will then find that some of them whom you've picked in fact can't do the job, and you've got to set them aside, and maybe some of those whom you haven't picked will prove to have been more capable than you thought, and they will grow into their places.

Q: Also would you say that somebody who is just super duper with visas and passports and that kind of problem would not be very good dealing with the Foreign Ministry?

DAVIES: Well, this is the real point. We have now reached a stage where everybody is a Foreign Service officer on an equal basis. You all come in, no matter what you want to do. In fact doing consular work, doing some of the administrative jobs that the management of any organization requires, is not so satisfying as dealing with the Foreign Ministry or reporting or attempting to formulate policy. It's a very different kettle of fish.

Yet in the old service we had a lot of people who were quite happy - the people whom we call noncareer vice consuls - who were quite happy to do those jobs, and they were just high school graduates, they had never gone to college, for one reason or the other. Now of course everybody goes to college. Well, that's all right. And for them, for a man who had just graduated from high school, to become a noncareer vice consul and eventually perhaps, if he were successful, work up to become consul general, was a very big step forward. That was very satisfying to him, and he was delighted to do what can only honestly be called the donkey work of consular work, and administrative work. He was delighted to do that, he had plenty of rewards, ignoring the salary side, which is another thing altogether, but in terms of the psychic satisfaction that he had of being a representative of the United States - he was very happy to have that recognition, and did a heck of a good job, and did not sort of go around saying, I am competing with you, although I really have never done anything in the field of political analysis or dealing with foreign offices or that kind of thing, I am still competing with you for a top job in the service.

I just feel that we made a mistake when we abandoned the so-called A line and B line, and put them together, so that now everybody - the guy who runs the motor pool as well as the head of the political section and the economic section and the consular section - everybody is in one pile.

Well, of course inevitably we had to unscramble that a bit, and set up these cones rather artificially, which meant going back some distance towards the old system.

Even so, it's a fact that it's very difficult still for people in the political cone to be promoted. It's the hardest. I mean the competition is toughest there, and it's easiest for people in some of the less demanding cones.

So the situation is not very satisfactory. And this has all been compounded by what I can only regard as the increasing politicization of the service. To some extent Wristonization played a part there, but I don't think a serious one. What is much more serious is what has happened in recent years, that is the increasing appointment of people from the outside, not a few of them ex Foreign Service officers who had left the service, gone up to the Hill to work, or gone into Academia or something like that, and then have come back in very much higher than they would have been if they had stuck in the service.

Well, inevitably you are discouraging younger people who say, why should I be the sucker and stay here when my contemporary after being three or four years in the service can go up to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and be an aide there for three or four years, and then go abroad after a total of ten years as an ambassador, whereas I am nowhere near that.

So I think this is the thing that disturbs them.

Well, there you are. In this country we are simply not going to have rigid bureaucracies, civil services, such as our European friends have; in the British service, you know, there may be two or three political appointees and that is all - the Ambassador in Paris, the Ambassador here in Washington, the Ambassador in...

Q: The same is true of West Germany.

DAVIES: Yes.

Q: One political appointee.

DAVIES: One. I mean it's just fantastic. Of course they have their problems too in the British service - retirement at 60 with no ifs, ands or buts, it doesn't make any difference whether you hold an ambassadorial appointment or not. In our service at least if you hold a Presidential appointment you can stay on until you are 65. And they are going to change the law I think, to make it possible for people to stay on anyway until they are 65. In the British service no excuses, no ifs ands or buts - at 60 you are out.

Q: But aren't they occasionally called back? For example Sir Nigel Henderson retired and...

DAVIES: Oh, yes, right, but he is a political appointee here, in effect.

Q: Yes.

DAVIES: Yes, yes.

Q: A professional diplomat.

DAVIES: Exactly, but his status is no longer that of a career Foreign Service officer.

At any rate the senior seminar goes on, I am happy to say.

Q: The budget people haven't tampered with it?

DAVIES: No. There have been several moves over the years to enlarge it, because it has been very successful. People have said, if it's so good, why don't you make it bigger. But making it bigger would destroy - you know from your own experience - the atmosphere and make it no longer manageable. Now you have a seminar atmosphere, you have distinguished speakers, academic or otherwise, coming in, and in a two or three hour session everybody gets a chance to ask two or three questions, and there can be a pretty good discussion engendered. You'd destroy that if you had another let's say... You'd destroy it if you doubled it, and perhaps even if you added another ten people.

So this battle has been fought successfully, and they've kept it small and more or less...

At any rate, along about the beginning of 1964, I began to look around, and I said, my goodness, what am I going to do? And my friendly personnel officer didn't have any ideas.

I ran into an old college classmate, John A. McKesson. The way these things go he was working in the Secretariat for Ben (Benjamin) Read, and he wanted to get out. He'd been there I think a year and a half. He wanted to get out after two years, but getting out required his finding a replacement, which I gather was not the easiest thing in the world to do.

At any rate he latched on to me, and introduced me to Ben Read, and Ben said okay. So I replaced John when I got out of the senior seminar in the summer of 1964.

That was an interesting assignment. I was only there six months.

Q: Let's see, Dean Rusk was Secretary and Johnson was President?

DAVIES: Rusk was Secretary, and Johnson was President by then. George Ball was Undersecretary.

Q: And Alexis Johnson...

DAVIES: Alexis Johnson? No, it was Foy Kohler. Foy came back. Alexis may have been there. No, I guess... Yes, it must have been Alexis Johnson, yes, precisely.

Q: The Undersecretary for Political Affairs.

DAVIES: Yes. So I was there for six months. It's always busy there. The Cyprus crisis was one of the big things that we were dealing with, and George Ball of course was handling that, and we had all the other things.

But the problem with those jobs in the Secretariat is that you deal with one problem for an hour or two hours, or maybe at most a working day, and then it's another problem the next day. There is no continuity in the subject matter you are dealing with. You know how it is.

Q: What would you say about this problem that since then and before then and certainly now everything is so crisis oriented, and the crises certainly come up fast - what would you say about the business of how to get higher up attention to a problem that isn't a crisis but does need attention? What is your experience with that?

DAVIES: Well, it's hard if not impossible. I think we... I say "we" but Ben Read was very good at identifying problems that were coming along that needed to be looked at. He did have difficulty in getting one of the principals to take a look at them on occasion, but he usually would find somebody who would take it on. But it's not easy. Dean Rusk in particular I think was very crisis oriented. He read an enormous amount. I think we all felt that he read too much, that he tried to see too much of the traffic, and didn't rely on the system that was set up to select the traffic for him to spend more time trying to figure out solutions.

George Ball I have enormous respect for. I think he was head and shoulders above anybody I've seen up there, really, and I wish he were around now. Well, maybe the new Secretary will...

Q: At that time McGeorge Bundy of the National Security Council was not... He was working with Rusk.

DAVIES: That's right, very much so.

Q: And had the appropriate deference.

DAVIES: Yes. Well, I mean it was a very cooperative... His conception of the job was that of getting the options together, and not interjecting himself into the process, but facilitating getting the options before the President.

He left not long after I came there, as I remember, and Walt W. Rostow...

Q: He was head of policy planning.

DAVIES: He was the head of the Policy Planning Staff. He went over there. And well, Walt Rostow wasn't quite the same caliber, I would say, in bureaucratic terms.

Q: But Walt Rostow, when he first went over there, I think people said my God, he'll talk Johnson to death, or he'll get fired...

But he really trimmed his sails to suit President Lyndon Johnson in an extraordinary way.

DAVIES: Yes.

Q: But then of course he got slumped by Vietnam.

DAVIES: Right. Apparently he got along very well with Johnson. I think it was a good move because he was turning out these very lengthy, scholarly pieces on coming problems which nobody read - Dean Rusk didn't read them, you know, nobody read them in the State Department - and when he got over to the White House he did change his modus operandi very significantly, I think, and did much better - you are quite right - than anybody had suspected he would.

Well, I'd been in the job for four or five months. Carl Rowan was then director of USIA, and I had known him when he first came into the Department in 1961, he was either Assistant Secretary or Deputy Assistant Secretary, I can't remember which, for Public Affairs in the State Department. He was Deputy, and Bob (Robert) Manning was the Assistant Secretary. I had known him slightly there, and we ran into each other one day and he said, "How would you like to come over to USIA and work for me? I need someone in the Soviet and East European area."

Q: He had been Ambassador in Finland.

DAVIES: He'd been Ambassador in Finland and had come back not too long before that, and had become director of USIA.

So I said, "I would really like to do that, but I have this job, you know, and Ben Read had sworn me that I'd stay a year minimum, I mean that was kind of the implication, but you have to talk to Ben Read. I can't do it."

So he did talk to Ben, and Ben came in and laughed and said, "Oh, you'll be amused by this."

I said, "What?"

"Carl Rowan wants you to go over and work in USIA of all places!"

And I said, "Well, I'd kind of like to do it."

He said, "What?" He was completely contemptuous of USIA.

I said, "Well, it's the area that I am interested in, and I know a lot of the people there, and I think working in that area would be very interesting."

Well, that put him aback, and initially he was pretty negative, but finally he agreed.

John P. Walsh was hanging around there, so he was brought in to replace me, and I went over to USIA at the beginning of 1965, and spent a very happy, pleasant three and a half years there. I really enjoyed that. I had a good bunch of people to work with. The big advantage was that whereas in the State Department, unless you are a deputy assistant secretary or assistant secretary you don't have any real managerial responsibilities - well, I did in the Executive Secretariat because we had a large staff there - in the USIA the thing is so much smaller, you have your own budget - I had a budget of about a million dollars for my section, and you had a whole bunch of people to manage and all the personnel problems that go with it. We had I suppose 40 or 45 or 50 people, Americans, in Washington and overseas, and 100-150 locals, something like that, overseas.

Q: This was the Eastern European Affairs Section?

DAVIES: The Soviet and Eastern European area, as they called it in those days. They have an area that corresponds to each geographic bureau in the State Department.

So I went over there, and Carl Rowan was a very good man to work for. Don Wilson was there then.

Q: Yes, Donald Malcolm Wilson, from Time-Life.

DAVIES: Yes, from Time, and he went back to Time-Life books, I guess, after that.

Q: Was he Rowan's number 2 man?

DAVIES: Yes. He had been number 2 man for Ed (Edward R. Murrow) and when Ed Murrow resigned - he was very sick - Don stayed and then Carl Rowan came. Don in effect administered the agency. Carl wasn't really that interested in management. Carl dealt with the policy side.

Well, with Murrow's departure there had been a great diminution anyway, and for that matter with Kennedy's assassination there had been a very substantial change. Whereas Ed Murrow had had a strong voice and had sort of Cabinet status and sat in the NSC, Carl Rowan didn't.

Oh, he got along well with Lyndon Johnson, he'd gone out to Vietnam with him in 1961 on that trip, so there was no problem there, but Johnson wasn't that interested, whereas Kennedy had been interested in...call it what you will, I always call it propaganda, because that's what it is.

But for us in the Soviet Eastern European area it was a very active period. We had a very active exchange program with the Soviet Union, and the beginnings of comparable exchange programs with some of the other countries. We were putting on trade fairs in Eastern Europe, and sending exhibits there. We had Amerika magazine going into the Soviet Union and Poland, and we published a number of other publications for Yugoslavia and various other countries in the area. We gave policy guidance to the sections of the Voice of America that dealt with and broadcast to that part of the world. So we had plenty to keep ourselves busy.

In the middle of that period the whole dissent thing began to develop. There was the trial of Sinyavsky and Daniel in Moscow, and Samizdat began to appear in some volume, and when this happened - this had begun of course as early as when I had been in Moscow, and we had been sending it back to the Department, but nothing had been happening to it, so when I got over to USIA, I made arrangements to make sure that any of these documents that were sent out through the Embassy were sent to us in USIA, and then we got them published in Russian, usually in the Novoye Russkoye Slovop in New York, the Russian language paper there, which then made them accessible to people who wanted to translate them.

We weren't the only ones in this business at that time. They were coming through all kinds of sources, they were being published in Paris, in Western Europe, in Germany.

Q: Was Voice of America under USIA then?

DAVIES: Oh, yes, sure.

Q: Who was the head of it? Anybody special?

DAVIES: Let me think. It was Henry Loomis.

Q: Yes.

DAVIES: And then John Chancellor came - Jack Chancellor, from NBC, very able. Henry Loomis went over to Public Broadcasting Service, and Jack Chancellor replaced him. I think Carl Rowan got him there.

We had a very active interchange with those people, and I thought a very good relationship.

Once those documents had been published, then they could pick them up and broadcast them back.

Q: That's what I was wondering.

DAVIES: Exactly, yes. But until they were we couldn't get them through the Embassy, and just give them to the Voice (of America). They had to be published somewhere.

So that worked very well.

And then we had a lot of dealings with people on the Hill. (Congressman) John J. Rooney (Democrat, New York) was still chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee that dealt with the appropriations for the State Department, Justice, FBI, USIA, so I went up to testify before him.

Q: Did he mellow at all, or was he consistently John Rooney always?

DAVIES: Well, he wasn't bad if you...

See, actually that's how I got the job. My predecessor, Lee Brady, who was a career USIA Foreign Service officer, had been Public Affairs officer in Moscow when I was there in 1961-1963, and Lee had come back and was head of that section.

Lee had testified before John Rooney on one of the budgets that was coming up, and had made a mistake in his testimony. I can't remember now what the precise facts were, but he had answered a question put to him by John Rooney incorrectly, I think in all innocence - he had been given the wrong figure - and John Rooney found out that it was a mistake, and he treated this as a willful deception on the part of Lee Brady, and told Carl Rowan. He said, "Get rid of that man, he lied to me."

Q: Did he really think he had, or he just didn't like...

DAVIES: Well, he didn't like him, and that was the problem. You know, it was a funny thing, because they were both Irishmen, but Lee Brady is very highly educated, polished, cultured - I don't know whether he had gone to Harvard or Yale or Princeton or where - bilingual in French, he had done his graduate work in France, he was an expert, and in fact that was his area, not the Soviet Union, and after, when John Rooney asked for him to be kicked out, he was sent to France as public affairs adviser in Paris, so he came out of this quite all right, and he preferred that anyway, because that was the area that he was interested in. But you can see that there was this clash, and there was a certain sense in which he just rubbed John Rooney the wrong way, and the fact that he was Irish-American did him no good. On the contrary, here was a guy who sort of was...

Q: Uppity Irish.

DAVIES: Yes, that's right. John Rooney felt, well, this guy - I don't know, he was perhaps throwing in a French word here and there - was trying to upstage him. So I think this lay at the root of it, and then there was this issue in which John Rooney apparently had been interested for years - and I can't remember now what it was - on which he asked this question and got the wrong response.

Now with John Rooney, if you told him, "I don't know, Mr. Chairman, I will get you the answer," you were much better off, but to come forward with something that was wrong, with all the assurance in the world, that was no good.

Q: Wouldn't you say that over and over again sometimes in the military and every agency probably, some of these people who are mythological monsters, if you have the right person to deal with them they are no great problem?

DAVIES: Oh, absolutely, absolutely.

Q: And that agencies, the Pentagon and everybody, continually send the wrong personality up there, somebody who bristles and just creates [trouble] and causes more harm for themselves?

DAVIES: It's absolutely correct. When I went up there the first time - the first time you appear before them you are supposed to give a little sort of biographical resume to introduce yourself to the Committee - I went up there, and Ben Bosner, who was the assistant director of USIA for administration, outstanding, USIA was the best administered agency, certainly in the Foreign Affairs field, that I had ever seen; of course it was small, and that was the big advantage of it, but they had some outstanding people there, they had Ben Bosner, who also taught government administration at either George Washington or American, I can't remember which, a real expert in his field, and he ran the whole administrative side. There was Lionel Moseley, who was an old line civil servant who ran the personnel side. And who was the guy who was the head of the security? He was an old FBI man, an Irishman, a wonderful man. Paul McNichol.

Well, those three people were kind of the heart of the agency, and they were professionals, they were <u>good</u>, they knew what they were doing.

Well, so Ben Bosner said to me... He looked (at my resume) and he said, "Oh, you were born in Brooklyn."

I said, yes, and he said, "Great. You know, with Rooney, well, we are home free. You tell him that."

So I appeared, and John Rooney said, "Now, Mr. Davies, tell us about yourself."

I said, "Well, Mr. Chairman, I was born in Brooklyn."

He said, "Oh, where in Brooklyn?"

And I said, "Well, as a matter of fact in Brooklyn Heights, Mr. Chairman."

And he turned to Carl Rowan, who was there, and he said, "Mr. Director, you know Brooklyn Heights is the Park Avenue of Brooklyn. I was born down by the Gowanus Canal."

So it wasn't such a good... (idea).

I said, "Mr. Chairman, yes, but then I taught at Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute."

"Oh, one of the great educational institutions in the world!" he says.

So that was all right, I was back in his good graces again. I recouped somehow. And after that there was just no problem. He was not hostile.

But then Leonard Marks came. Carl Rowan stayed for another year or a year and a half - I can't remember exactly how long - and then was replaced by Leonard Marks, and Leonard Marks did a very smart thing, which I think is worth noting.

Carl Rowan used to go up there, and he would take the assistant director for the area involved, so that meant that he had - I don't know - ten or 12 people appearing before this committee, and he'd sit there on one side, and if a question arose which dealt with a wider policy issue, then he'd step in. But that would occur only very infrequently. So there you had a good example. In the case of Lee Brady, Carl was sitting right there, and yet Lee - this was the second or third time he'd appeared before Rooney, and it was clear that the vibes were not good, but they let him go up there.

When Leonard Marks came, Leonard said, "Look, I know nothing about this business, but I am going to brief myself and I am going to be the witness."

We said, "What do you mean you are going to be the witness? You mean all alone?"

He said, "Yes, I am going up there with Ben Bosner, who is my budget man, and with somebody to handle the books, and there'll be three of us, but I am going to be the witness."

And everybody said, but you won't know...

He said, "If I don't know, I'll tell them I don't know."

Then he said, "You know, he can't cut me up the way he cuts up these (people)."

Q: Courageous.

DAVIES: Yes. He said, "Look, he isn't going to do that to me, and if I don't know I'll say I don't know, and we'll submit the answer for the record."

Well, it worked beautifully. It's the right way to do it. It worked beautifully.

Q: And Leonard Marks has a democratic, frank, not urbane, but...

Davies He does.

Q: He's dealt with people all his life.

DAVIES: Sure, that's right.

Q: (His approach is) cut the crap, and let's get to the point.

DAVIES: That's right, exactly, and you know, "Mr. Chairman, you and I are both busy," that kind of thing. It cut in half the length of time.

He said, "You are up there, I am up there, there are three of four of us there. Well, my gosh, we are spending thousands of dollars on this thing, and it goes on and on, and since you are an expert in the area, the members of the committee, led by John Rooney, want to delve into all these details, whereas I can honestly say I don't know, I'll get you the information."

Well, it cut the whole thing in half or less. Rooney enjoyed it more, because despite the fact that he always liked to bore in on these things, he was dealing with the top man, and it worked beautifully. It's the way to do it.

Q: He wasn't putting on any airs.

DAVIES: He wasn't putting on any airs, he was trying to give the answers, and it worked beautifully. So it was a lesson to me.

Q: At that time who was the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration in State?

DAVIES: Bill (William) Crockett.

Q: He had had a minor job in Rome, and Rooney came over to see the...

DAVIES: Right.

Q: Crockett took care of him, and he liked him from then on.

DAVIES: That's right.

Q: Crockett had an easygoing, quaint way, and that was of value to State, I guess.

DAVIES: That's right. Well, he was the guy...and Rooney then said, "I want this guy there in that job."

Q: Is that so?

DAVIES: You know, you can, if you kind of use your head, deal with these situations. All those guys up there are going to use their power to the extent that they can, you know that. Well, you have to cater to that, you have to try to protect yourself against it, but there are ways to do it.

Q: Yes, a little imagination and so forth.

DAVIES: Sure.

Q: I remember once McGeorge Bundy said to me at the NSC, "I want to talk to someone. You find me someone who knows the political situation in Italy, and I just want to hear from him. Is there such a person?"

I found somebody who had been there 18 years - some case officer - and when you go to the bureaucracy, his bureau chief...

DAVIES: No, one man.

Q: So all these puffy bureaucrats sat quivering outside.

DAVIES: (laughs heartily) Is that right?

Q: The bureaucracy will kill you.

DAVIES: Oh, inevitably, unless you know how to cope with it, how to deal with it.

Well, one good thing about that job which I failed to mention, in addition to the fact that it gave a relatively junior officer an opportunity to develop some executive capacity, was the fact that in USIA then - and I think the same thing is true today of the successor agency, which they call now the International Communications Agency, you know...the rule was...in fact they said that you were supposed to spend half your time in your area in the road. Of course that was to much, you couldn't, but I did spend maybe between a quarter and a third of the time traveling in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union; whenever we had an exhibit open or any event of any sort I went there, and on a couple of occasions went with Leonard Marks, I took him there to see exhibits and see various things.

Q: That must have been strengthening for Ambassadors in Eastern Europe to see one of themselves dealing with the USIA. It must have meant a lot more weight than if it were some USIA person that wasn't known very well and who was trying to...

DAVIES: Yes. Well, you know, the attitude of the older line people is very strange. On the one hand you had...

At that point Outerbridge Horsey was Ambassador in Prague, an old line officer. He was bound and determined...

We had participated in a big trade fair that they held in Brno, in Moravia, Czechoslovakia, for many years, but we had stopped participating in it several years earlier, before he (Horsey) arrived in Prague, and he was bound and determined that we were going to go back into Brno, and I confess that I was very much opposed to this, because it was an additional expense, the conditions of participation were very restrictive, we could not have a separate pavilion, which really we insisted upon. If we had a separate hall or pavilion which we could use as we saw fit - you know, where you might have a little back projected movie thing here, there were lots of, as I say, propaganda things you could accomplish, if you could control the pavilion...

We had that for example in Poznan, at the big Polish trade fair. We had it in Plovdiv, in Bulgaria, we had it in Budapest at the trade fair. In those three places we had beautiful setups, we had our own pavilion, and we could do anything we wanted with it.

But in Brno the rule was that all foreign government exhibitors - not private firms, but government exhibitors - were in what was called the Hall of Nations, which was a big pavilion in which each of the countries that were participating officially had a booth of roughly equal size, very restrictive.

Then there was a list of rules as long as your arm to ensure that people did not smuggle in any political propaganda. It was very restrictive.

Foreign firms could go into a vertically organized pavilion - that is, agricultural machinery, machine tools, lathes - and exhibit their goods in that pavilion together with all the other firms that were exhibiting, or a foreign firm, if it wanted to, could get a separate pavilion. But we had no American firms in those days that thought you could do any business with Czechoslovakia, and they were quite right. There was no business to be done.

So every time I went to Prague of course Outerbridge Horsey pounded and pounded away at me on this, and I said, "Look, I'd be delighted to do it, provided we could just take most of the things that we have in Budapest," - I think Budapest preceded Brno by several weeks - "and move that stuff up here, but there isn't room, you know, we have this tiny little thing, and what can we show there? All it amounts to is that we are included. We give the Czech authorities the opportunity to say, we have 50 nations participating, including the United States, the Soviet Union and so forth and so on. They use our name, but in fact we are really not getting anything out of it, and the Czechs come there and look for the American exhibit, and what do they find? It's picayune, it's beneath our dignity."

Well, he was insistent, he was very stubborn, you know, and he kept coming back and sending telegrams. It wasn't that expensive, so finally okay, we agreed, and we put it in there.

Q: What, the Budapest stuff?

DAVIES: Well, part of it, we scaled it down. It was very unsatisfactory, and it remains that way to this day, as far as I am concerned, in Brno.

Q: Was the Brno fair a much smaller one in general than in Poznan?

DAVIES: No, it's about the same size, but the big difference was that in Poznan, in Budapest and in Plovdiv we could have our own pavilion, a national pavilion. And of course the Soviet Union had a huge pavilion in Brno, and we said...

Q: They weren't in the Hall of Nations?

DAVIES: No. They had a thing in the Hall of Nations too, but they said, this is Soviet industry, it's for export, or something like that, it's Soviet firms that are exhibiting there, they've gotten together and they exhibit there, and if your firms will come, then your firms can have a place in there.

Well, we had no firms, so it wouldn't work.

At any rate, you had that kind of attitude on the part of some of the chiefs of mission who are very anxious to have you do something for them.

On the other hand they were all, I felt - well, not all, that's inaccurate - most of them tended to be very conservative, you know, don't do anything or say anything to upset the apple cart, with which I completely agreed, we didn't want to upset any apple carts, but... (they would say), well, I don't know about your Voice of America, I don't know about this, I don't know about that...

And I'd say, if you've got problems let us know, tell us what the problems are, and we'll try to straighten them out, we can have some influence...

Oh, well, hmmmm. It was kind of, what is this propaganda anyway? What is this USIA anyway? That was sort of the attitude that was expressed by another earlier Ambassador to Prague, a guy from Maine...

Q: Ellis Briggs?

DAVIES: Ellis Briggs, you remember in his book...all these different things.

So I'd say, well, the propaganda business is with us. Both sides are doing it, and we've got to try to compete here. There is something to be said to these people. We put up window displays, and show windows lighted with photo displays.

We had a shop in the Embassy in Vienna which prepared things for Eastern Europe, very professional, excellent. They published things there, brochures and things like that. Whenever there was an art exhibit or a film or a show, they would publish a little brochure in the language of the country which could be given out, and they still do it, and they do a heck of a good job.

And I kept pressing these guys to use these facilities.

"Well, you don't want to make waves..." (laughs)

They weren't very imaginative. I think that the more recent, younger generation of chiefs of mission is very much readier to do it than some of the (older ones).

Ambassador Jake (Jacob) Beam was sort of...

Ambassador Outerbridge Horsey...they weren't so sure. Ambassador Mac (Malcolm) Toon was a little bit that way, although he became somewhat more prepared to use these things, as the years went by.

Ambassador Larry (Lawrence) Eagleburger, who is now in Belgrade, he is fine, he's no problem.

Walter Stoessel (Ambassador to Germany) I think was very good too while he was there.

And also some of the others for that matter. Leonard Meeker, when he was Ambassador in Bucharest, although he was not a career officer, was very interested in having art exhibits and anything. Of course the situation there was that anything you could do to get Rumanians to come to your house, or to come to the Embassy, was welcome, because they...

Q: To digress for a second, since you mentioned Eagleburger, what is your opinion of the failure of the President to go to Belgrade? I presume that reports are accurate that Eagleburger strongly urged him to come, as did the professional diplomats.

DAVIES: Yes.

Q: Is that a minor thing or quite a major flaw in judgment?

DAVIES: It think it's a major flaw in judgment. It's not a question of what Brezhnev did or did not do, but it seems to me that it's a repetition of the same kind of mistake that he made during the campaign, when he said of course we support Yugoslavia, but under no circumstances would American troops be sent there.

Well, you know, nobody expected or asked that American (troops be sent there), but he didn't have to say that. It was gratuitous to say that, he didn't have to say it. And he should

have gone. I mean that kind of occasion doesn't occur very often, and here are all kinds of dignitaries, crowned heads, Margaret Thatcher, and...

Q: Indira Gandhi.

DAVIES: Yes, and Jimmy Carter is conspicuous by his absence. Now either we are supporting the preservation of an independent Yugoslavia, in which case he should have been there, and it's not a question of showing the Soviets that we are doing this, or showing anybody else, but showing the Yugoslavian people, and they are the ones who are concerned, who are worried.

The thing I couldn't understand was that it was a perfect opportunity for him. He said, all right, I have to get out of the Rose Garden. So that was taken care of.

He could have gone and acted Presidential, he did not have to have a meeting with Brezhnev if he didn't want to have a meeting with Brezhnev. Alternatively, he could have had a five or ten minute or 15 minute courtesy call - that could have been handled. But he should have gone there, and met the new leaders. Now of course, second best as usual, he is making this trip to Venice and will drop in in connection with that. But it's not the same thing. And I am afraid it's a result of the fact that...people talk about Brzezinski's power, but I don't think he has very much in fact. I don't know what he recommended in this case.

Q: He probably recommended that he go.

DAVIES: I think so, but he was listening to Ham (Hamilton) Jordan and Jody Powell.

Q: Domestic people.

DAVIES: The domestic people.

Q: Who have domestic considerations.

DAVIES: That's right, sure, and who have no conception of how this looks to people in Europe. I mean the London Times was scathing.

Q: And it puts whom you do send in a real tertiary position. I mean Mondale was nobody there.

DAVIES: Sure.

Q: Even though he is the Vice President he didn't rank anybody there.

DAVIES: That's right. It's ridiculous. Well, there you are.

Q: Now to get back to these fairs and things, how much money are we talking about, to participate in a fair? Just a modest amount?

DAVIES: Well, what we would do - as I said, at that point...

Let me back up one step beyond that.

Only with Poland did we have most-favored-nation trade, so it was really only in Poland that we could hope to develop any trade. I should mention too that there was and is a trade fair in Zagreb, Yugoslavia, but in those days Yugoslavia did not belong to the Soviet East European part of USIA.

Q: So you weren't in that one.

DAVIES: I tried hard to get it...

Subsequently they combined Western Europe and Eastern Europe, so there is no difference, they are all in the same office - because we did have and we do have, have had for a long time a most-favored-nation arrangement with Yugoslavia.

So, so far as the countries for which I was responsible were concerned, it was only with Poland that any businessman could think of doing any business, and consequently only in Poland could we get people who were prepared to go in there seriously. They'd send their representatives, and they'd send their best stuff.

Now we traded on that then, and used some of that stuff, got the same people who agreed to go into Budapest, and to the extent that we were able to do anything in Brno they had helped us out there too. In Bulgaria nobody was interested, so we had to put the thing on pretty much ourselves. But the Bulgarians were so happy to have us there that they didn't much care what we did, so it was pretty strictly a propaganda show in Bulgaria.

But it didn't cost a great deal of money, because we were able to get from the commercial firms - from the European branches - the equipment to send in.

Q: I see. Caterpillar Tractors or International Harvester would pay their own bills, and get their stuff in there.

DAVIES: Yes. Even though they knew they weren't going to be able to do any business, they would go in because they are all hoping and expecting that one day this was going to open up, except for Poland, where they did do some business, so that was a real trade fair.

We also had cultural exhibitions, art and the so-called special exhibits, theme exhibits on education in the United States, or publishing in the United States, which enabled us to get a lot of stuff.

One of those exhibits of any significance of course was the American National Exhibition in Moscow in 1959. Nixon went and opened it, and it was kind of the granddaddy of them all, but from there on we kept using, and we still use, this exhibit form.

The great value of it is that regardless of the theme, regardless of the artifacts you display - and given the right kind of theme you can usually find some pretty good artifacts - we always recruited young Americans speaking the language of the country to go in as guides, and I always thought that was the most valuable part of it here, and particularly in the Soviet Union, where contact was so difficult. You get thousands and thousands and thousands of Soviets going through speaking with these kids.

Q: Who are bright college kids.

DAVIES: Who are bright college kids, some of whom were bilingual or they came from that ethnic background, some of whom had learned the language in school and were anxious to have an opportunity to develop it, but you know, these young Americans - the right kind of young American - and of course in some of the places the conditions under which they had to work and live...but they were troopers, they were Trojans, and they, I've always felt, made such a good impression, so honest and frank and candid and sincere, trying to answer people's questions. It just brings a breath of a different world. And that was the thing that so many of the visitors wanted to do - talk with these kids. "Here is a real young American."

Q: Do we still do that in Poznan every year?

DAVIES: Oh, yes, oh, yes.

Q: Are they hard to find?

DAVIES: Oh, no, they are not hard to find. Well, I should say it's hard to find good ones, but there are plenty who are interested in the work. Through language departments, and through ethnic groups, the people at USIA and the training division had developed a whole network of contacts, and if we needed 15 or 20 guys they'd get 100 or 150 kids applying for these jobs, and they would then be tested. And we'd take the ones whose language was best and whose knowledge of the United States was (good), you asked them test questions, and who could reply most cogently...(would be selected).

Q: And they'd sign a contract with nominal pay and per diem?

DAVIES: Well, it wasn't just nominal, it was fairly good pay, and they spent between six months and nine months - depending on how long these things were - on the road with the exhibit. And some of those young people then came back and joined the Foreign Service, either in the State Department or in USIA, they were so fascinated by that. And others were working on their M.A.'s or something like that, and they went on into the academic world,

utilizing the knowledge that they'd picked up to strengthen their skills in the use of the language and the knowledge of the area.

So it's just a heck of a good program.

Of course the Soviets have had reciprocal exhibits, but the impact of their exhibits here...we won hands down on that. Of course now those things are suspended as a result of Afghanistan. We had an exhibit, AGRICULTURE U.S.A., which was supposed to go in there, a beautiful job which really did show, I think, why American agriculture is so productive, but that won't be going now. Too bad. Maybe some day, when things change in the world.

So I spent three and a half very happy years there.

Q: That many with USIA?

DAVIES: Yes, I was there from the beginning of 1965 to the middle of 1968. Actually the terms were two years. Near the end of the second year I told the Department...

Well, Marks was there by then, and I spoke with him. I said I'd like to stay. He agreed, so I told the Department and I stayed for the third year, but then I really had to go back. I was trying to find a job, and finally they said, how about Calcutta? I had never been in Calcutta. We'd been in Delhi, Madras, Bombay and several other places during the tour in Afghanistan, but I had never gotten that far East.

It sounded pretty interesting, and Calcutta is a great city, a large city.

So we went off to Calcutta in the summer of 1968, in August, and my gosh, when we got there Pam Am was still landing in Calcutta - Pan Am One, around-the-world flights - and we came in, and we came in in the midst of one of the worst monsoon storms they had had there in years. The airport was awash, and the water was coming down in sheets, and they had to bring a van out to the plane, and we managed to get into that, my wife and I, and I guess we had all four kids with us then.

The residence was ankle deep in water.

Of course the problem with Calcutta is that the drains, which were put in at the end of the last century or the beginning of this century, have been stopped up for years, and the Hooghly River...

Well, in the first place it was all swamp - bamboo swamp - to begin with, mango trees, that kind of thing, a very swampy ground. And they built up the river bank to keep it from flooding so badly, but then the harbor has silted up, covering up the outlets of most of the drains, so the drainage system is practically nonexistent. And nothing has happened since the British left, and they didn't do much, because the capital was moved up to Delhi from

Calcutta in the early years of this century, and after they left Calcutta they weren't keeping it up, they were working on Delhi, not on Calcutta.

So whenever we had these bad monsoon rains the water was up to your ankles or knees in the street, and we came right in the middle of that.

Well, but it was all right. We managed to get into the Consulate. Our office in Calcutta is one of the two or three oldest in our service. We set up an office there shortly after we achieved our independence.

There was a great triangular trade - shipping ice from New England to Calcutta, and picking up hemp there, I suppose, and tea and taking it to the spice islands, taking it to Indonesia, and picking up spices from there and bringing them back to New England.

Unless I am mistaken - maybe my memory is no longer quite so accurate on this - maybe the first consular officer who was appointed by the United States was supposed to go to Calcutta and he died at sea before he got there. In those years you know it took you several months to get there.

So this is a very old office, and the situation in Bengal then was fascinating, because they had President's rule. In India, when one of the states proves to be ungovernable, the Prime Minister recommends President's rule.

They had that in Bengal; they hadn't been able to elect a government, and Bengal of course is the turbulent part of India. But a new election was set - I guess it was set for January, and indeed in January they had the election, and the communists were elected there. There are three communist parties: there is the Moscow Communist Party, the Communist Party Marxist, which is the one that was elected in Bengal, which had had some ties with China before the Chinese invasion, and they were broken after that. But it is independent of Moscow, it has nothing to do with Moscow. Then there is the Communist Party Marxist-Leninist, the so-called Naxalites, who were violent, a violent group.

This of course was in the middle of the Vietnam War, and every Saturday and Sunday there was a demonstration outside the Consulate, where crowds gathered.

Everybody knew the rules of the game; as long as we had somebody there to receive a petition they'd come and give a petition, and stand and shout outside. But it was all right, there was never any violence.

Q: Not the type of danger of today.

DAVIES: No. There were dangers in the city, and there could be riots.

Q: But I mean they weren't likely to burn down the...

DAVIES: No, it was a safety valve, and the police were good, they would give us warning ahead of time, up until the communist takeover that is. But then they took over, and they were a good, strong party. This young fellow - well, not so young - Jhoti Basu, was the head of the party, and he is now Chief Minister in Bengal. He won the election there fair and square. At that time they were in a coalition with other parties.

We were on a street called Harrington Street. Of course most of the streets in Calcutta, which is fundamentally a British city, were named after Englishmen. The Consulate and the British High Commission were located on Harrington Street. Who Harrington was I don't know. But when the communists won they changed the name of the street to Ho Chi Minh Street - Ho Chi Minh Sarani - and we didn't know what to do, but finally we had to print that on our letterhead. I mean what the heck, what do you do?

So, Ho Chih Minh Street it was.

We had an annex on another street nearby with a different name, and we were thinking of making that the chief address, but it would be silly. What can you do? They had us.

It was a fascinating place. India of course is just a world apart, a delightful place to serve, I think in many ways, very discouraging in many ways too. But you have to understand that this civilization has been going on there for 6000 years, and there is a great deal of misery. Actually of course it's a very mixed thing, because the population is so much larger than it ever was. It has become exponentially larger. So many more people are alive today, subsisting in that same territory, than there ever were in any previous historical epoch.

Q: Was Sister Teresa working there?

DAVIES: Oh, yes indeed. My wife and a lot of the women in the consulate corps went and helped her, whether they were Catholic or not, it didn't make any difference. She was very active there, and Malcolm Muggeridge was in the process at that point of making a BBC documentary about her, which was the way she first came to world attention. Well, she was known, but she was known primarily through the Kennedy's. She came here several times under the auspices of the Ethel and Joseph Kennedy Foundation for Retarded Children. She may have started a house in Boston, I don't know. But she's got several in this hemisphere, in Latin America primarily. But she is a remarkable woman, she is just absolutely fantastic.

Q: Who was the Ambassador in Delhi then?

DAVIES: When we got there it was Chester Bowles.

Q: Oh, he was still there.

DAVIES: He was there on his second tour. He'd been Undersecretary in the State Department.

Q: Kennedy...

DAVIES: He was shoved out of there and went back to Delhi. Wonderful man - he and his wife were just great people. He had - what do you call it?

Q: Parkinson's disease.

DAVIES: Yes, Parkinson's.

Q: The beginning of it?

DAVIES: He had the beginning of it, and he was one of the first people who were getting this L-Dopa drug, which kept it very much under control. He is still alive.

Q: Yes, lives in Essex, Connecticut.

DAVIES: But he can't speak now. I think he can take anything in, but he can't control any longer his nervous system now. But he was still playing golf, he was very active and doing a lot of things - a wonderful man.

At the end of that year the election came along, and when Nixon was elected Ken (Kenneth B.) Keating was sent there, and he was very nice. He was a widower at that point, and he was married while he was there, but after we left. Very nice man.

Q: Yes, I served under him in Israel.

DAVIES: Right, yes.

Q: He died.

DAVIES: Yes. I quite liked him, what little I saw of him. I only saw him two or three times. He came down there once, and we went up to Delhi for a couple meetings. He had been there during the war, and he knew something about India. He had been a pilot in the Air Force, or a staff officer. So he knew something about the place.

So that was good. And for children in particular India is a wonderful place.

Q: Really?

DAVIES: Oh, my goodness, just terrific, just terrific. Afghanistan had been great, and India was the same; for kids up to I would say 15 years of age it's just wonderful, because the servants are very good with children, they like children, and they are childlike themselves in a way I suppose, and there is so much to do.

Q: What was the gap between service in Kabul and service in Calcutta? I mean how many years had elapsed? Had all the children been born?

DAVIES: Oh, all except one had been born. The third was born in Kabul, but he didn't remember it at all, and actually the second one didn't remember it too well. John, the oldest boy, remembered. Well, the second one remembered too, he was just a baby when we got there. We had left Kabul in 1958.

Q: So it was ten years later.

DAVIES: Yes, ten years later. And we went back there. At Christmas or New Year's we went up to Kashmir, and spent a week in a houseboat there in the middle of Dal Lake, wonderful. And then from there we went to Kabul, because this third boy who had been born there always wanted to know, where is this place?

Q: "Where was I born?"

DAVIES: Right, so we took him back up there and showed him actually the building and the room where he was born. He was born in the doctor's office in the compound there, so we showed him that.

Bruce Laingen, who is now in the Foreign Ministry in Teheran, was DCM there at that time. I had known him before.

But for kids it's just great, they really enjoyed themselves. The oldest two were in school here, and they came out during the summer and for Christmas vacation, and then they were there in the summer again, in the summer of 1969, when I was asked to come back here. So the two older ones spent a fair amount of time (there). The two younger ones were there all year and they went to school, the Anglo-American School there in Calcutta, and they just loved it, it was great.

Well, in the summer of 1969, I got a telegram from Elliot Richardson asking me to come back. He was changing the policy planning staff to what he called the planning and coordination staff, and he wanted me to...

First he asked me to come back to be interviewed, so I did, and then he said he'd like to have me come back and work on Soviet...

So I didn't know what to do. We were planning to stay in Calcutta. We would like to have stayed there.

Q: You had been there how long, a year?

DAVIES: Just a year. Actually by the time I left it was 13 months. I didn't know what to do, as I say the family was quite happy there, we were settled, and you know you hate to move more often than you have to. But Elliot was very persuasive, so I said okay, I'll come back.

So we moved back here again, and I went to work in this planning and coordination staff, which was...

Of course his idea was, you know, you have this planning staff, but you don't have any follow through. You work on plans and there is no follow through, so there should be a coordination side as well, to make sure that the various elements of the Department and other elements in the Government that are concerned are all...

I think it was too much. At any rate there were two sides to it: there was a coordination side, and there was a planning side. I was on the planning side with Joe (Joseph W.) Neubert, who was also a Soviet type. We worked there.

And you know Elliot is a great guy, and I enjoyed working with him, and I liked Bill (William) Rogers very much in fact.

Actually I guess the only thing that happened during that year of any considerable significance was the opening towards China. We were supposed to write a paper. Henry Kissinger had charged the Department to write a paper on whether or not we should have an opening towards China, and there were very mixed views. I strongly favored doing it.

We prepared a paper in the policy planning staff, recommending that Elliot in fact be sent to China to explore the possibilities.

Q: Secretly or overtly?

DAVIES: Overtly. My feeling was that at the Deputy Secretary level you are not making any commitments, you are out in the open. Our policy should be evenhanded, we should be saying all the time that we don't intend to try to use China against the Soviet Union, or vice versa, we don't want to get in the middle of that thing, but there is no reason in the world why we shouldn't have relations with China which were commensurate with those we had with the Soviet Union.

Well, there were other so-called Soviet specialists - and I apply the "so-called" to myself - in fact Joe Neubert felt very much the opposite way, he said we would make the Soviets mad, and I said, "I don't care whether we make the Soviets mad."

He said, "Well, they are the ones who...

I said yes, well, they've got the bomb and all that, but maybe they'll be a little more amenable if they see that we have this alternative.

Well, we then had a big discussion with the Secretary, with Bill Rogers, where Alexis Johnson and Win (Winthrop) Brown - was Marshall Green Assistant Secretary for East Asia? I can't remember.

Anyway Win Brown was kind of doing the China thing, and he was at the meeting, and Alex and Win Brown argued very strongly against this, "Oh no, you can't do that to Taiwan."

And I said, "Well, you know, we have given Taiwan this veto power. We let them veto the establishment of relations with Outer Mongolia for years."

They said, "What's the point of having relations with Outer Mongolia?"

I said, "Well, the Outer Mongolians would like it, it would give them an alternative. It would. The Soviets don't want us to, so I think we ought to do it."

***

Q: Good evening, Ambassador Davies, nice to see you again. We've had a bit of a lapse here during this terribly hot summer, and I can't say it's too cool this evening. Nice to see you again.

DAVIES: Ha! It's good to be here, and as you suggested perhaps we can take up with the autumn, the fall of 1969, when I came back from Calcutta to join the Planning & Coordination staff which Elliot Richardson had set up, or was just setting up, in the State Department. We talked last time a little bit about the organization side of that.

Actually, as I think I said then, it was a very good idea, a good concept, but it broke down in my opinion, and it failed to work as envisaged for the same reason that the planning staff in its previous incarnations and subsequent incarnations has never really very effectively fulfilled the functions which it is supposed to fulfill, the reason being that people get caught up in the day to day activities of the Department, of U.S. foreign policy, and eventually are more involved in operational matters, or in the fringes of them anyway, than they should be, in my opinion, so that longer-range planning doesn't get done.

There are many reasons for this and many things that militate against a successful planning process in the United States Government, which we don't need to go into here - there's been quite a bit written about that.

As you remember, at that time Henry Kissinger - well, the story was, and I am sure it was true and in fact it's borne out by what he's written, or at any rate it's clearly implied in the first volume of his memoirs - was inundating various Government departments including the State Department with requests for studies, and it was suspected that this was an effort on his part to sort of keep the Departments involved in studies while he began to operate and assume a more active role in the direction of execution of U.S. foreign policy.

The first thing on which I worked together with Joseph W. (Walter) Neubert - Joe Neubert, who is now retired and who was already there in the planning staff when I arrived, another alumnus of the Soviet group, the group of people who served in the Soviet Union in the Foreign Service - the first thing we worked on was a study designed to recommend to the White House what we should do about China, and there were many views on that within the Department, some of them pretty much what you'd expect, and some I guess not so much what you'd expect.

The East Asian Bureau I think had come quite a distance from the old days, when all they could think about was maintaining good relations with the Chiang Kai-shek Government on Taiwan, but they hadn't come to the point yet where they thought that we, the United States, should contemplate recognizing Communist China, and on the Soviet side - and this I think was what Joe Neubert felt about it - among people who dealt with the Soviet Union there was some fear that any movement by us towards China would be very deleterious to our efforts to maintain a stable relationship with the Soviets.

Q: Would you say there was any atmosphere, among thoughtful people concentrating on that, of reticence because of what had happened to John Stewart Service and others, a hesitancy to say what they thought?

DAVIES: I don't think so, not at that point. That I think was one of the things that Elliot Richardson did successfully - he did encourage people to think some daring thoughts, and he was extremely receptive to brainstorming, and no matter how bizarre the thought might be he was prepared to consider it on its merits. I didn't feel that at all.

We wrote a paper, and my point of view was very strongly and decidedly that we should change our policy and recognize the People's Republic, that we should not do that with a view to exacerbating our relationship with the Soviets, that we should specifically disclaim any intention of playing one off against the other, and not only disclaim it verbally, but really mean it, although of course neither side would believe it. It was quite apparent that the Soviets wouldn't believe that, and the Chinese of course - the Chinese Communists - were interested in a relationship with us precisely for the reason that they wanted to worry the Soviets. So there were certain delicacies involved, but I felt we should do it, and I felt that the effect on the Soviets rather than being one of exacerbating our relationship with them would be one of compelling them to compete in a sense with the Chinese Communists and be a little more forthcoming towards us. And indeed I think that presumption or hypothesis was correct and it was borne out, I believe, by subsequent events.

However all that may be, the whole thing came down finally to a discussion which took place with Secretary Rogers.

We did write a paper in the Planning & Coordination Staff which because there were divergent views in the Department and also in our own staff was a typical kind of

committee document, and contained considerations on-the-one-hand-this-and-on-the-other-hand-that, and "there are those who think this, and there are those who think that." So it wasn't a very satisfactory paper.

But it did raise as one of the possibilities for future action - it contained a suggestion that some consideration be given to the possibility that Elliot Richardson - I guess by that time they'd changed the title to Deputy Secretary, I don't know, I've always felt that was a mistake, because it was just aping the military and aping the Pentagon, to say Deputy Secretary instead of Undersecretary. Of course it's confusing. All these terms are confusing, but in any case that's a whole other story.

But the suggestion was that it should not be somebody at the top of the Government. In the first place we could not envisage or could hardly dare presume to suggest that the President might go. My goodness, none of us ever thought of that.

We said, Let's take a sounding and see what the Chinese might say. It should be somebody at a high level, but not an authoritative person.

And we mentioned several possibilities, but the most prominent of them was Elliot Richardson.

Well, we knew of course that there were problems in the Department. In the first place there was a certain tension I think between the Secretary - Secretary Rogers - and Elliot Richardson. In the second place, any such suggestion would, we felt, probably give the White House some qualms, although actually Elliot got along quite well with Henry Kissinger. There was some element of understanding there, they used to meet for weekly lunches, and they did communicate.

In any case this was the suggestion that emerged most prominently from this memorandum as something concrete that might be tried, and Secretary Rogers when he got the paper called a meeting in his office. Alexis Johnson was there, Winthrop - Win - Brown who was Acting Assistant Secretary there for the E.A. Bureau, as I guess it still was then, Far East. And myself, and I don't remember whether Coby Swank (Emory Coblentz Swank) was there, and I can't remember who it might have been from the European Bureau. And we all sat around.

The Secretary didn't really express any views, but Alexis Johnson argued strongly against doing anything with the Chinese Communists, and he made some very good arguments.

Win Brown I think was supporting Alexis Johnson - or at any rate not supporting any other position, and the representative of E.U.R., whoever was there - and I can't remember who it was from the European Bureau - was raising points like this was going to be bad for our relationship with the Soviets, and I was trying to contend that I didn't think it would, and that it would help our relationship with the Soviets.

At any rate the whole thing was quite inconclusive.

I can't remember now, but I think finally the paper did go over. I am not sure that that suggestion was still in it when it got to the White House.

It wasn't long after that of course that the train of events began which involved the eventual opening to China, and as I say I think that that aspect of President Nixon's policy - and I believe it was President Nixon's policy, not Henry Kissinger's policy, quite clearly - did work out quite well.

Q: Do you think it got any push there on the NSC? Was Alfred Jenkins there?

DAVIES: Alfred Le Sesne Jenkins was there, yes.

Q: And he was an old China hand?

DAVIES: I don't know what his point of view was. He wasn't at the meeting, Win Brown was the only one at the meeting. Alfred Jenkins eventually went with Henry to Peking.

Q: Yes.

DAVIES: Well, that was sort of the first thing that I was involved in, and I suppose it was a bit of an exercise in futility because I am not sure that whatever we sent over to the White House had any effect one way or the other. When they began to move they did so for their own good reasons and in their own good time.

So I stayed their on that staff for about a year or perhaps a little less than a year, I can't remember now exactly how long, and then the following summer Coby Swank went off to Cambodia as Ambassador. He was the Deputy Assistant Secretary of EUR for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. And Marty Hillenbrand was there, and he asked me to come down and replace him, which I was delighted to do, having worked with Marty in Paris many years before, and also in the Department in the early 1950s.

So I went down there and was pitched right in the middle of all this business; instead of being on the planning side we were now on the operational side, and in a big way, but not on the big policy issues, because it's quite clear that Henry and the NSC were steadily taking them away.

Q: Encroaching.

DAVIES: Encroaching, exactly.

Q: More than encroaching, seizing.

DAVIES: Yes, seizing the initiative on these things. But there were some problems, and they tended to be the nastiest problems, the least soluble and most difficult ones, which we had to deal with. For example the developing problem of Soviet Jewry.

At that time the Jewish Defense League, a creature of Rabbi Meyer Kahane, was just beginning to be active.

Well, I think the first thing that happened of course was either in December or January - I can't remember, it was either in late 1970 or early 1971, isn't that right? Yes, the Leningrad trial of the highjackers so-called - actually they had not highjacked a plane - was held, and two of these young Jewish people were sentenced to death. Well, immediately of course there was an outcry all over the world, and at the same time simultaneously the courts in Spain - I think it was two separate courts - had sentenced to death two young terrorists, one Basque, or maybe they were both Basque terrorists, and so these two uproars were going on at the same time, but the one that concerned us most was that involving the Leningrad trial.

I was in constant touch with people in the NSC about these matters, and they just had no interest at all.

Secretary Rogers, who has gotten such a bad press all the way around, I thought behaved very well in this and several other matters in which I had the opportunity to observe him. He was sort of left holding the bag. Important Jewish contributors to the Republican political coffers, led by Max Fisher, and officials of the important American-Jewish organizations wanted to come down and see the President or somebody, and of course they were told to go see Secretary Rogers.

So we arranged a meeting where he received them, and I thought did a very good job of dealing with them. They were, needless to say, very upset. The question was whether we should do something, and here the NSC staff, although nobody said they weren't going to do anything or that we shouldn't do something, were really, I sensed, reluctant to do anything, because...

I think the reason for it - the reason all along - was that the President and Henry had this idea of doing a deal with the Soviets, and they didn't want to let extraneous issues, from their point of view, get in the way or distract them or the Soviets from this deal they had in mind. That's my own interpretation, but I saw several instances - this was just the first of them - in which I felt that that was determining the attitude that we took.

So in effect the guidance that we had in the Department, although it was carefully nuanced and there was nothing in writing that you could pin on anybody, was "play this down and try to keep it from getting to be too big a thing."

And we said from the European Bureau, "Gosh, we just don't see any way you can avoid, we can avoid, the United States can avoid some sort of communication to the Soviets expressing the horror and the feeling of revulsion that the sentencing of these young people

to death had aroused." There had not been a highjacking. There was of course a plot to highjack a plane, but actually nobody highjacked a plane.

Q: There was a woman involved.

DAVIES: Well, there were five or six - I forget how many there were - but yes, there was, and both her brother and her husband, I believe, were in the group. One of them died in camp, and another I think got out. But at any rate they were plucky young Soviets who had gotten caught, and obviously the death sentence had been passed to discourage others who might have the same idea. But the point we were making from EUR to the Secretary was, we've got to say something to somebody.

The first thing we had to deal with was this demand for a high level meeting, and the Secretary received Max Fisher and various other people who came with him - there were four or five important Jewish leaders who were as I say very excited and who were demanding that we should do something.

I admired the way Secretary Rogers handled this. After he had heard what the members of the group had to say he said wait just a minute, because they were demanding to see the President.

He said, wait just a minute.

And he went into a little inner room he had there with a phone, and obviously called the President, and then he came back out and said, let's go, the President can see us right now, we'll go over there, we'll go down to the basement to get my car, maybe we'll take another car, and go over there.

So he got them in to see the President, which was kind of 90 percent of the battle.

Q: They weren't shunted away.

DAVIES: That's right. If they had been shunted away they really would have felt pretty unhappy, to put it mildly.

Then, largely I believe as a result of Secretary Rogers' recommendation and urging, approval was obtained, and he did send a message to Andrei A. Gromyko, on a kind of Foreign Minister-to-Foreign Minister basis, because there still was this concern - and again I could sense all this, I was talking every day - that well, the (White) House sort of felt we don't want this to get out of hand, that sort of thing.

But Secretary Rogers sent I thought an excellent message - I honestly thought it was excellent because I wrote it (laughs), and I shouldn't have said that. I didn't realize it when I said it was excellent - to Gromyko, which did express concern at the severity of these sentences, and the hope that some way would be found or something like that.

Q: Was there anything in your message that implied that if they followed their own course of action all hell would break loose?

DAVIES: Well, I think it did. It said or at least strongly implied that carrying out these sentences would have a great effect. Of course we were late in this game. The Pope had already protested publicly, and all the leaders - the British, the French, the Germans - everybody had been sending messages to the Soviets, and to Franco. As I remember we never did do much with Franco on this.

At any rate the Soviets commuted those sentences to substantial terms in prison camps, so nobody was executed. That was kind of the first thing.

Meanwhile the Jewish Defense League was mounting all kinds of campaigns up in New York around the Soviet U.N. Mission, including - I have no proof, I don't know that it was the Jewish Defense League, but there were instances of people firing from the roofs of adjoining buildings into the living quarters of Soviet diplomats there in that Mission, firing rifles.

Q: Nobody was injured?

DAVIES: Nobody was injured, but there were a couple of cases of snipers that made bullet holes in the walls. And all kinds of harassment going on in the street. And the New York City police, the New York City Administration were very reluctant - understandably, from their point of view, from the point of view of domestic political repercussions - to take any very decided action, they were having problems arranging for police protection for the Mission building and for places where Soviet diplomats lived, because they said - and I couldn't blame them - they said, look, this costs money to mount a 24-hour guard over premises, and do it properly, you've got to take what, three shifts, and maybe let's say you have a roving guard, put two men on a shift, something like that, to do an adequate job on a big building, and that's an awful lot of men by the time you get done, and we just can't afford the resources. They said, look, this arises not from the police, from ordinary police responsibility that we've got for the City of New York, this is something that arises from the foreign relations of the United States, and what are you going to do about it?

So there was an impasse here which finally was broken when the executive protective service, the EPS was founded.

Q: That's when it was founded?

DAVIES: Well, this was one of the things. It was only one of the things. There were a number of other things in other areas.

One of the other things that we struggled with constantly in the European Bureau relates of course to our relationship with Yugoslavia.

Q: With the Croatians.

DAVIES: The Croatians, and we had two or three bad cases with bombs. One happened not too long ago here, just a couple of months ago. But those things were recurrent, and the Yugoslavs, again quite understandably from their point of view, came and said, "Now, damn it, we are guests in your country, and we can assure you that nothing like this could happen in Belgrade or in Zagreb to you or to any other diplomatic or consular office. Now why can't you do something here?"

Well, you were dealing with a worldwide terrorist organization, not the oldest perhaps in terms of history - that would be the Macedonian one - but at least since the end of the Second World War, one of the most active and virulent, with people scattered from West Germany to Australia, all around the world.

Q: Sweden...

DAVIES: Sweden. Very effective by and large, and with good reason to suspect that they were not acting completely alone in all that. I always felt pretty darn sure that somewhere there was some Soviet link in that chain. But that's another question.

At any rate the Jewish Defense League was a real problem, and of course here in Washington there were demonstrations outside the Soviet Embassy. None of these things had really occurred before in our relationship, at least not on the consistent and recurrent basis that began to develop at that point in 1970 and 1971, as the demand of Soviet Jews to leave the Soviet Union became more and more known in the West.

And I had many discussions. The man I usually saw was Julius - Yuliy or Yuly, depending on how you want to transliterate it - Vorontsov, who was the Minister Counselor at the Soviet Embassy, the number-two man there. He is Soviet Ambassador to India now, and I assume he is still in India.

Well, Yuly came to see me many times to protest about incidents that had occurred with their diplomats who were living in various apartment houses in the city. And there were of course reprisals mounted by the Soviets against our people in Moscow, so we were concerned to try to keep these things down here, because they can "reprise" in a very effective way, you know.

There was this incident of the West German, and I can't remember now whether he was a courier or what he was in the Soviet Union. I think he went out to the great cathedral city to the east of Moscow, and somebody put some kind of acid on his legs.

So we wanted to avoid such a situation if we could.

Q: You wanted to avoid a situation...

DAVIES: Yes, in which they'd decide well, we've had enough of this, and really hurt an American or some Americans. But it never came to that, fortunately. There were instances in which people in our Embassy were jostled, or in a case or two perhaps struck in obviously staged altercations, but everybody knew how these things worked.

Yuly Vorontsov prided himself on being a historian - that had been the thrust of his studies in the university - and I said to him, "Well, Yuly, if you are a historian, we keep talking about ways in which U.S.-Soviet relations might be improved, and I want you to cast your mind back to 1912," - He didn't even know about this - "to the time when the United States Congress revoked the Treaty of Navigation, Commerce & Friendship we had with Russia, kind of the opposite of this, the obverse of the coin we are dealing with now, the reverse side of the coin we are dealing with now." That is, at that time there were a large number of Russian-Jewish immigrants in the United States who had come over here and had become American citizens, and who wanted to go back and visit their relatives in the Tsarist Empire, and the Tsarist Consulate in New York City put a religious test on these people, and would not permit Americans of Jewish faith and Jewish origin - particularly Russian Jewish origin - to have visas, and this went on for a matter of some years, 10, 12, 20 years, something like that.

"Finally it came to a head I think during President Taft's Administration, but at any rate the upshot was that the Senate revoked this treaty, it just denounced it, and passed a resolution demanding that the President denounce it. It wasn't even a case of the State Department or the White House wanting to do it. This was imposed by, you could say, the representatives of public opinion."

He said, "Oh, these people are just a small group, Zionists, you know."

Of course it was several years before the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, but...

And I kept making the same point to Hal (Helmut) Sonnenfeldt and saying, "Look, you'd better tell Henry that if you want to develop this relationship this can be a real stumbling block," because of course they dealt as little as possible with the issue over there in the White House, they kept it at arm's length, and let us do the dirty work. But you know it was fascinating, and I was delighted to have that opportunity. A lot of the people involved from American Jewish organizations were just darn good people, and they got themselves very well organized, as you can imagine, and I think they've done an excellent job in managing the thing on this side, an excellent job to the extent of course that they turned off, so to speak, this key element in the Nixon-Kissinger strategy, which if you want to put it crudely amounted to buying off the Soviets, or attempting to buy off the Soviets, which of course is just not going to work - you can't buy those people off. You can pay them, but they won't deliver. (laughter)

The great Kama River truck factory - that was also one of the things we were dealing with and wrestling with.

Q: What was that?

DAVIES: Well, it was a Soviet project to build a huge integrated industrial complex on the Kama River in the eastern part of European Russia to manufacture heavy trucks, and they wanted to do it with American technology. In fact they approached Henry Ford II on it, and the story at the time was that Henry Ford had come back and checked - I can't remember exactly where the approach took place, but I think it was perhaps on a visit to the Soviet Union - and they said to him, "Mr. Ford, you know we did business 30 or 40 years ago, when you set up the first big modern automobile factory in the Soviet Union, the one where the Reuther brothers worked, and we were very pleased with the results of that. And now we'd like you to take on the business of setting up this truck factory on the Kama River." It's not a factory, you know, because we think of these things in terms of the way our own industry operates, which is what the Ford Motor Company does, or the General Motors Corporation does on one of their automobile or truck lines, which is to bring together a lot of components, many of which have been manufactured by subcontractors or contractors, in some cases by other subsidiaries of the same company. DELCO for example - General Motors if it doesn't own DELCO it owns a lot of DELCO, the electrical components Fisher Body - General Motors controls or owns Fisher Body.

But regardless of whether the firm owns them or not they don't manufacture everything on the same site. These things are manufactured and brought together then in a remarkable display of American organizational skill, or it used to be that way, and I think it still is, anyway we were the first ones to do it - Henry Ford was.

Whereas what the Soviets had in mind was manufacturing everything from the tiniest cotter pin to the chassis to the bodies to the truck beds, everything, on one site, a totally integrated site to produce thousands - I forget now what the number was, 10, 15, 20,000, a large number - of trucks on a site where they could expand production continuously.

Well, it was a huge project, an enormous project.

Henry Ford did come back - I think he had been on a visit there - and he did check with Washington, and there were some grumblings particularly from the Pentagon, and the upshot was that he turned it down, and in the papers at the time it was said that he'd gotten a negative signal from Washington because the Pentagon was afraid that this would increase the Soviet's military capacity.

But the reason he turned it down, as best I could determine from talking with people who represented the Ford Motor Company, was that if they had gotten involved in this they would have to have stripped their company of practically all its operating engineers and supervising engineers, and they didn't have the technically skilled manpower, they would have to send them all over there, and they said it was just too huge, and what's more, they said, we don't even have the people in many of the disciplines that you need to send there, we buy a lot of this stuff you know.

But on that site they wanted to make everything because in the Soviet Union that's always the problem, you can't rely on another factory that belongs to another industry or another ministry to produce something for you and get it to you on time. It just doesn't happen. So if you want to make a truck you have to do it that way. That's the way they set up the FIAT plant for example at Togliattigrad in the Soviet Union - everything on one site. And FIAT didn't really understand that when they got involved, and of course they found that they were sort of over their heads and lost some money on that deal. It was not a great success for them in terms of setting it up. I think they probably turned the relationship into a profitable one as a long-term relationship, but the immediate construction of Togliatti was not a profitable operation for them. They were unhappy that they got into that.

Then the Soviets went to Mack Truck, and Mack Truck couldn't handle it, and the upshot was that they finally stopped looking for a foreign firm. The foreign firm - whether it was Ford or Mack Truck or whoever - would have been a prime contractor for the Soviets, and then would have to have subcontracted out to a large number of other companies the work of getting people in to build electrical components and the various other things that were needed.

Finally they did get an American firm - I can't remember the name and I should know it - Swindell-Dressler - who began to work with them on the assembly line part of the thing, and a great many Russians came over here and were trained in American production techniques.

At any rate the Kama River Truck Factory was set up, and precisely what had been feared by people in the Pentagon who objected to doing that, who objected to our getting involved in that, came true. That is, trucks made in the Kama River Truck Factory are carrying Soviet troops in Afghanistan today.

Well, whether that should have been a ground for saying "No, we are not going to do this" - as a matter of fact it turned out we didn't do it, although a great many American firms did become involved in one or another aspect of it, and a great deal of American technology was shipped in there.

But in the strategy of the White House - the Nixon-Kissinger strategy - this was important because this was one of the things that we were going to make available to the Soviets. We were going to develop trade with them, and in return for that they were going to agree to the rules of the game. That's what they thought, and I kept trying to tell Hal Sonnenfeldt, you know, you can pay them, but they won't be bought, you can't buy them, they won't deliver. Well...

I don't think he believed they would either.

Q: But he was going along.

DAVIES: Well, it was his job. Henry I think must have thought that there was some chance that this would work, and there were a number of things to make him think that, to support that kind of belief: the way they kind of knuckled under despite the bombing of Hanoi and with everything that was going on in Vietnam nevertheless they were extremely interested in making a deal. I think the interest arose primarily from our movement towards China. That was what worried them, and they wanted to try to work out an arrangement with us before that would go too far, despite Vietnam. I never thought that would prove to be a stumbling block in their perception of what they could do with us. And this was a very important stage in the development of detente, something they set great store by. They were relatively weak militarily and in other ways, and if they could work out this arrangement with the Americans, the appearance of a superpower condominium - regardless of what the content of the agreement was - would be there, and a lot of people would say, well, the two superpowers will deal over our heads and make agreements.

And this was something that apparently didn't bother Kissinger or President Nixon. And of course you know there was a sense in which the Soviets quite clearly were delighted at being able to deal with people like this who were - I hate to use the word unprincipled, but who could rise so easily above principle, or perhaps never even reached the plateau where principle was located (laughs) - that was the kind of people they wanted to deal with, people who believed that power was everything and who were very cynical about anything else.

It was very instructive to watch all this.

I was talking about the problem of Soviet Jewry. That eventually, as far as I was concerned, shortly before I left that job to go to Warsaw, in a hearing before the Subcommittee on Europe of the House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs - Representative Benjamin S. Rosenthal (Democrat, New York) held this hearing and we wrote a statement on the situation of Soviet Jewry. The hearing was held November 9th and 10th 1971, and we made the most, I would say, responsive statement that had been made by the United States Government at any time up to that point on the subject, which didn't mean that Congressman Rosenthal didn't give us a few raps on the whole thing.

There was enormous concern in the American Jewish community at that time that somehow genocide or a repetition of the Holocaust was in the works.

Q: Can we cite that document more specifically for historians?

DAVIES: Certainly. It's a document called HEARINGS BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, 92nd CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION. NOVEMBER 9 AND 10 1971.

It's entitled SOVIET JEWRY.

Q: That ought to pin it down.

DAVIES: Yes. It doesn't have a number, it's a Committee print, for that Subcommittee on Europe, and published early in 1972.

That was the first time I really became aware of Congressman John B. Anderson, because he was involved with the Speaker. He was a member of the Republican leadership in the House. Oh no... Was that before Tip O'Neill became the Speaker? I think it was, yes, sure, and he and Tip O'Neill - sort of bipartisan - were sponsoring a resolution, and that's why we went and testified. A number of resolutions had been offered, and the question was which one did we, State Department, think was the best.

So we went up and discussed that. Of course we had to make the point that really the situation was not comparable to Nazi Germany. It was not a question of fearing genocide, it was not a question of the Soviet Government having plans to physically annihilate the Jewish people - not at all. And I am afraid that's what got the headlines.

Bernie (Bernard) Gwertzman, who was there for the New York Times, wrote a story saying well, the State Department says the situation of Soviet Jewry is not as bad as in Nazi Germany.

Well, that's right, we did say that, because it was right, it wasn't as bad. (laughs) I mean you know, there is one heck of a big difference between being persecuted, as at least observant Soviet Jews were at that time, and being eliminated. I mean it's not just a small difference. And we knew that and said that. Well, that was what he chose to fasten on, which was really a misunderstanding by him. I suppose I felt guilty afterwards. I should have gotten together with him and pointed out that boy, you are breaking new ground here, this is something new. But actually I didn't know until the night before the day we went up there what I was going to be able to say, because again it all had to be negotiated very carefully with the White House, and they were extremely reluctant to say things that would offend the Soviet Government. I mean they didn't tell me that that was what was bothering them, but it was evident to me. They kept saying cut this out, cut that out, and I kept saying, look, we can't cut out everything. This can't be just a watered-down statement, we have to get up there and say something of substance on this issue. These people have got a good point, there are people who are being persecuted for the simple reason that they are consciously Jewish and are not prepared to give up their Jewish heritage or identity.

I said, what a paradox this is. On the one hand the Soviets on the internal passport insist on putting a person's nationality, JEWISH, and on the other hand if the guy says "Okay, you call me a Jew, and I am going to be a Jew," then he gets into all kinds of trouble.

Well, then of course they began to let the Jews out, which again - I think Hal Sonnenfeldt and people there said, "They'll never do this," but I think it was thoroughly predictable that they would start doing it, and slowly they began to let people out, and the flow continues to this day. Thousands and thousands of people, astoundingly, have gotten out of there, and

then that was followed by the Volga Germans. The West German leadership had been working on that for a long time, and finally they began to get people out, and they are still coming out, too.

Q: I didn't know that.

DAVIES: Oh, yes, a lot of Volga Germans have come out.

Q: They had been exiled from the Volga.

DAVIES: To Central Asia, that's right, during the Second World War they were moved down to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

Q: But did they trickle back to the Volga afterwards, or did they emigrate to Germany from the Soviet Far East?

DAVIES: No, some of them were still left on the Volga, and some of them came back, but most of them were in Central Asia, not in the Far East.

Q: And they came back to Europe from there?

DAVIES: They came back to Europe from there, and they set up collective farms. Of course they were about the only really productive collective farms in the Soviet Union. The Volga Germans - they really worked on that.

But that of course is part of the price that the Soviets have been paying the FRG - the West Germans - for detente. And they are prepared to pay a price for these things.

Q: Is there, would you say, any Soviet security concept that the fewer of these Volga Germans and the fewer Jews the less chance for trouble if they get out?

DAVIES: Oh sure, that's the reason. Sure, they regard these people as unreliable, and indeed they are unreliable because the system itself, the regime, creates the kind of situation in which these people can't fail to be unreliable.

On the one hand of course the whole Jewish problem began after the 1967 war, when for the first time really...

Well, with the creation of the State of Israel Soviet Jews began to feel an interest, and a very strong one, and then when Golda Meir came to Moscow in 1947 or 1948 - whenever it was, when the State of Israel was set up - as the first Israeli Ambassador, there was a fantastic scene when she went, I think, to the Great Choral Synagogue, as it's called, in Moscow, and this huge group of Jews then followed her from the synagogue on to the hotel where she was staying. They didn't have a residence. In effect they serenaded her and stood outside

and applauded, and she came out on the balcony of the room of the hotel. Well, this absolutely infuriated and terrified Stalin, and that was probably the beginning.

Soviet policy during the war - during the Second World War - had been no worse than ambivalent about the Jews. You know they had this scheme to resettle Jews out in Birobidjan, in the Far East, which never worked. And Stalin of course didn't have any use. In the first place Trotzky, the Jewish communists, the communist Jews and the Jews in the communist leadership - the leadership of the party - most of them had turned out to be on the side of the opposition. About the only Jewish communist that ended up with him was Lazar Kaganovich, who was a pretty crude type. Oh, there were a few others.

But that was the inception - that incident with Golda Meir - of this fear of the Jews. And then from then on they began to clamp down on emanations of Jewish national feeling or cultural expression, to the extent of course of taking the leaders of these groups and assassinating them, or they just disappeared.

So that was the beginning I think of the postwar anti-Semitism which then became a consciously pursued policy in the Soviet Union, something that people in the outside world didn't really understand, that these people were just as anti-Semitic, in a different way, as the Nazis. It was expressed perfectly by Khrushchev when he said - I can't remember whether this was to a group of French communists or socialists - he said, "We are training our own intellectuals, and when we get enough of them we'll get rid of these Jews, because you can't trust them, they are all Zionists."

But that was not the case at all. They were not all Zionists. Many of them were perfectly good communists; the great majority were not; they were not communists, but they were perfectly good Russians, perfectly good citizens of the country. But when you begin to suspect the whole group - and of course Stalin destroyed whole peoples during the war when he began to suspect their loyalty, he just moved them elsewhere and dispersed them - the Crimean Tatars and some of the little people from the North Caucasus who collaborated with the Germans, and collaborated very understandably because they felt life in the Soviet Union was impossible for them.

And now he was beginning the same thing with the Jews, and the whole thing culminated of course in the so-called plot of the doctor-murderers, at the very end of Stalin's life, when a number of Jewish doctors who were the leading doctors in the Kremlin Hospital were arrested. All were Jews, and they were accused of having murdered communist party leaders and of having plotted to kill Stalin and so forth, and only his death then - at the beginning of March 1953 - forestalled what I was sure was going to be a terrible pogrom. There was a danger not of a holocaust, but there would have been exile for them. He'd send them all to Birobidjan or to the Far East, as many as were suspected of being dangerous to the state, and in Stalin's day that was always... I mean whether you were dangerous to the state or not you could be suspected of being.

Q: Yes.

DAVIES: So this thing had been festering for a long time, and I told Yuly Vorontsov, I said, "Look what happened to the States. Look what happened in history when people drove these people, the Jews, out. Look what happened to Spain."

Well, of course he wouldn't hear of it, and he'd say, "What are you talking about? Who's trying to drive the Jews out?"

But after the 1967 war so many Russian Jews who had been perfectly assimilated then began to say, "My gosh, those people...we are proud. It doesn't mean we want to leave here, but we are proud of what they've done."

And some of them began to take an interest in their religion, particularly the younger people, which they had never shown any interest in before, and became interested in learning Hebrew, in which there had been no interest before. And this spread very rapidly and became very strong, and the reaction of the Soviet leadership finally was, let's get rid of these people, not by killing them, but by expelling them or letting them go. And they let a lot of them go.

Of course they are concerned about security on the other side too, and they have these rules that I think you have to be out of most Government jobs and out of the Army for five years before you are eligible.

Well, that was a fascinating experience for me at any rate, and it still is. It's still going on, and it's still one of the great problems they've got. I think probably three quarters of the Jews would leave if they got the chance, if the gates were opened - maybe more, because they recognize there is no future for them there. At the same time they are not very happy in Israel, so more and more come here, and of course since the American Jewish community is so well organized and still relatively...they don't stand out the way for example the Jews do in Miami. But a lot of those ex-Soviet Jews are getting out.

Well, that was one thing.

The other big thing that occurred of course was...this television show on the defection of Simas Kudirka. Did you see that on TV?

Q: Only part of it. He was a seaman, wasn't he?

DAVIES: Yes, a Lithuanian seaman. That happened on November 24th, I think it was, of 1970.

Q: The initial thing was that the Coast Guard turned him back.

DAVIES: Yes. Rear Admiral Ellis, who was the commander of the First U.S. Coast Guard District up in Boston - and who was on convalescent leave at the time and wasn't even

supposed to be on duty, he was home convalescing - ordered the commander of the USS Vigilant, the Coast Guard cutter, to turn him back, and in fact told them, "If they want to send their people onboard ship to get him..."

The Vigilant was in U.S. territorial waters.

"That's all right, you know, let them send their people on board."

Commander Eustis said, "Look, I can't, my men are not going to use force on the guy. I can't tell my men to seize him and deliver him to them."

So Admiral Ellis...he said, "Well, there's very delicate fishing negotiations going on."

There were no negotiations going on at all, and besides that's not his business.

I came to the conclusion after that that next to the Immigration and Naturalization Service the Coast Guard is the other organization in this Government in whose hands I would just as soon not be somehow, you know, if I needed help. (laughs) Oh I think the guys on the boats do a good job, but...

Q: But for other business...

DAVIES: Oh it was shocking. Well, we were in the middle of it because they had called us. They called a desk officer in the Office of Soviet Union Affairs in the middle of the afternoon or early in the afternoon of the 24th, from Coast Guard Headquarters here in Washington - the duty officer, somebody called - and said, "Look, we got a message from Boston that says that there is some indication that a seaman may defect from a Soviet ship, a Soviet Lithuanian ship, the Sovietskaya Litya may defect from there. What should we do?"

Our guy checked around and said, "Has he defected yet?"

"No."

"Are you sure of it?"

"Well, we don't know. All we know is that they say he may."

So he said, "Well, if he should come aboard, then let us know, but it's a hypothetical case, we don't know who the guy is, we don't know what he'll say, maybe they are just trying to play games with us or something, you don't know. What is this thing?"

Then the guy who got the call, Edward Leo Kilham told the duty officer, who happened to be a subordinate of his, a very able young officer...

Well, the Coast Guard said, "We'll get back to you if we have any further word."

"Yes, get back to us as soon as something happens. We'll try to give you advice in the light of the circumstances."

Well, of course afterwards Bill (William) Macomber - who was Deputy Undersecretary for Administration and who was in charge of the investigation in the Department - and Wayne Hays at the hearing on the Hill said, "Why didn't he think to say, if he does come aboard don't give him back?"

Well, I suppose he should have said that, but at that point nobody knew whether anything was going to happen.

And the Coast Guard said, "We'll get back in touch with you."

We didn't hear anything, Ed Mainlain (Edward Allen Mainland) didn't hear anything, the office closed up, so about 10 or 11 that night he called the Operations Center in the State Department and he got them to call the Coast Guard Operations Center, and they said, "Well, we haven't heard anything more."

He said, "Then presumably nothing's happened, so we don't need to do anything."

And of course we found out then the next morning that indeed the man had come aboard the Vigilant, that there had been a great deal of traffic back and forth between the boat and the First District Headquarters in Boston, but apparently none of this was repeated down here, or if it was it never got to the State Department.

So as a result of that we had this hearing. Wayne Hays was very indignant - everybody was, the President - understandably.

I brought a little book along, it's called "Attempted Defection by Lithuanian Seaman Simas Kudirka: Hearings Before the Subcommittee on State Department Organization and Foreign Operations of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representative, 91st Congress, Second Session, December 3, 7, 8, 9, 14, 17, 18 and 29, 1970," which Wayne Hays held. A great actor, that man, he deserved the Academy Award.

Finally it was determined that Admiral Ellis had done this, and Captain Brown, who was his executive officer, who was technically in command of the District at the time, because Admiral Ellis was on convalescent leave. Despite the fact that Captain Brown counseled him against it, Admiral Ellis persisted in doing this.

Well, finally Admiral Ellis and Captain Brown were permitted to retire from the Coast Guard.

Q: Really?

DAVIES: Yes, and that was the end of their career. And Commander Eustis, who I thought behaved very well - the man in command of the Vigilant, I thought he behaved very well, and we were aware of earlier incidents in which he had done good work. I was too harsh on the Coast Guard, because the guys on the boats do a good job. We had a lot to do with them off the coast of Alaska, fishing, and off the New England coast. It's when you get above that level that you begin to run into problems. It's not the Navy by any means. They just don't have that caliber of officers, unfortunately.

I am afraid his career was badly hurt.

And of course the really remarkable thing about the whole business was the effective action taken by the Lithuanian-American community.

Q: Oh, really?

DAVIES: Oh, beautiful! There is, you know, an ethnic group, if you like. In the first place they are - at least the group I came in contact with - relatively highly educated people, professional people, very impressive, they take care of themselves, they take care of their own, some of these Lithuanian-Americans then got to work, and eventually they determined that Kudirka's mother had a claim to American citizenship, and I think they pretty well established that she was an American citizen. She had been over here in the States and had gone back there. Kudirka himself was born out of wedlock. Well, the law at the time of his birth provided that the child of an American citizen born abroad was an American citizen.

Q: That's an American law.

DAVIES: Oh, yes, it's our law, not a Russian law. He was born in Lithuania anyway, shortly before the Second World War.

But that's our law. And they ferreted all this out despite all the difficulties involved. Meanwhile he was taken back to the Soviet Union and put on trial and given a lengthy sentence in a prison camp, really rough, and they made an object lesson of him.

But these Lithuanian-Americans found this out long after I had left the State Department. They came in and they persisted, they kept saying, you've got to do something for this guy.

Finally we took it up with the Soviets, and eventually in order to get rid of this problem they let him go - him, his mother, his wife, and one or two children, the whole family.

Q: How recently?

DAVIES: They came here in 1975 or 1976, something like that. They live in New Jersey. He's a bit of a kook, you know, a bit impulsive anyway. Here he was, he was married, he

had a nice family, and yet he was prepared to jump over onto our ship that way, leaving his family. Well, I guess he just trusted that somehow they would be gotten out. I think he had the whole thing worked out.

But this leads me back to another thing that occurred long before the Lithuanian-Americans were in a position to prove to us that the guy had a claim to American citizenship.

At that time - at the time that this occurred - we were in the process of arranging for the turning over to the Soviets of a spy - a Soviet spy, I think his name was Pavlov - a driver at the Soviet Mission in the United Nations who had been caught five or ten years earlier, I don't know when, and had been convicted of espionage and was in prison I guess in New Jersey, I don't know.

He was tried in Newark - that was the reason - a judge in Newark was involved in arranging the legal end of releasing him.

Anyhow this guy, Simas Kudirka, had been taken in violation of international law, and we had permitted the violation to take place. In fact we had...

Q: Abetted it.

DAVIES: You could say we had abetted it, certainly, even invited it, through Admiral Ellis telling this guy - he got on the phone himself to Commander Eustis, and when Commander Eustis said what am I going to do, he said, let them come on the ship - which they were only too ready to do - and take him.

But it was still violation of international law. The man was on American territory once he was on our ship, and they had no more right to do that than...

It was just illegal.

So Charlie (Charles) Brauer, who was Assistant Legal Adviser for Europe, and I were talking about this, and I said, "Look, we were supposed to be letting this guy Pavlov go for them, I think this is crazy."

Q: The Pavlov case was not an exchange? Just give him back?

DAVIES: No. He had been...he had done quite a bit of time, and the Soviets had been after him for years, or rather after us for years, to try to get him back. I don't think it was a big thing. He was involved in one of these cases where they get in touch with some non-com or defense contractor or something like that who then goes to the F.B.I. - that kind of thing - as I remember it. Oh he was a spy, he was guilty, he was caught redhanded, there's no doubt about it.

But anyhow we wrote a paper for Secretary Rogers, and this was another thing that I kind of admired him for.

I said, "Mr. Secretary, there is really only one thing we can do, and I think we should do it. Are we going to hand this guy Pavlov back to them at the same time that they have taken Kudirka?"

This was while the Sovietskaya Litya, the ship was still on the high seas.

I said, "Why not hit them right now and say we can't give you Pavlov unless you give us back Kudirka; they'll say he is a Soviet citizen, and we'll say all right, we are not denying that he is a Soviet citizen."

At that point we had no reason to think he was anything but a Soviet citizen. Nevertheless he was on our ship, he'd asked us for asylum, and we have an obligation that we have not fulfilled, but once we get him back we'll treat him exactly the same as we treat anybody else in a similar situation. "Do you want to have an interview with him? You can have an interview with him, provided we have one of our people there to ensure that no undue influence is exerted."

Well, the Secretary agreed, and he authorized this, so I told Vorontsov this.

And of course what I didn't know was that Henry and Dobrynin had been discussing this.

Vorontsov came in and I said, "Look, this is what we want." And he said, "How can we do that? It's impossible. He is a Soviet citizen."

I said, "It's very simple, the ship can call at a British port, we can arrange to have him picked up there and flown back here."

"Oh, it's out of the question." Well, he didn't say that, he said, "I'll transmit this to Moscow."

He said, "Is this the position of the United States Government?"

I said, "Sure it's the position of the United States Government."

He said, "Well, I'll transmit this."

So he went away, and the next thing I knew - I think it was that same day or the morning I saw him - Ted (Theodore L. Jr.) Eliot was then Executive Secretary and I got a phone call that afternoon from Ted Eliot, and he said, kind of excitedly, "Henry just called me from the helicopter."

I don't know what helicopter Henry was in at that point. (laughs while speaking)

Apparently he was between Andrews (Air Force Base) and the White House, someplace, I don't know. (Ted Eliot told me that) he said, "Tell Davies to keep his nose out of this business. Pavlov will be returned as scheduled."

I said, "Ted, why are you telling me this? Tell the Secretary. The Secretary is the one who would want to know this."

Ted said, "Er, uh, I..."

I said, "You've got to tell the Secretary. I can't speak for the United States Government without the Secretary telling me I can speak for the United States Government."

At any rate nothing happened. It was just forgotten. Pavlov was handed back.

Terrible.

Q: Almost always I remember there was a quid pro quo - Rudolf Ivanovich Abel for Gary Powers.

DAVIES: There had been several. This had dragged on for several years, and I don't really remember now all of the protractions. I remember at one point somebody said to me, gee, you know, we sold this guy five times over. I mean we've gotten things we said we couldn't consider doing this now until something else happened, and then when that had happened we still hadn't done it. There had been a change of Administration, a change of personnel...

In any case we had the guy, and obviously they would not have given us Kudirka at that point, but my point was, you establish the conditions for an exchange, and you are then in a position to tell the people who are interested - not only the Lithuanians and the Americans but anybody else - that well, we shouldn't have done what we did in the first place, but we are trying to make good on it and we are taking a firm position on it.

No, no, no, it's getting in the way of Henry's schemes with Dobrynin.

So that was the end of that, and it was only thanks to these good people - the Lithuanian-Americans who kept on the trail - that this guy finally was gotten out of there, and the deliction was purged.

I thought the TV show was pretty good. This was a repeat. They have shown it several times.

Q: But they had the basic facts.

DAVIES: They had the basic facts. They combined - they only had two State Department people depicted in it, not a very flattering portrait. And they harped on this point - well, it's

a hypothetical incident, we can't give any advice, that sort of thing. The fussy State Department line, which wasn't altogether fair, it seemed to me, although we had plenty of second thoughts ourselves, after the poor guy had been pulled off the cutter.

But we could not imagine in our wildest moments that my God, a man who is an admiral in the Coast Guard is going to say give him back.

Q: Was he made the villain in the television play?

DAVIES: Oh, yes. At the end - it's kind of a documentary, and it's done very well - at the end Admiral Ellis and Captain Brown are shown permitted to retire or something like that, and Commander Eustis transferred to shore duty, and poor guy, he didn't do anything you know, he behaved perfectly properly, but he was just caught in the middle there.

In terms of repercussion on us, Bill Macomber was full of second sight, he had his retrospectroscope operating very well. (laughter) And he said, "Why didn't you guys tell him? If he comes over you give him asylum, you should have been more aggressive, should have taken more initiative."

Well, I think we should have.

Of course afterwards we set up a formal arrangement. We have now a guy over at the Coast Guard who sits in there and who is a State Department adviser in the Coast Guard, and we also drafted a lengthy set of guidelines for handling defectors, which ensured that before any decision was made they'd check with the State Department. But actually there had been a set of guidelines before that which were, I thought, perfectly adequate if anybody had paid any attention to them, but you know nobody pays any attention to guidelines at a time like that.

I thought the program was very well done.

Then the final scene is Kudirka and his wife going aboard the Vigilant where he had defected five years earlier.

Q: Ha!

DAVIES: And there's the entire crew of the ship lined up, and the ship dressed in flags, and they are piped aboard and given a dinner. That actually happened, oh yes, when he came back. They were trying to make it up to him a little bit.

Q: But they had an actor portraying Kudirka?

DAVIES: Oh, yes, it was done by Alan Arkin. Alan Arkin did it, and he was excellent, with a phoney Russian accent, which was very good. Actually for a Lithuanian perhaps it's not

quite so good - they don't have a phoney Russian accent, they have a phoney Lithuanian accent. (laughs)

But he knew his business. And it was very well done, I think, very well done, and it will be around, it will be shown over and over, because it is a dramatic story - this crazy guy deciding to jump to the American ship, and of all things he couldn't imagine...

Q: There is a procedure in every embassy, supposedly, to follow on defection.

DAVIES: There is no problem in an embassy, because there is a defector committee in every embassy, or there shouldn't be any problem, I should say. There are problems as a matter of fact, because one of these guys will walk in, and if there is a 17 or 18 or 19-year old Marine who is on duty, when the guy walks in and he doesn't know the drill, and he may not know the person to turn to, but...

Q: It applies to certain non-Russians too, doesn't it? I mean when you have a problem...

DAVIES: Absolutely.

Q: Various nationalities.

DAVIES: Oh, yes. When I was in Warsaw we had an East German who came in, and he was just an ordinary guy, he didn't have any particular secrets or anything like that to tell, but he came in, and fortunately we went through this regularly with all the people involved so that one knew immediately whom to call and get somebody there who had a language capability and could talk with the person.

And we had to tell him, "Look, it's awfully difficult for us to do anything for you here. If you can get let's say to Belgrade that would be easier, we can't do much here in Warsaw."

But it was handled all right, because in Poland the militia is not so vigilant as it is in the Soviet Union, they don't arrest people coming out or going into an embassy the way they do in Moscow.

Q: Of course you have a problem in some places, once the person is there.

DAVIES: Oh, yes, you see, that would be the problem with anybody in Warsaw. You couldn't get them out, you'd have to run very considerable risks to do that, and unless the individual were someone very valuable you wouldn't want to run those risks.

Q: And you have the problem trying to establish bona fides.

DAVIES: Exactly.

Q: Sometimes in a place like Warsaw you have linguists, but in a neutral country sometimes they don't know the languages.

DAVIES: That's true, they don't have anybody who can speak with the individual unless the individual knows English.

It will continue to be a problem because despite what we keep saying about ourselves, and despite the problems we've got in this country, this is the country to which everybody wants to come, as the President said. Jimmy Carter in his little talk - was it up in New York someplace? - to the Urban League said, "You don't see people flooding Key West trying to escape from the United States to Cuba." You don't even see these Iranian students striving to get back to the homeland.

Well, I think those were pretty much the highlights - a couple of things at any rate.

We had a lot of problems during that year and a half - or slightly longer I guess - that I was in that job. It was the beginning of detente.

Q: But there must have been increasing evidences and hints of private deals between Kissinger and Dobrynin, and things that nobody else was...

DAVIES: All the time, all the time, and as I say the whole thing was...

There were two things that particularly shocked me.

One was the famous declaration or statement of principles for the conduct of U.S.-Soviet relations, which was concluded at the Moscow summit in the summer of 1972, which was just absolutely ludicrous to believe that the Soviets would live up to this. No way. And then when they got back from there - we had not known anything about it in the State Department.

Marty Hillenbrand went on that trip with Secretary Rogers - it was a whole big traveling circus - and as Henry writes in his memoirs, in the first volume of his memoirs, Marty had not known anything about this: this had been negotiated between Dobrynin and Kissinger - this statement of principles. It was something that the Soviets wanted. It was in fact a kind of a standard fixture in their negotiations with Western countries. They wanted to include one of these statements of principles for the conduct of relations, kind of sort of something signaling the end of the Cold War between the Soviet Union and that particular country. And they wanted it with us, and Henry agreed to that, he negotiated it, we in the State Department never knew that it was being negotiated. When they were in Moscow for the summit Marty Hillenbrand was in a meeting then at which the Soviet side said, "Well, you know, here is this document." They were agreeing on the document, it would be signed, and as Henry really with great noblesse oblige in the memoirs says, "As a true professional Ambassador Hillenbrand did not lift an eyebrow when this document was laid in front of him, although he'd never seen it before and didn't realize it was being negotiated."

In the first volume of his memoirs Henry rather patronizingly said that as a true professional he did not even raise his eyebrows when this document, the existence of which he had no knowledge of at all, was handed to him at a meeting in Moscow as one of the documents that would be signed later in the visit by the President and Brezhnev.

Well, when we got back I spoke with Hal Sonnenfeldt, I said, "What possesses you people to do this kind of thing, to sign that kind of document, which doesn't mean anything, which you know they will violate, which simply leads people astray? It leads the people in this country and elsewhere to think that they've changed their spots, or that we think they've changed their spots."

Hal said, "Oh, well, people will forget about it," which of course they did, to the extent even that it should have been used.

Admittedly it was a mistake, in my opinion, to sign it, and you can sense that in Henry's treatment of it in his memoirs, on the one hand trying to downplay the significance of it as just something that the Soviets wanted, and on the other hand treating it very offhand and in a sort of light way.

But it could have been used. It provided a remarkable thing, because you know, it's a document that provides for consultation and... If everything that is in that document were implemented we'd have a relationship with the Soviets which would be as good as if not better than the relationships we have with our closest allies: consultations where you'd warn them ahead of time of our plans. Oh, my gosh, however it could have been used and should have been used at the time of Angola.

Here was something. Now admittedly it would not have caused the Soviets to stop doing what they were doing in Angola, but we could have gone to them. The thing to do at that point was to treat the thing perfectly seriously. Having been so stupid as to sign the thing in the first place, let's get some benefit out of it, and treat it perfectly seriously. "Hey, look!" Because there is language in it which can be interpreted to mean - in fact it says so rather flatly - that neither side is going to take advantage of situations to the detriment of the other.

Of course the Soviets would have said, what's Angola got to do with this? It's not to your detriment.

Nevertheless it could be used. But no, although our people recommended - I know this from Moscow - that it be used, Henry would never use it, for I think a very good reason: he recognized that calling attention to it would just raise the question in the minds of people who follow these things, let's say up on the Hill, why the hell did you sign the thing in the first place?

*Q: How does that differ from a treaty which the Senate would have to ra*tify?

DAVIES: Well, it's not a treaty.

Q: What's the correct term for it?

DAVIES: I think it's called a statement. I think it was signed, as I remember, by the two principals, but it just has declarative effect, it doesn't bind anybody, it hasn't got any real legal force. It's a statement sort of "these are our intentions," and I think there is language in it like "to the best of our ability" or something like that. It's not a treaty, it was never put before the Senate, of course not. Of course not.

And in that flood, you remember Henry had that wonderful line, I can't remember it now - I wish I could, he is a witty man. In his press conference there, somebody from the Times or someplace had accused him before the trip of planning to dribble out a spate of agreements one after the other, and he kept coming back to that, he said, "You know, today we've dribbled out the following agreement." (laughs)

But there were so many of them, and of course the big ones, the important ones were dealing with other matters. This was a very minor thing.

The SALT treaty was the big thing, the centerpiece.

Q: What about the Helsinki agreement?

DAVIES: The Helsinki Accord on Europe?

Q: Yes.

DAVIES: Well, that was under the Ford Administration.

Q: Oh, I see, after Nixon.

DAVIES: They were negotiating at Helsinki. I remember Gerry (Gerard) Smith was up there and had to come down, and the whole thing was wrapped up very rapidly, at the end. Not a very tidy operation at all.

Anyway that was one thing that Henry worked out with Dobrynin.

Again, part of this approach of well, you know, we can buy them off and if they want to have this little thing we'll sign it, without realizing, I think, either he or President Nixon, that you create the wrong impression, you make them think you are gullible when you sign that kind of thing, when you give them that kind of thing. We say, Ah, we'll throw them a fish, but they don't look at things that way - they've got something, they've achieved something in their minds. So there was that.

The other thing was the grain deal, which we began to hear about then in the State Department, and again I tried to discuss this with Hal Sonnenfeldt.

The idea that we could buy them this way. Ha! Of course they are going to take the grain, they will buy it, literally. But then you create a kind of dependence, as we see. The American farmer then becomes dependent on this.

I don't say that we shouldn't do it, but there ought to be some intermediary step, you ought to have some Government control. Of course we did, shockingly - these arrangements that we had, there was this revolving door thing, and the guy who was Assistant Secretary of Agriculture in charge of the part of the Department of Agriculture that dealt with grain sales then went up to become vice president of one of the biggest grain firms up in New York, you know, this kind of thing.

And of course the American taxpayer was subsidizing those deals with tax dollars in terms of the credits and the Government facilities that were made available.

It just doesn't make any sense.

We were involved in a number of other negotiations, the so-called incidents at sea treaty - remember we used to have these encounters between American naval ships and Soviet naval ships - which has worked rather well.

Q: But would you say from your observation that Henry was playing big-power politics along with Nixon to make a successful Administration image, or did he deep in his heart believe that he was screwing the Soviet Union or...

DAVIES: I think this was...

At the time I am speaking of he was still the President's national security adviser, and he was quite obviously - I never had any doubt on this, and I don't think anybody in the State Department did - hoping that he would become Secretary of State.

Q: And these were stepping-stones?

DAVIES: These were stepping-stones. I interpreted all this very largely as an emanation of his own personal ambition. I don't know how much he believed any of this stuff. But he was certainly the right man in the right spot at the right time for that kind of operation. He was prepared to play that game up to the hilt, regardless - I felt - of the rights or wrongs, of the effect good or bad of these activities. And he played it very cleverly.

I had started to say something about Marty Hillenbrand, and how he was kind of complimentary to him in his book there, but of course he did succeed before he left office there in forcing Martin Hillenbrand out as Ambassador to Germany. He hated him, and he hated him because when the Nixon Administration came in Hillenbrand had been Assistant

Secretary for Europe in the State Department, a man with all this experience in postwar Germany, dealing with postwar Germany. And Hillenbrand had told him at many meetings that were held that detente was inevitable. You remember at the beginning of the Nixon Administration Kissinger expressed real doubts about this. He was talking about the Year of Europe and how the Europeans had to slow down, that after all we were their leader and they ought to slow down and let us get ahead of them, and that kind of thing (laughs). And of course detente was a Western European invention, beginning with de Gaulle and going on to Willy Brandt.

And we were trailing behind, we were being pushed by these events and these developments in Europe over which we had no control and which we weren't really able to have any substantial effect on.

But Marty Hillenbrand was right, and Henry didn't like that. It's dangerous to be right with a guy like that. And Marty - a very modest fellow, but very smart and intelligent - was just too right and too accurate in his analysis of the situation, and Henry initially resisted the idea that detente was a good thing, I think mainly because he had not invented it and was not controlling it. And Marty kept saying, "Look, our policy ever since the war has been that when the West Germans are prepared to recognize the existence of Eastern Germany - we are not going to force this on them, they've got to make that decision - we say to them okay, you go ahead and work out the deal yourself."

Well, of course the road to that lay through Moscow, so they had to go to Moscow first before they could do that.

That was the thing that worried Henry, and I think sincerely worried him, and understandably. But Marty kept saying gee, this has been our policy since 1948 or 1949 and we can't change it now, we've got to fit ourselves into this process.

And Kissinger felt, well, you know, this guy is a traditional diplomat. Which of course is true, Marty was, and perhaps lacking imagination in some degree, but nevertheless a man who knew the intricacies of this thing inside out. A very useful and brilliant man. And he forced him out as Ambassador to Germany in a very complicated ploy. He kept him from becoming a career ambassador, the highest rank in the Service. That's too bad.

Q: How do you feel about this premise that Henry, a man of enormous talents and so forth, in another time or another Administration... He forged ahead due to his ambition and talent and so forth, but there was such a paucity of talent around Nixon and such a lack of depth that he could carry the ball every down, and if he was surrounded by people like Robert Lovett and Dean Acheson and others people would have said, looking at pictures, "Who is that owlish looking man?" And everybody would say that's a very able staff man, Henry Kissinger.

Do you agree with that?

DAVIES: Absolutely, you are so right, you are so right, Peter, you are ABSOLUTELY CORRECT. And that's what he should have been.

Q: A superb staffer.

DAVIES: A superb staffer, a man who...an idea man. But it's this element of personal ambition that spoils him.

Q: There was also a contempt, an innate contempt for the hard-working, straightforward professional, whether he was a diplomat or in another Government agency.

DAVIES: Oh, yes, oh, yes.

Q: In the book that you mention, in the first volume, I don't remember the part about Hillenbrand, but he says about the same thing about Joseph S. Farland and praises him - he was Ambassador to Pakistan...

DAVIES: Right.

Q: And he sort of churns with glee that they invited Farland back to the States, ostensibly on personal business and arranged all this, and sort of "I foiled all those pros" is implicit.

DAVIES: Yes, yes. He regarded the bureaucracy and the people who were in the bureaucracy as his enemies, he resented them, and he resented them because they had not called upon him, or when they had called upon him when he was a consultant they had not taken his recommendations as the final word, so these resentments had built up.

But he was a brilliant man, there is no doubt about it. It is too bad, I think, that it worked out the way it did, because he could have been, I think, more useful over a longer period of time if he hadn't had this, I say overweening ambition. He had to be Secretary of State, and he had to... Well, he just made an awful lot of enemies. Certainly if there is a Reagan Administration I would...

Well, you never say never, you can't tell. Ronald's gone and talked to the Urban League...

But I would doubt that there would be a place for him in a Reagan Administration. I think the result of his machinations and his wheeling and dealing has been that people recognize his slipperiness, and he is you know, he's changed so many views, he's disavowed so many things he'd said. He said some very true things, among all the other things that he said. But I just don't think... I wonder whether he's got a place in American public life any more.

Q: Perhaps he'd make a good Senator.

DAVIES: Maybe, sure, if Javits would retire eventually.

Q: For instance Daniel Patrick Moynihan is better off in the Senate than as...

DAVIES: ...than as Ambassador to the U.N., absolutely.

Q: Or as Ambassador elsewhere.

DAVIES: Yes, you are right. (laughs)

Q: He'd make a good Senator. He can speak out and make forceful statements at certain times, some of which will be right.

DAVIES: That's right. And it is the greatest gentlemen's club in the world, there is no doubt about that, and even a Henry could fit in there. (laughs) Although I am not sure. It would take some doing before he was accepted.

But that's where he might end up. And of course he has nothing to worry about, he is very well fixed in wheeling and dealing.

Q: What do you think of that book? I mean the book stands out big and tall and strong until something else 30 or 40 years from now is written and other sources are available, but who else ever was able to cart away all his papers, have a staff of five or six able people, and have all the work done?

DAVIES: Yes, beautiful. You know it's a great book.

Q: But who else can do that?

DAVIES: Yes... I think the second volume will be even more interesting because things then began to get a lot more controversial, and he is very clever.

In the first volume... I mentioned this one instance with regard to a man I know he strongly dislikes, to put it mildly, and he pays him a compliment, pats him on the back, so there is nothing one could take objection to in that.

And he is gloating that he put it over in effect on the professionals, as you said, in the case of Farland.

The second volume will be even more interesting. I think he is very clever, very clever. He is a brilliant man.

Q: How did you in that difficult atmosphere get your appointment as Ambassador to Warsaw?

DAVIES: Well, in the first place Secretary Rogers and Marty Hillenbrand recommended me. By that time Walter Stoessel was back, and Marty had gone to Germany. Walter

Stoessel had come from Warsaw, and it took them a while to decide what they were going to do. But Secretary Rogers put my name forward and I stood well with Hal, and I think Henry - to the extent that Henry was aware of me - there was no objection.

Actually the concern at that time - I frankly didn't feel this very strongly myself, but Hal Sonnenfeldt was interested in the job, but Henry wouldn't let him go.

Q: Selfish.

DAVIES: Exactly. Of course then Nixon went to Warsaw on that same trip, wasn't it?

Q: Yes.

DAVIES: After the Moscow summit they came through Warsaw and spent a couple of days there. I guess both Hal and his wife Margie were there, and they saw the residence which was very nice, and I guess they said gee, we'd like to go here.

But since he couldn't have it, he was perfectly prepared I think to say well, send Davies, he knows the language.

Q: Completely aside from Sonnenfeldt's ability and brightness, would a Berlin-born Jew have been acceptable to the Poles?

DAVIES: Well, of course they would have accepted anybody whom the Administration nominated.

Q: But would that have made it more difficult for him or not?

DAVIES: Well, they wouldn't have liked the idea very much. The Jewish part is not the worry at all, but the German part, the Berlin part. There was always an uneasiness about Henry because those people in Warsaw bear very strongly the marks of the birthplaces where they grew up, and of course in Warsaw, in Poland the Teutonic mentality is just distrusted deeply.

But I think Hal would have gotten along all right there. There wouldn't have been enough to keep him occupied, I don't know what he'd have done, maybe he would just have been happy to enjoy a restful life and get away from the stresses and strains of being Kissinger's Kissinger, as he was sometimes called.

And so...anyhow I left at the end of December, right after Christmas, and went to Warsaw, and began five years in Warsaw. It was of course a great satisfaction to come back to the place of my first post, knowing the language.

Q: You succeeded Walter Stoessel?

DAVIES: I succeeded Walter Stoessel, yes. He'd left there in June or July and came back, and there was a six months' hiatus, and Davis E. Boster was charge there over that period.

Then I got there in late December and presented my credentials in January, and had a great time!

Q: Nice to be out of DC.

DAVIES: Oh, yes, I would never...I really...

Q: Did the Poles have the same attitude as other sophisticated Europeans about "ah, what's all this fuss about Watergate?"

DAVIES: Oh, yes, sure, sure.

Q: After all, look at his...

DAVIES: They could absolutely not understand it, and Mr. Gierek, the First Secretary of the Polish Communist Party, the Foreign Minister, all the high officials were scratching their heads and they were asking, "Mr. Ambassador, is it possible that the President could..."

Initially they didn't ask the question - they made the statement, "Oh, Mr. Ambassador, you know it's not possible that the President could lose his job, that's impossible."

I said from the outset, "Gee, I don't know. I don't know. We've had one President impeached. Actually they failed, but it really broke his power, and he was a nullity from then on. And I just don't know."

And of course they followed this with absolute fascination, because even in Eastern Europe there is some understanding of democracy. They do not have the kind of democracy in any of those countries that we've got here. You take Britain - well, they have a very highly developed system of elite Government, and people do not publish stories about the peccadilloes of ministers. Well, you know, like with the Profumo case, these scandals do pop up from time to time, but my gosh it takes an enormous amount for anything to get into the decent press. There may be something in News of the World, or in this little magazine that they've been putting out in recent years - I forget the name of it...

Q: Tabloid scandals.

DAVIES: An expose thing. But decent people don't read those publications. These things are all very neatly covered up and are kept covered up. And of course it's only been in recent years in our country that the press hasn't covered up for leaders, you know, people like the former Speaker of the House, Carl Albert, who was an alcoholic for years and years. Every

once in a while he'd get a parking ticket here and there would be a little story in the paper, but very discreet.

Q: Well, of course Kennedy's predilection for ladies was never (publicized). It was known, but...

DAVIES: That's right, it was known but it was not written about. But now of course more and more of these things are written about, and frankly, damn it, if you are going to be in the public eye you've got to be...

Q: Wouldn't you say that ambassadors - I mean foreign ambassadors - are getting messages from their Governments, what's going on now with this President's brother, and what's all the fuss?

DAVIES: Oh, yes, sure.

Q: I mean, what's the problem? Why are they making such a fuss?

DAVIES: Yes, exactly, exactly, I think they can't understand it at all.

Well, finally, when President Nixon did resign I saw the First Secretary, Mr. Gierek, shortly after that, on some occasion, and he came up to me across the room, and he said, "Mr. Ambassador, I just want to tell you something. You have got a real democracy in the United States." He was really impressed. Of course it can't happen there (laughs heartily) It can't happen there! And it can hardly happen... Look at some of the stories about France - Giscard d'Estaing accepting these gifts from Emperor Bokassa I, of the Central African Empire or whatever. I mean, you know! And some of the things that have happened, some of the Ministers in his Government - was it the Minister of Labor who committed suicide? I mean these things would be gone into here with a fine-toothed comb, but they are very effectively covered up there, nothing ever comes up.

Of course in a place like Poland nobody ever hears of it. There are scandals. There was a Minister of Shipping while I was there, quite an able man. He got drunk. He had a nice car, which is one of the ways the elite there as everywhere amuses itself - a nice foreign sports car - and he killed a foreign tourist. Now if it had been a Pole nothing would have happened to him. Well, there would have to be some payment to the family and things like that - that would have been taken care of. I think it was a Swedish or a German tourist. He was fired - fired. Unusual, very unusual. Quite a story there.

The Minister of Culture, there was quite a scandal. His wife... He was carrying on with some other woman, and his wife lay in wait for him outside the Ministry. I don't know whether she caught him with this woman or what, but she created quite a scene on the street, so they had to remove him, but they gave him another job somewhere, less (important). But of course none of this ever gets into the newspapers. It's common talk.

But people were just absolutely flabbergasted, and I think eventually when President Nixon resigned most of them were just full of admiration for a country that could effect that kind of... well, what to call it? - of change peacefully, without...

Q: Without stopping everything.

DAVIES: Without stopping everything, without soldiers going into the streets, without a coup or something like that. It was just absolutely astounding the way the transition was handled.

Of course in Poland and in the Soviet Union they regretted very much the passing - the political passing - of Richard M. Nixon, because here was a man whom they could deal with, they felt, on the basis of a mutual understanding. "He has no principles, and neither do we, and he'll do anything, politically, and we understand that." I mean they could respect that. In their own way, so they were very regretful that that had happened.

And then came Gerry Ford, and they really liked Gerry Ford. He visited there, and they liked him, and they liked very much Mrs. Ford - the leaders did. That was at the time of Helsinki.

Q: He was a straightforward person.

DAVIES: Very decent.

Q: With a sophistication - the kind that he had - developed through years in Congress.

DAVIES: That's right.

Q: He wasn't awkward in meeting people there.

DAVIES: That's right, and there really was a feeling very different from the one they had about Nixon. It was advantageous for them, they felt, to have Nixon as President of the United States. They weren't so sure it was advantageous for them to have Ford, but still he was a nice man, and Mr. Gierek really liked him. He asked me many times about Mrs. Ford who was undergoing her radiation treatment before that trip, and she was not too well, in fact she spent a good part of the time in bed while they were there. But he kept asking me about Mrs. Betty and about Mr. President, "Oh, I hope they are all right, they are very nice people." Well, they are very simple and unaffected people, straightforward as you say, sophisticated but not...

Q: Intellectually.

DAVIES: Yes, very, very engaging, really, and they liked that.

Q: Gierek is still there, isn't he?

DAVIES: Oh, yes.

Q: I imagine that he'd be scratching his head about Jimmy Carter. He is a puzzle.

DAVIES: Jimmy Carter - oh, well. Right from the outset of course they had great doubts about Jimmy Carter because of Zbigniew Brzezinski.

Q: Oh, because of that?

DAVIES: Oh, yes, oh, yes, both the Soviets and the Poles, because they've known him for years as a scholar, and he visited there many times, and of course he is a Polish-American. So they had real doubts about him, and I kept trying to allay those doubts. I am not sure I should have tried to do that, but I thought it was my duty. I said, look, he is an American. Yes, he is a Polish-American, but that doesn't mean that he is wicked or anything.

Well... They had doubts about Carter right from the outset, and then the human-rights campaign worried them greatly, the stir of that.

And then of course Carter came. Zbig mapped out this lunatic trip, nine countries in eight days, or some silly thing like that, a crazy business. Initially it was supposed to begin at the end of October, and then he couldn't do it because he was trying to fight the energy proposal through the Congress, or something or other. Was that it? I guess it was supposed to be at the end of November that the trip was supposed to take place, and they postponed it then until the end of December. Well, I've always felt that that's the worst time of the year to visit Northern Europe. In the first place you have no idea what the weather is going to be, or whether you are going to be able to get into these places. And they arrived in terrible weather - it was raining, hailing, snowing all the time they were there. Crazy. Makes no sense. And there was no purpose in coming there except for Zbig to show off, bringing the President there at that time of the year, particularly around Christmas and New Year's, which is a holy season as far as 99 percent of the Poles are concerned. So I could never understand the purpose of the damn thing. There was no business to transact.

Well, then Zbig got the idea that the President would come there and there would be a big meeting with the dissidents. In 1976 this committee for the defense of the workers had been set up, largely by social-democrats, but there were a number of political points of view represented in the committee. And then another committee was set up - it's called the movement for the defense of the rights of man and the citizen.

People would say, "Well, these dissidents..."

I'd say, "Look, 90 percent of the Polish people are dissidents, or 95 percent, pick your number. They are all dissidents."

At any rate we got this telegram saying WE WANT A GUEST LIST OF ALL THE LEADING DISSIDENTS THAT THE PRESIDENT IS GOING TO INVITE TO THE RECEPTION.

So we prepared the guest lists and sent them back.

Then I got a telegram from Washington saying YOU COME BACK. So I came back here to Washington. This was while the plan was still for the trip to take place in November.

What they wanted me to do was, Marshall Shulman (Secretary Vance's Soviet adviser from Columbia) wanted me to go over and talk to Zbig, to try to talk him out of this. I mean they couldn't do it themselves. Well, I couldn't do it either.

I went over there, and the first thing that happened was, he took me into his office there in the West Wing and pointed to the red phone, and said, "That phone goes directly to the President. When it rings I drop everything else."

Well, big deal, you know. (laughs) I expected there would be a phone.

He was intent on showing off. He said, "The President wants to have this reception."

I said, "Zbig, you know you can't do it."

"Why not? You Foreign Service people, you always say you can't..."

I said, "Look, you are their guests there. How can you?"

"You mean not invite any of the Polish leaders?"

"No, of course not, you can't do it. He is the guest of the First Secretary there."

I had proposed that there be a press conference with Polish and American journalists. They'd have a bunch of American journalists together with Polish journalists, and they would alternate the questions - a public press conference by the President. That had never been done anywhere in Eastern Europe. There had been plenty of press conferences on these trips, but not for the local press and public.

I knew that there would have to be some kind of media event there, and I said, "Zbig, we could do this."

"No, no, no. He is going to meet the dissidents."

Well, I argued with him and got nowhere.

So I went on back to Warsaw, and the day I got back the so-called advance party - or the pre-advance party, I don't know that's how these things are for a Presidential visit - arrived with Phil Wise (Philip J. Wise, Jr.) who is now the Appointments Secretary, the only other man in the White House from Plains, Ga., Jimmy Carter's hometown. Phil Wise and this guy who used to be the chief of protocol and who is now the treasurer of the Democratic National Committee, a young fellow from up in Massachusetts, Evan Dobelle.

Q: Ex-Mayor of Pittsfield (Mass.).

DAVIES: Right. Well, they came on the pre-advance or advance party. And we went over to the Polish Foreign Ministry to speak with the man who is now Ambassador here, Romvald Spasowski - who then was Deputy Foreign Minister in charge of our relations - about the President's visit. We had given him a draft schedule. The President was due to arrive at night - at 10 o'clock at night or some damn thing like that, you know, absolutely asinine, you know - and leave roughly 24 or 30 hours from then on the morning of the second day. So he really only had one full day, that's all. And we had these two hours blocked out in the afternoon - it was called Staff Time. Well, he has to have staff time, no matter where he goes, because the courier planes come in with documents that must be signed. But two hours of it, you know. Maybe it was three hours. We just left it there, staff time.

It was during this time that the reception was supposed to be put on at the residence. I said, "I'll do anything you say. I just tell you it won't work."

So we got in there, and Spasowski looked at me and he said, "Mr. Ambassador, we have a problem," and I said, "What do you mean, what kind of problem, Mr. Minister?"

He said, "These three hours of staff time."

I said, "What's the problem?"

He said, "Well, don't you know what the White House wants to do with that time?"

I said, "What do you mean, Mr. Minister?"

He said, "Well, our Ambassador was called in to see Dr. Brzezinski yesterday." This was while I was on my way back from the States.

I said, "He was?"

He said, "Yes, have you received the report?"

I said, "No, I haven't received a report." (laughs heartily)

Well, it turned out of course - although Brzezinski didn't tell me this - he said, you'd better go back and check because if...

Q: And Dobelle and Wise were sitting there?

DAVIES: Yes, they were right there, and he said, "Because if that is the intention of the President then all I can say is that there cannot be any visit to Warsaw."

I said, "Well, what did Dr. Brzezinski tell your Ambassador?" - Ambassador Trampczynski then.

He said, "He told him that he had seen you the day before, and that he was going to tell Ambassador Trampczynski the same thing he told you, that he wanted to have these people."

He said, "Mr. Ambassador, you know if the President comes to Warsaw he is our guest."

In the first place, the President wasn't offering to give a lunch for Gierek - Gierek was giving a state dinner for him. The President wasn't going to give a lunch for him.

You know, these people are so vulgar, crude. They want to play the game, but they don't want to play it according to any rules...

The Poles were very upset by this, and they said he should give a lunch, there should be a lunch.

Well, they refused to give a lunch.

Then they had all kinds of other things planned.

So he said, "You just have to tell him that if that is the intention then there will be no visit."

So on the way back from the Foreign Office I was riding with Dobell and Phil Wise - I took them in the car with me - and Dobell, who you know is just absolutely worthless, he said, "Well, we've got the time blocked out there, and we'll just tell them that it's staff time, and then the President can slip away, we'll arrange for him to meet these people..."

And I said, "Look, you can't do that, and if that is your intention please let me know 24 hours in advance if you are going to do that. If you are going to trick the Government to which I am accredited," - it's not much of a Government, admittedly, it's a communist Government - "I want to know so I can resign in time, and leave here before that occurs. I can't be a party to that."

So we got back to the Chancery, and Phil Wise finally came to see me, and he said, what shall we do?

I said, "Well, Phil, it's very simple." I took out the original telegram I had sent on the whole thing, and I said, "I have suggested this press conference. I mentioned that to Spasowski early in the game, and he said oh no, that's impossible. But we are in a very good position how anyhow to go back to him with that, and he'll accept it."

Q: Because the other things were so much more horrible.

DAVIES: Oh, yes. I said, "They want the visit. They can't accept it under those conditions, of course not, because the headline would just be one thing, PRESIDENT ENCOURAGES DISSIDENTS IN WARSAW, PRESIDENT SAYS TO DISSIDENTS...

"Well, that can't happen here, they are not going to permit you to do that, it's ridiculous, let's be realistic about this."

So they left then, and they went on to the next stop. Tehran was the next stop of course, where he finally made that ridiculous toast to the Shah.

Q: Which said what?

DAVIES: Oh, you know, that the Shah was a pillar of stability in the Middle East and we were so happy with the progress he had made in civil rights, and so forth and so on. An extravagant toast, you know, full of Southern courthouse hyperbole, I mean absolutely disgraceful. Yes, sure the Shah was an ally, and you should have said nice things, but you didn't have to say he was the greatest thing since God made green apples. That was ridiculous.

Well, they went on, and then the trip was postponed. This all happened while we were assuming the thing would be in November, but then it was put back on for December, and when it came back on we got a telegram that authorized me to raise the question of a press conference, and it was very simple then to arrange it. They agreed. They had some conditions, but it worked really very well. Actually in the event it was a totally novel thing there, an American-style Presidential press conference in Warsaw.

I thought it went off very well. The President was able to make a couple of good points on the SS20 for example - it was the first time anybody in public had ever mentioned that there was an SS20 in the Soviet Union - and on human rights, and a few other things.

It went off so well in fact that the Poles ran the whole thing on television. They did fiddle with the translation in a couple of places - with the interpretation - to obscure for instance the thing on the SS20, but they ran that, and pretty much the full text in the paper, and I felt it was a step forward.

But I feel that Brzezinski never forgave me.

Q: I remember earlier in the interview we were saying that due to the lack of depth Henry emerged far taller than all the people or most of the people that Nixon had around him?

DAVIES: Yes.

Q: Couldn't that be applied to Brzezinski, too - that he is a bit brighter than some of these people from Georgia?

DAVIES: Absolutely.

Q: So he, too, would be the staff man if...

DAVIES: Yes, but he lacks...he is not the kind of operator Henry was and is.

Q: But my point is, doesn't he loom much larger than he should?

DAVIES: I don't think he does, because... I think what I would say is that there was something to Henry, some substance to him. You might not agree with what he was doing or with the way he was doing it, but by golly he was getting things done, and there was a rationale, there was a concept. Zbig has no concept, he is an awful lightweight by comparison with Henry. Now he gets along like cats and dogs with the Georgians - they hate him, because he has that arrogance, that European arrogance or professorial arrogance, I don't know which it is, but I think it's European. Well, you know, most of our academics - American born and bred - don't think they know it all. Some of them do, undoubtedly, but you know, this arrogance...

And of course this trip was the perfect example of it. It was a botch from beginning to end. It was overscheduled, too, many countries in too few days.

You remember that initially they were planning to... It was suppose to cover twice as many countries, and they had to cut it in half, they had to lop off some of the countries. And he had this rationale that they were going there to Poland - to Eastern Europe - to show them how we were supporting the forces of making for pluralism. That was the idea - to get these dissidents, you know...

Then to Iran, which was our bulwark in the Middle East. (laughs) Then where, to Egypt? I don't remember. Where did he go from Iran?

Of course they went to Germany. I don't remember whether they went to France.

Was it Egypt? I think it was Egypt.

Q: I am not sure.

DAVIES: I am not sure. Then to some place in West Africa, and they had also planned that he would go to Brazil and in a couple of places in Latin America on the way back. Well, they had to lop that off.

But the trip was just insane. No one was able to get any sleep. There was at least no real reason to go to Poland, there was nothing to be decided there, in contrast for example even to the trip by Gerry Ford - we had a couple of agreements then that he and Gierek could sign. They didn't have to, but...

But (in this case) there wasn't even that.

Q: How much of a gaffe do you think it was not to attend Tito's funeral?

DAVIES: I think it was a mistake - not irreparable or anything like that, but it was a mistake, he should have gone. We are very interested in Yugoslavia's maintaining its nonaligned status, and here I think you can say one of the titans of wartime and postwar era dies, and even Yugoslavs who are anticommunist and anti-Tito - not perhaps those Croatian nationalists, but an awful lot of people in Yugoslavia look to the United States still, despite everything that's happened, as a potential guarantor of Yugoslavia's position. And just to brush this thing aside (and say), well, it's not important, was such a mistake. And of course eventually somehow they understood that.

But here I think is the kind of thing that you get with... Zbig has no weight in this situation.

I think this initial trip - it will be interesting to look back - diminished his weight in the White House, because it was not a great success, and things that have happened since have shown that it wasn't a great success. So I don't think he did himself any particular good with it.

Now of course the thing is that this President won't fire anybody.

Q: But he did get rid of two of his ablest men, Blumenthal and Schlesinger.

DAVIES: And Vance, quite apart from the question of ability. It's a peculiar kind of Government where the one guy to resign in the wake of that abortive rescue attempt was the one guy who warned against doing it in the first place. I mean you'd think that Harold Brown would have had the decency to say, gee... (laughs) maybe we shouldn't have been standing there saluting and saying CAN DO all the time.

Oh, well, anyway it was a lot of fun in Warsaw. It's a fascinating country, and great people, they love America, they love Americans. They are in a terrible mess, but...

Q: Next time let's go into your observations on the Polish problems in some detail, shall we?

DAVIES: Yes, I'd like to do that.

Q: Poland's future, and essentially Polish matters.

DAVIES: Okay. I think they tie in with... I mean you can't talk about Poland without talking about the Soviet Union.

Q: Yes.

DAVIES: And what our policy really ought to be, and we don't have any policy. There is no foreign policy now. We have foreign policies, but there is no concept, That's the thing where Zbig looks so bad, I think. He is not capable - he doesn't even care. Here again you have a question of personal ambition, a case of personal ambition. He's fulfilled his ambition. I think he had hoped that during the second term...

Q: Question mark.

DAVIES: Question mark. He had hoped that during the second term he might become Secretary, because after all Henry did it. He hoped that he might become Secretary of State. But I don't know, I really find it difficult to envisage a second Carter term. But even if there were one, I wonder whether...it just doesn't seem to be in the cards somehow. He hasn't got that stature that Henry had developed. Certainly he knows more than the Georgia boys about foreign affairs, but you can't say he's been a great success there, if you look at the whole thing - the policy towards Afghanistan, the grain embargo, all these things are rather equivocal.

Q: Would the Polish people have any particular interest in Secretary of State Muskie because of his Polish origins?

DAVIES: Oh, they are well aware that he is a Polish-American and are proud of him and the fact that he is a Polish-American.

Q: Does he speak Polish or not?

DAVIES: Not so far as I know. I think he knows a few words. His father came from a village near Warsaw, and he's been back there. He was there before I got there. He made a short visit to the ancestral village. They know about him, and they are pleased that he is there, and of course his policy line is much more compatible with the thinking of the Government than Brzezinski's.

Q: They may feel somewhat more comfortable.

DAVIES: They feel somewhat more comfortable with him. But here again I can't see... He'll be there, I don't know... He won't be there unless there is a second Carter term, in

which case I am sure he'll want to stay as Secretary. But I don't have any feeling that he is really going to get his teeth into that job.

Q: He is like a relief pitcher in the World Series.

DAVIES: Yes, yes, what they call a short man, that is somebody who comes in to get one guy out, or something like that. (hearty laughter) Well, anyway...

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Q: Good evening, Mr. Ambassador. We've had a lapse of considerable time, partly due to your being extremely busy with a number of things, one of which has been the Polish crisis.

It came to my mind - I've heard off and on during my life that people of experience in the Foreign Service once they left there wasn't much use of their expertise and in-depth experience in various areas, and I've heard of certain specific illustrations. I was wondering what your opinion was with specific regard to Poland, whether your recent and lengthy experience in that communist land, with some of the same personalities involved has been utilized by the Government. I know that the media and other people have been immensely interested in your opinions.

DAVIES: Yes, well, I can say exactly to what extent the Government has called on me towards the end of August.

The crisis, so to speak, developed in August - around the 12th or 13th - and towards the end of August the people in the State Department asked me to come in to attend an interagency meeting on Poland. Actually it was called for one Saturday morning - to give them the history of the Department's reaction to the December 1970 crisis in Poland - I was then Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Department - and to give them some background and history on the June 1976 strikes demonstrations in Poland when I was Ambassador there.

That was all they wanted to hear from me. They sort of said, well, can you give us this background? But I did volunteer my opinion, particularly at that point, on what they should say, because actually there was no action required. It was primarily a question of what press line the United States Government should take. And I advised that they simply say that this was a matter to be settled between the Polish workers and the Polish Government without outside interference, in the hope that adding "without outside interference" would show that we didn't intend to interfere and would also somehow inhibit a little bit Soviet interference, although one could hardly have any real hopes that a mere statement would have that effect.

So that was the extent of my involvement at the beginning.

Then in the intelligence community there was a meeting at which people with some expertise - academic or practical experience with regard to or in Poland - were called

together and asked to make an assessment of the situation. That took place early in October. And those have been the only two occasions on which I have been asked to participate.

I should add that the State Department has an institution called the Open Forum. It's run by some of the younger officers, and they invite people in from nearly all walks of life - journalists, former diplomats, businessmen, academics, anybody who has something to contribute to foreign policy, particularly viewpoints that might not otherwise obtain full expression within the Department.

Q: Would this be an across-the-board subject matter or a specific agenda?

DAVIES: They invite a specific person to come and speak on a subject of which he or she is knowledgeable.

They asked me to come along - that was in September, in the middle of September. I had just published an article in the Washington Post, recommending that we not grant the Polish Government the 670 million dollars in Commodity Credit Corporation credit guarantees for which they had asked until we had a better idea of what they were going to do. I think it was that (article) that stimulated them to ask me to come in.

So I went in, and there was quite a large audience. Unfortunately the principal people with action responsibility for Poland were not there, and that didn't surprise me because it had already become apparent that we were not thinking along the same lines, and I think they didn't want to be involved.

But there were some people from the economic side of the Department who are involved in these matters, and a lot of other people - not from the Bureau of European Affairs, but from other Bureaus and other agencies of the Government - and we had a very lively meeting.

The idea that we might use our economic leverage in an effort to affect the direction in which the Polish communist regime moved initially aroused a great deal of opposition. It seemed to be something that people were not prepared to think about. But I heard later that as a result of the meeting some study groups were set up, and some effort was being made to approach some of these problems. One point that I made in particular was that we really had to get together with the West German Government - which is the largest single creditor of the Polish Government, and is economically the most active government in that part of the world - and we should talk with the West Germans and see if we could establish some common point of view. I knew that it would be very difficult to do that because Chancellor (Helmut) Schmidt and his Government are wedded to detente for lots of very good reasons. They have gotten lots of people out of the Soviet Union and of Poland - lots of people with the claim of German citizenship or who are relatives of German citizens - and this is a very substantial thing for them. In addition to that they are obtaining some substantial proportion of their fuel requirements - natural gas - from the Soviet Union and they have hopes to get more, so they have quite important human interests - and I think that those are by far the more important - and economic interests in that part of the world, in addition to the natural

interest that they've got as the largest Western European state and the one closest to Eastern Europe in stability and peace in Europe.

So I knew that this would be a problem - a stumbling block so to speak - in any effort by the Western powers to forge a common point of view even let alone policy. I wasn't even talking about policy. I urged strongly that we start talking with the West Germans. They said, well, of course we <u>are</u> talking.

Yes, we were talking, and presumably have been ever since this began, but it's been much more a question of exchange of points of view and of exchange of information on what's been going on in Poland, rather than any effort to work towards some common view of what we are going to do in the future, or even immediately.

Q: Can you do that effectively at certain levels, when two chiefs of state are not very fond of each other?

DAVIES: It wouldn't be easy. The other thing I felt strongly about was the desirability of taking this whole problem into the North Atlantic Council, and there again I knew that there would be strong objections from some of the Western Europeans - from the Germans, from the French, and probably the Dutch and Belgians as well would be worried about having a full blown discussion of Poland and the way the Alliance looked at what was happening there - and it would be very difficult to do.

But I said, what is the North Atlantic Alliance for, if it's not precisely to discuss something of this sort which, while we certainly hope it will not produce a threat to the peace of Europe, is fully capable potentially of producing such a threat. After all, the Second World War did begin if not in, at least over, Poland so to speak, and this is a very sensitive area, when one contemplates the possibility of large numbers of troops moving around.

Well, there was a lot of resistance to this approach, I think. I could only judge from the response I got in the Open Forum. The higher ranking and more responsible Department officers were the least interested in following that sort of logic.

I did feel that it wasn't a question of anybody taking my advice, but they could have paid a little more...they could at least have solicited it a little more actively.

I wrote to the Secretary of State shortly after the whole thing began - that was before I was asked to come in even - telling him that for a long time I had objected, and indeed I had raised an objection in the last telegram I sent from Warsaw - a sort of retrospective, to our continuing to grant credits to this Government which was so reckless and so irresponsible in its use of credits, and had become so dependent on credits, was living on credits, the whole country was living on credits, without any apparent thought being given to the morrow, so to speak.

So I wrote to the Secretary, and made roughly the same recommendations that I later made in the Open Forum meeting, and I never received a reply.

Q: The Secretary at the time of your letter was (Edmund S.) Muskie?

DAVIES: Yes, I wrote to Secretary Muskie, and I enclosed with that letter a much longer letter I had written to the President of the Polish-American Congress, the principal umbrella organization in this country of the Polish-American organizations, there are 50 or 60 of them that belong to this umbrella organization. They had presented a memorandum to the State Department - I think that was on August 25th - recommending what they called a Marshall Plan for Poland. The memorandum it seemed to me was not as tightly drafted - that's the way we used to put it - as it might have been.

This memorandum recommended a Marshall Plan for Poland provided - and they did make this proviso - that the Warsaw Government undertook serious systemic reform. But somehow that proviso got buried later. They got to talking about all the things we should do.

I wrote to Al Mazewski - whom I know well and with whom I've had many good exchanges - and said I completely agreed with the point of view expressed in the first part of the memorandum, that we should help provided these reforms were undertaken, provided we were assured that they were being undertaken. Then I expressed again my feeling that we had to be careful because three times in the postwar era there had been similar upheavals, not so serious as this one perhaps, but there had been similar upheavals, and promises had been made but in each of those three instances nothing had come of those promises. Consequently we should in effect try to be sure that this time the regime was going to do something before we rushed in and took the pressure off them to a certain extent by giving them additional credits.

Al Mazewski called me back after he got the letter and said he agreed that it was a very useful thing. I sent a copy of that letter to Secretary Muskie, and again I never received any response. I later sent a copy of this correspondence to Ambassador Roz (Rozanne L.) Ridgway, the Counselor of the Department, who at one point for reasons that aren't clear to me was put in charge of the Polish crisis, I guess because everybody else was on leave, and then she went on leave herself in the middle of the whole thing, too, so there was nobody there handling it, which did seem rather peculiar to me. And she never responded.

Here again, I didn't expect them to write back and say gee, you are so right, we accept everything you say, but at least they could have said we've gotten your letter and we are studying it...

Q: That's more normal, isn't it?

DAVIES: Well, one would think so. I've always tried to at least telephone or respond in some fashion. But no, nothing like that.

I sent copies of this correspondence to the Secretary of Agriculture. He did write a letter without giving me any real satisfaction - and I didn't expect him to - but he said we received your letter and we are studying it.

And I sent them up on the Hill, and again got answers from a number of Senators and Congressmen who were involved, but not from the Department, which did make me feel a little...

I should add one other thing. In addition to everything else of course our Ambassador - my successor - left Warsaw in the middle of September, in the middle of all this, because he had a job offer in New York which he felt he could not afford to refuse.

Q: Who was that?

DAVIES: Bill (William) Schaufele.

Q: A career Foreign Service officer, yes.

DAVIES: That's right. I was really quite disappointed, but although the Administration urged him to stay - "You know, this whole thing is unfolding right now, so please don't leave us in the lurch" - he felt he had to pick up this job offer. I can understand that, but...

Q: Was it commercial?

DAVIES: No, he became the president of whatever of the Foreign Policy Association.

Q: Oh, I see, semiassociated.

DAVIES: Yes. It's a very good job, and I understand that, but there was a bit of a crisis there.

Q: Yes.

DAVIES: And he kind of walked out right in the middle of it.

As a result of that they moved quickly to get another person, to send somebody else there. Here again nobody consulted me, although I called and gave my opinion that there were three men, I felt, who would be ideal - I mean one of whom would be ideal for the job - each of whom had had at least two tours of duty in Warsaw, spoke Polish perfectly, and knew all the sources.

Unfortunately they didn't feel they could do that, because none of these three chaps had served as an ambassador before, so they took our then Ambassador in Prague, Frank (Francis J.) Meehan - whom I also know very well - and moved him up to Warsaw,

although he knows no Polish, and it will take him I am sure from six months to a year to find out, particularly under these chaotic circumstances, whom he can talk with, and to develop some good sources. I was disappointed in that.

Q: So he hadn't met General Moczar nor Olczewski?

DAVIES: No, this was a totally new ball game to him, whereas the three people I mentioned - they are all senior officers - are thoroughly qualified. They could have walked in, gotten off the plane, and within a day have been operating on all eight cylinders because they have contacts, and the contacts would be coming to them, they would not have to seek them out.

Q: The selection and decision had been made on the seventh floor?

DAVIES: It was made, I think, primarily on the basis of the close friendship between the Director General and Frank Meehan.

Q: I see.

DAVIES: They had served together in Moscow and were friends, and that is as good a basis as any, but my point was, holy smokes, here you've got a crisis, you've got one hand tied behind your back if you don't know the language, you've got both hands tied behind your back if you don't know people, and it will take at least six months before people begin to trust you. And the three people I named - one of whom had been my DCM, John R. Davis (Jr.), who is now Consul General in Sydney, Jack (John D.) Scanlan, who is DCM in Belgrade right now, and was a political counselor there and had served I think either two or three tours there, spoke beautiful Polish, and Leonard (J.) Baldyga, who is an outstanding Polish-American who works for USIA in international communications, and he has served two tours there - any one of these fellows would have been outstanding. But the feeling was that they had to have somebody who was already an ambassador, to show that they were giving appropriate attention to this critical situation.

Well, I argued, "Look, you can show that you are giving appropriate attention by sending there a man who knows the language and who knows the people."

One of the outstanding things about this crisis has been the number of Poles who have been coming here to the United States during it, and very outstanding, I mean official and unofficial, Poles who are - many of them - actors in the drama, and they have been traveling back and forth, explaining their points of view and trying to make contacts in the Government and outside it. I've seen a number of these people, and they would all ask me, who is this man Meehan?

They were in effect asking me, do you recommend him? Is he somebody who will understand?

And of course I would say he is a good man, and I think he will understand. They don't know, but it's going to take some time.

So I thought that was unfortunate.

I of course recognize that the whole thing happened during the vacation period, and people were off on leave during that time. George Vest, for example, Roz Ridgway, the Secretary, David Newsom...

Q: But the British Foreign Service, the French Foreign Service, the West German or even the Russian - would they have a different approach of using old expertise? I mean of course there are allowances for political changes, but don't they use...

DAVIES: I think they would, yes. Certainly the Soviets would, and I am pretty sure the British would too. I really don't know enough about it. The Germans...yes, I think they would. They would actually call people in and...

Well, of course too many cooks do spoil the broth, and they've got the operating responsibility, but I don't think it would have hurt them to...

The upshot was, as I said, that little article for the Washington Post, in frustration. I didn't really want to publish that, but when I couldn't get anybody to pay any attention to me on this, I said, well, I'd better go public with this, to make sure that somebody is paying attention to it, and that did get a little attention, and it did I think affect the view at least of the editorial writers of the Washington Post. They subsequently had an editorial which pretty much agreed with what I'd said, and some other papers also picked up that line.

Q: Now what about your larger piece in the Washington Star's Sunday comment section? That's a rather lengthy piece for the layman, which of course I was.

What was the main thrust of that? I mean I read it, but I didn't have enough of a grasp to...

DAVIES: Well, it is of course a controversial thesis. In fact now Steve Rosenfeld in the Washington Post has written a column this morning in which while he doesn't mention that piece obviously he is taking issue with it.

But the thesis of the piece is very simple - that insecurity in Europe does not result from the existence of the two Alliances confronting each other - although of course there is always some danger there - but rather from the fact that in these Eastern European countries you have populations - there are 90 million people all told - people who have never accepted the form of government to which they are subjected, who resent increasingly the sort of second-rate citizenship and low standards of living to which they are condemned by that form of government and economy, and who increasingly are going to be expressing this restiveness. That's the real danger in Europe, and it's a danger with which we have I think not grappled really adequately enough, because after the first few years following the war,

when the Marshall Plan was established and NATO was set up, for the first time in our history we committed ourselves in peacetime to involvement in Europe, and then we kind of rested on our oars, and business began again pretty much as usual. That's really what I think detente is.

The Germans have become very heavily involved, people talk about the Finlandization of Western Europe as something to be feared in the future. Well, it's not Finlandization, but it's this... I would call it business or politics as usual, in which, and as a result of which, the Western European countries have developed vested interests in maintaining the status quo, so that when something happens - such as has happened this summer in Poland, since the beginning of August - there is a great deal of concern, and the concern tends to be directed against the Polish workers and as The Economist I think put it somewhere in one of their editorials, the reaction in Western Europe is one of raised eyebrows and people saying oh dear, oh dear, why are they being so restive.

The people, the Polish workers are trying to win some democratic freedoms and rights, and everybody is sort of saying that they are threatening to upset the apple cart, so that you then get warnings, for example by Secretary Muskie, who said, well, you mustn't go too far, you Polish workers.

These people are putting their lives on the line really - not only the workers themselves, but the entire nation in a sense - and people in the West then begin to be very upset and to warn them, stop doing what you are doing because you are disturbing things for us.

The point I tried to make in the article was that we really have to begin to grapple with this issue, because it's not going to go away. You can't expect Poles and Czechoslovaks, Hungarians and East Germans to accept indefinitely the status of - call it what you will - captive nations, people whose destinies are going to be determined by the Soviet leadership. It's not that any of these people are interested in challenging Moscow or breaking out of the Warsaw Pact, but what they are saying is why can't we organize things inside our own countries in such a fashion that we can have not everything - we understand we are not going to have everything they have in the West - but a little more, we ought to have a little more of what they've got in the West. We are working, we are working hard, and we are not seeing an adequate result, we are not seeing an adequate return for our labor.

And when they don't see an adequate return on their labor, then of course they stop working hard, productivity drops, and that then becomes a contributing factor, although by no means the main one, which produces this kind of situation.

What is more, during the next 10 to 20 years the economic situation in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union is going to get progressively worse, they are beginning to run into a lot of the same kinds of problems that we have run into and Western Europe has run into, but they have much less in the way of resources with which to meet those problems. So inevitably they are going to be turning to us, as they have already, for credits, for joint ventures, for cooperation, even for economic assistance, and if we are to participate in this kind of game,

we really have to think about the terms under which we are going to participate, and not just keep pouring billions of dollars in there, which take the pressure off these governments, relieve them of the necessity of making the kind of fundamental reforms that they should make, and could make without endangering their system in its main outlines, and at the same time permit the Soviet Union to indulge in this fantastic military buildup.

Q: Is it valid to say that the Soviet Union hopes with some covert pressure and so forth to have the Poles solve this problem, or is that just a deception that a Western newspaper reader might read? I mean is the Soviet Union being restrained, or are they being the opposite of restrained?

DAVIES: I think it all depends on what we expect them to do. Secretary Muskie said at one point that they were being restrained. Of course the implication of that is that they don't have to put up with this, and the implication of that in turn is that despite the fact we treat these states - these Eastern European states - as though they are sovereign states, we ourselves accept the qualification of the Brezhnev Doctrine.

Now we really ought to straighten our own thinking on this. If we accept the Brezhnev Doctrine, and we recognize that these are not sovereign states, then I think we should do so overtly, and make suitable adjustments, including - I think the principal adjustment we would have to make would be that we would have to say, well, look, if you people don't count in the international arena as fully sovereign states, then you cannot do things which sovereign states do, among others for example borrow abroad this way, and we'll have to do all our financial transactions with Moscow.

Of course that would infuriate them.

But these are the kinds of...

Q: In other words we are paying quite a few of Brezhnev's bills.

DAVIES: Exactly, exactly - 54 billion dollars in ten years have been poured in there, and the point has been made - I think I quoted a young professor from the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, who said, "We have been operating a gigantic aid program for the benefit of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe which enables them to have guns and butter.

Now they might want to have the guns anyway - insist on having the guns - but then they wouldn't be able to have the butter, and we've been providing the wherewithal for them to have the butter, and kind of keep their populations more or less satisfied, although, as became apparent this summer, we are running out of that ability to keep people quiet and happy, more or less.

But why should we be providing the money which enables them to indulge in this kind of military buildup, which then compels us to go into a comparable military buildup - as we are about to do?

I mean the Western taxpayer kind of gets it from both sides. On the one hand his interest rates are affected by the fact that you've got a lot of very shaky debts over there right now, and on the other hand his tax rate is unfavorably affected by the fact that he is going to have to pay for more armaments.

So somewhere in here there's something the matter, and I'd like to see our thinking on this begin to be straightened out.

Now I think the new Administration has some inklings again - I mean some of the things they've said are right on the score, but my fear is...well...my...

Yes, my fear is that here again we are going to find it very difficult to buck the Western Europeans on this.

Mr. Schmidt was the first man out of the box. He got over here, he snuck in, saw the President-elect. It was supposed to be...

He is a very smooth operator, and he got him to say some things, and then he went back and announced in Parliament that the President-elect had said these things, they agreed with each other on arms control and so forth. Now I am all for arms control in theory, but this is one of the techniques that the Soviets use to make us...to give us an interest in detente.

You see the kind of grip this technique has when you consider that President Carter was saying right up to the end that we've got to get SALT II ratified, just as though nothing else made any difference. SALT II is important all right, but there are a lot of other important things that perhaps one ought to pay attention to before one concentrates on SALT II.

So I hope the new Administration will be able to...

I don't know, I am a little concerned because it seems as though General Al (Alexander) Haig, although a very competent guy, is not likely to see some of these things. He is very close to Schmidt.

I believe we need to begin to differentiate our policy from that of our allies. If we can't lead them in a different direction, at least we ought to make it clear that we don't think this is adequate.

Q: Would he be constricted in his thinking by his military cast of thought and his recent experiences at NATO, or would he be open to more ideas? Is he opaque to new ideas?

DAVIES: No, I don't think he is opaque to new ideas. I don't really know the man well enough, I've spoken to him on the phone a few times when he was one of Henry Kissinger's assistants, and he is a very competent and able man; he is a politician, he is not a general, and of course that's the complaint.

Q: You don't go from colonel to four star general by marching.

DAVIES: That's right, you don't in a matter of four or five years, you know, so he is generally hated over in the Pentagon because he's hopped over the heads of so many of his colleagues and did it in what they regard as not the right way to do it.

I think by and large he's got a lot of qualifications, but I have two concerns about him. In the first place, he is so closely identified with Henry Kissinger - Henry is a very clever man, but he is the man who really put us into the detente procession, following, as I say in that article, the French and the Germans. They are the ones who led the way in detente. And then there was that famous Year of Europe, 1973, in which Henry said, Oh, oh, we have to...

No, I guess it was before that.

In any case he did not succeed in his effort to slow things down, so the result was, unable to stop them from taking this route, he dashed - or tried to dash - to the head of the column, and these were his followers, so he tried to lead them. In other words we went down the detente route just as quickly and thoroughly as the West Europeans, but I don't think it has worked out well for us.

Q: If General Haig were Secretary of State he might run a more disciplined ship at State, and he might... I mean if there was a grievous leak five people might be fired if he could pin it on them, which hasn't happened before, but would he be the powerhouse as Secretary of State and lambast the national security adviser, or would there be the same old tilt again?

DAVIES: Well, I would hope he'd lambast the national security adviser. He has been there, he knows what the problems are.

I don't think there'll be the problem with Dr. Richard Allen that there was with Henry. Well, one can't tell, of course.

Q: But you begin to puff up once you are over there.

DAVIES: Well, that's true, but I think Al Haig could certainly keep him in line. He knows Dick, they know each other, and I am pretty sure he could keep him in line. He is a pretty effective man that way. I think he'd be good from that point of view.

I hope that now we are going to begin...

We've got to start building down the NSC - I don't care - either that or move it over into the State Department, or move the State Department somewhere else, but there ought to be one department which is responsible.

It was reduced to its lowest common denominator during the past Administration, and it was just awful I think.

Q: Before we got on to other things, one other question. Of course every ambassador resigns.

DAVIES: Yes.

Q: I mean 107 or 121, or whatever it is, resignations come in.

DAVIES: Right. That's par for the course.

Q: But is the recent development of a transition team or the Administration coming in undermining certain people in difficult situations such as Ambassador (Robert E.) White in Brazil or El Salvador and so forth? Is that unique or has that happened before in a very unfortunate situation, and a person who has spent his career in the Foreign Service respect for them coming out and saying look, damn it, it stinks, this way of doing things.

DAVIES: Yes, I've got a lot of respect for them. I know neither of them. I've never met, so far as I am aware, either one of those guys. I did follow up closely until last February the traffic from those two posts, because we were supposed to be looking at critical situations, particularly in light of what had happened in Nicaragua and what was going on in El Salvador and Honduras. That became of great interest.

And I came to admire both of them very much. I think they are absolutely right in their approach. You know, with regard to Nicaragua you can say, well, these guys are nothing but a bunch of Castroites, and we'd better fight them tooth and claw. Or you can take the line that (Lawrence) Peccullo has taken, which I think is right - we've got a chance, let's hang in here, until the game is totally lost we've got a chance and let's not throw it away. I think he's maneuvered very, very well down there in a very difficult situation.

White again...

These guys are people of character, and in great contrast to some of the people we had in the Latin American countries in the Foreign Service in past years, and apparently this one individual - Giannini or something like that - went down there, whether he was authorized to or not, and was throwing his weight around quite a bit, calling their authority into question, predicting that they were going to be fired, which of course is quite possible, not to say probable, but in the meanwhile they are the ambassadors.

I think White was absolutely right: people's lives <u>are</u> at stake, thousands have been killed there already.

I very much admire these two guys, no matter what happens to them. I think they did the right thing.

The transition team - that's really a new development.

Q: Of course that's way down below President-elect Reagan.

DAVIES: That's right.

Q: But a lot of problems can be caused by a troublemaker.

DAVIES: Sure. You know there is one person - or in some cases more than one person - assigned to each bureau in the State Department.

Q: That many?

DAVIES: Yes. I mean that's a lot of people.

Q: Is that new?

DAVIES: That's new.

Q: They've never had that many?

DAVIES: Oh, no, that's never happened before. What's happened before is that the Secretary-designate - where one had been selected before the inauguration, and it has been customary to designate somebody before the inauguration - has moved in with some assistance and started to prepare, that kind of thing, but you never had a team. Bob (Robert G.) Neumann - Ambassador Neumann - has I don't know how many people down there, 20 or 30, and they are crawling all over the Department.

The same thing is happening in every other Government agency. It's not at all clear to me on what basis these people were selected. They are a very disparate group of people, they seem to be united by no philosophy or policy bonds, they are all applying their own ideologies or preconceptions.

Q: But they can wreak havoc and do some good.

DAVIES: They <u>can</u> wreak havoc, that's right.

They are drawing up reports, and it's not at all clear what effect these reports are going to have, and as some of the people who were named to the Cabinet yesterday said at their press conference, "Well, I'll get the guys' report. I'll get the report of the transition team, and when I have a chance to study it I'll see whether there is anything there that I want to act on or not.

Q: The great danger there is that some of the new people, well intentioned as they may be, have no depth in the past, so this is the Bible that they get so to speak.

DAVIES: Well, I think... The impression I have - and I don't know, because I am not that close to the process - from having heard people in the State Department and in various other places, like the International Communication Agency and some other smaller agencies, Foreign Affairs agencies as well as some people in the C.I.A., they've been saying, look, you know, these reports are going to be very uneven, they will, as you have indicated, be very dependent on the ability, the knowledge and the background of the members of the transition team, which is very uneven, so there may be some good things in there and there may not.

Fortunately, most of the people at least whose names were announced yesterday are - even though some of them have not had any previous experience in the Government - pretty shrewd managers, and they are people with considerable experience. Casper Weinberger is outstanding. He was my candidate for Secretary of State and I am sorry he didn't make it; although he has no background in foreign affairs I think he'd be outstanding in that job, he is a very intelligent guy.

But Bill (William) Casey has got a long history, going back to Wild Bill Donovan. He is a shrewd old bird. And Drew Lewis is very capable. Dick Schweiker tends to be a little naive in some ways, but he's also had a lot of experience, at least on the legislative side.

So I don't think any of them is just going to take this report and regard it as a Bible. I'd be surprised if they did. Bob Neumann is a very capable man, an excellent...

Q: He's been Ambassador in Afghanistan.

DAVIES: Yes, Afghanistan and Morocco.

Q: And he retired from the Foreign Service?

DAVIES: No, he is not a career officer. He was appointed by...let me think.

Unless I am mistaken, he was there when I arrived.

Yes, he had been appointed by Lyndon Johnson. I was trying to think...

He was a Democrat, his wife a Republican - I believe that's right, but maybe it was vice versa - quite active in California politics. That's right, he was appointed by Lyndon Johnson, and then when Nixon came in, his wife having been active in Republican politics he kept right on. And he was in Afghanistan for a long time, six or seven years.

Q: Really?

DAVIES: Oh, yes, a long time. It must have been from 1966 or 1967, I really don't know, and he was there for quite a long time, then he went to Morocco, and then he was not reappointed of course by the Carter Administration, so he was out.

Q: Was he a youngish man?

DAVIES: I would say he is now in his early '60s.

Q: But he sort of staged a comeback from some obscurity to...

DAVIES: No, he then went over to this Center for International Strategic Studies at Georgetown. Yes, I suppose he has staged some comeback. David Abshire is the director there, and Dave Abshire became the head of the entire transition team.

Q: He was in the Department.

DAVIES: Oh, yes, Dave Abshire was in the Department. I think Dave Abshire was made the head of... I am not sure whether it was all the transition teams or just the foreign affairs transition team, but I think it's the whole thing. So naturally he picked Bob Neumann who was one of his deputies there, CSIS, to run the State Department transition team.

Q: He is not a Rasputin or anything.

DAVIES: Oh, no, no, he is a very shrewd guy... He is an angler if you like, but he did a very good job in Afghanistan from all accounts. I visited there briefly while he was Ambassador. He did a good job there, and he did a good job in Morocco, he is highly spoken of by the officers who work for him, he is not your average run-of-the-mill political appointee by any means. He was professor of political science at Berkeley, I think, or somewhere in a big California university, when he was appointed. He is a Viennese originally, I guess a refugee from Vienna, but a very bright man.

Q: Like Martin Herz.

DAVIES: Like Martin Herz, yes.

Q: That's a weird field of specialists in prognosis and we did want to do some reminiscing on some of the things that you remember as your contributions.

DAVIES: Well, I mentioned the effort to obtain new status for RADIO FREE EUROPE and RADIO LIBERTY, and I was very pleased to have been involved in that.

I think the other two things, as I look back now, that I really sort of felt I had accomplished -

One was - I don't think I did describe this, and it's not worth describing - I sort of got the commissary in Kabul, which was in a lot of trouble, back on its feet. That was a very complicated business, because we were 9000 miles away from the supplier, we were bankrupt, the supplier was demanding the money from the Department, and we fixed everything up.

But the other thing was getting a new school in Warsaw.

Q: An international school?

DAVIES: Well, an American school. We had to set up an American school there shortly after the Embassy was established, and we established it.

Q: And could others go to it?

DAVIES: Yes, there were - oh I don't know - 15 or 20 nationalities represented there. The French of course as usual always have their own school, the Russians have their own school, and most of the Eastern Europeans with the exception of the Yugoslavs went to the Russian school. The Yugoslavs came to our school.

Q: Really?

DAVIES: Oh, sure. And I guess the Germans had their own school. The Germans, the Austrians and the Swiss, you know. But everybody else - the British and the Commonwealth people, and we had some Germans, Scandinavians, Dutch, Belgians, Latinos, about 15 or 20 different (nationalities). About half the kids were Americans and the rest were foreign.

The school was located in a building that had been condemned many years ago, and for years we'd been trying to get a new building, an extremely difficult thing in those countries, where you can't buy property, and everything is in the hands of the Government, in this case the City of Warsaw.

Finally my predecessor Walter Stoessel had gotten a commitment from the Polish Government that they would make available a new building for a school.

Q: On a rental basis?

DAVIES: Yes, on a rental basis, by the end of 1972. And they made this commitment during the Nixon visit in the summer of 1972. That was one of the results of the Nixon visit.

Walter Stoessel then left shortly after the Nixon visit, and when I arrived at the end of 1972 that was one of the first things that confronted me. Of course they had still not offered anything, so when I made my first call on the Mayor - the President of the City of Warsaw they call him - I raised this question, and the President said well, it was very difficult, very

difficult, because as I knew they were short of school buildings themselves, which was perfectly true. They were running two full school sessions a day. The kids would go from 8 till 12, and then from 12 until 4, or something like that. The schools were...

He said, "It would be very difficult to explain to the people in Warsaw why we are making a building available to foreigners."

I said that well, that was really his problem, but he had obligated himself to do this, and we had this unfulfilled commitment which we wanted to have fulfilled. He didn't deny that it was a commitment, and he said well, yes, he would see what could be done.

And of course, as is typical - or can be typical - in those countries, this then became a perennial question. Nothing happened. I think the administrative officers in the Embassy and the members of the school board were shown a couple of completely inadequate buildings, but a year went by and nothing had happened.

In the meanwhile, as I think I mentioned earlier, at the instance of Secretary (of the Treasury) Simon we were negotiating an end to the large number of surplus local currency - zlotys - that we had, and in the course of this negotiation I insisted that it be put into the agreement a provision that they would make available to us a school building, because we hadn't been able to get anywhere with the Mayor on this.

That was finally put into the letters that were exchanged, making the agreement ending the PL-480 zloty surplus fund.

The letters were exchanged during Gierek's visit here in October 1974.

That was fine. It was in the letters exchanged - there was a letter signed by the Polish Minister of Finance, and I forget who signed on our side - and still nothing happened.

Finally the only leverage we had left was...

Well, when President Ford was coming there in the summer, July, 1975, the Deputy Foreign Minister asked me what items we intended to raise.

Q: Was that Romuald Spasowski?

DAVIES: Yes, Spasowski. There were a number of items, but I said we'd raise (the one of) the school building.

Well, he was horrified and he said, "You mean the President, President Ford, is going to...?"

I said, "Sure, and I'll recommend that he raise it, because it's now been three years, and we haven't been able to get anywhere with this."

And he said, "Oh, Mr. Ambassador, you must be joking."

I said, "I am not joking. Why would I joke? This is a serious matter to us. We are completely at your mercy. If I could go out and buy property and build my own building, that would be one thing, but we can't do that here, you won't permit us to buy property, you won't permit us to build our own building. We would have solved this long ago if that had been possible."

Well, he was quite disturbed by this, because obviously he didn't want Mr. Gierek to be annoyed with this.

And we did get it after all finally, then. Shortly after that I was told, and I believed it, that at the weekly Cabinet meeting the Prime Minister had been apprized of our intention to raise this, and had given orders that the City build a school building for us, and then by golly things did begin to move.

That was the summer of 1975, and it took a year and a half, but we were able to move in by the beginning of 1977. They built a very nice building, a standard Polish school building.

Q: But that makes it a permanent institution, doesn't it?

DAVIES: Oh, yes. Well, the school was a permanent institution, but it was in these completely impossible, cramped quarters in a four storey building which was literally tumbling down around the kids, was dangerous, they had no playground, it was on a crowded street, there were several accidents, kids were hit by cars, it was in a narrow little street, and you had all these diplomatic cars there trying to pick kids up after school and take them to school in the morning, and it was very bad.

As a result of this we got a very nice building on a relatively secluded and quiet side street in the country a little distance out, with a nice, big playground, and a gymnasium which of course we hadn't had before, small but adequate.

So that was really a source of great satisfaction.

Q: Did you find... I found that there was sort of a circular movement between international school headmasters. Or did you find a person who spoke Polish, or a Polish-American...

DAVIES: No, there was a deal between... We had a deal with the school system of Springfield, Massachusetts.

Q: Oh.

DAVIES: How that arose I never was able to completely determine, but at some point in the past somehow we'd gotten in touch with the school system there, and they recommended

teachers and headmaster. And you know, it's a very chancy thing. We had one headmaster while I was there who was really not much good who came from the Springfield school system. The man who replaced him was excellent, outstanding. And we had good teachers, some of them from Springfield, some of them recruited separately in the States or in Britain. Jobs at that school were regarded by British school teachers as real plums because they paid something like three times what they got in the British school system, plus all kinds of perks - they got apartments, you know.

Q: And this was right up to the high school level, wasn't it?

DAVIES: No, up to the end of grammar school. Only to the end of grammar school. We couldn't carry it beyond that because we didn't have enough kids to carry it beyond that. Every year there were three or four or five kids, but... Some of them had special tutoring or took the Calvert system, but most kids then were sent back to their schools.

Q: One irony of international schools seems to me to be about that period earlier, when it was so hard to get into American colleges, you know, when American universities were (saying) if you want to go to Harvard you'd better not come from Boston and so forth, but...

DAVIES: Yes, that was a big advantage.

Q: If you went to a Mozambique high school they'd say we haven't got anyone from there...

DAVIES: Right, right. (laughs heartily) Gives us some new geographic area that we can claim we've got somebody from! Yes. Our kids benefitted from that, yes. Ha, there's no doubt about it. (laughs) We had kids who had gone to school in Calcutta - our boys - and that was regarded as quite an acceptable venue for a pupil of an American prep school. And the same with Warsaw. Our youngest boy went to the school in Warsaw, came back and went to school up in Connecticut, and he was exotic when he first arrived in Connecticut.

Q: And it's not phoney, because we do appreciate people with other experiences.

DAVIES: Oh, yes.

Q: So that sort of makes up for the constant shifting as opposed to somebody who went for eight years to one school.

DAVIES: Yes.

Q: They had those benefits.

DAVIES: Yes. Well, it can be a good thing for kids, and it could be very difficult for kids.

Q: What is your opinion of the caliber of people applying for Foreign Service today and for Government (service)? They're just as good or maybe even better than they ever were, aren't they? What is your opinion on that?

DAVIES: Well...

Q: They have different attitudes.

DAVIES: They have a different attitude, and I don't think they are just as good as they were. My impression is that they are not as well prepared.

Q: Really?

DAVIES: Yes, and that I think is particularly evident in two areas: their ability to write English, and their knowledge of foreign languages. Increasingly the younger people in the Foreign Service are not illiterate, but they do not write well, they don't know English as well as they should, and they have difficulty expressing themselves as well as they should. And this is not just my own perception, but it's recognized. In the Foreign Service for example they are now even teaching courses in composition, and I think this is ridiculous, 30 years ago you couldn't get into the Foreign Service (if you didn't know how to write). You had to write several lengthy essay questions in the exam, and if they didn't come out well you were sunk.

The other thing is foreign languages, and that's not the fault of the applicants except very indirectly. It's the fault of our school system. We simply neglected or stopped teaching foreign languages, so that you can no longer demand of an applicant that he pass or she pass a language exam, and we don't any longer. We let people come in without having qualified, and then they have to qualify after they are in.

Q: Which takes up a year or two.

DAVIES: Yes, and inevitably the standards are no longer so high. It just seems absolutely wrong to me that we shouldn't require people to come in offering one language. At least you know then that the individual can learn a language. There are some people who can't learn a foreign language. That's nothing against them, but they shouldn't be in the Foreign Service, they ought to be somewhere else, because while you can get by very well in English in most places, on an official basis, you are never really going to be able to understand the culture unless you are able to do something with the language.

Q: Of course the U.S. Government was spoiled in that period from 1945 on, because there were so many people - naturalized Americans - who were born in other languages, and they are all retired now, so there is a great dearth, isn't there?

DAVIES: Well, there were quite a few, but I think still the great majority of officers who came in were native-born Americans, perhaps some of them from a background where they

learned a language. But my impression is that most of them had acquired a language - at least all the ones I knew in the Eastern European and Soviet side.

I think now of two officers who are of Russian background, two out of I would say 60 or 70. All the rest were people born in this country, not of an ethnic background that would help, but...

Q: I think you mentioned the name of one whom you recommended...

DAVIES: Yes, Leonard Baldyga. He is a Polish-American...

Q: What about Scanlan?

DAVIES: Scanlan is half Irish and half Scandinavian.

Q: You said his Polish was superb.

DAVIES: Excellent, yes, very good.

Q: But why? How come?

DAVIES: Well, he learns languages well, I guess as a young graduate student he was working on Yugoslavia, and he went to Yugoslavia and spent a year there and learned Serbo-Croatian. He knows Serbo-Croatian, he knows Russian, and right now he is DCM in Belgrade. He knows Russian, he knows Polish, he knows Turkish.

Q: But can you expect half of that competence from the average person accepted in the Foreign Service? He is extraordinary, I mean you don't expect others to match that.

DAVIES: They did a study some years ago on multiple language facility - if you want to call it that - and I forget the exact figure, but 30 or 35 percent of the officers in the Service - this would have been 10 or maybe 15 years ago - had qualified in more than one language.

Q: Really?

DAVIES: Yes, and the level of language competence was really pretty good. They published in fact a list of people who had two or more languages, and they had some with five or six languages. Not many, but some.

Now I think really the problem I've got is that I am afraid that if young people don't start fairly early - and I believe for example that it's awfully useful to start with Latin as a matter of fact in high school - then it becomes a terrible chore, and it's regarded as a chore, that's quite clear. Everybody is... (they say) well, I've got to pass a language qualification.

But they are not really trying to learn the language, they are just trying to pass the qualification, to complete the qualification. Well, some people do very well nevertheless.

Of course what's happened in our school system and in our colleges is that very few colleges now have a language requirement any more. Somehow they are beginning to reintroduce that, but during the heyday, during the 1960s, when the students were determining the curriculum, all the language requirements were dropped, because this required some hard work, memorization, and that kind of thing.

Q: Would you say this decline that you perceive in this language capability carries over to those incidents in Warsaw? I believe it was an interpreter for Carter who...

DAVIES: No, that's just bureaucratic thickheadedness, because I had recommended...

In the first place, there's a big difference between somebody who knows a language and somebody who is able to interpret, particularly that kind of consecutive interpretation. That's a very different kind of skill. I mean you may be able to speak a language bilingually, but you still can't interpret, because that requires a special kind of skill.

There I recommended - I think I discussed this before - that they get a guy who used to work for our Embassy, a Polish citizen in fact, who had emigrated to this country. He is working out in Chicago now, a very able man, the best.

There are two excellent Polish-English/English-Polish interpreters. One of them works for the Polish Government, and this guy used to work for our Embassy in Warsaw. I said, get hold of Alex Wiechowski, he is a Polish citizen, but he is a landed immigrant - he had a green card or whatever, he had immigrated and intended to stay in this country - and bring him along with you.

They said, well, he is not cleared, and this and that and the other thing. But there was no secret, these were going to be conversations with the Poles, and the Poles were going to know what it was. (laughs)

I said, "I vouch for the man, he is the most reliable man, the most discreet man you can possibly want, and what's more he can do the job. We've been betrayed - in the figurative sense - time and time again by these people who represent themselves as being Polish interpreters, because the one who did the job for Nixon in 1972 was terrible."

He had the same problem that this young fellow Steven Seymour had in December of 1977 in Warsaw. His native language was Russian, and so when he tried to speak Polish and he didn't know the Polish word he simply took the Russian word and gave it the Polish pronunciation, and this goes over like a ton of bricks with the Poles, they hate anything of the kind. After all they have a heritage and they are quite proud of it.

So I said get hold of Alex Wiechowski. But Dr. Brzezinski, who was running everything else about the trip down to the minutest detail, didn't seem to realize that this after all was the heart of the whole thing, I think - somebody who can do the interpreting.

At any rate they said no, you can't have Alex Wiechowski, we have this man who is perfectly well qualified, he has passed the test and everything. You know, some bureaucrat who didn't know from nothing.

Q: Yes.

DAVIES: And they sent this poor kid over there and gave him no advance text. If he'd had an advance text and had been able to sit down with a dictionary and translate it, that would have been fine. Anybody could do that - I could do that.

Q: Yes.

DAVIES: But no, he had to stand up there in the bitter, driving sleet and snow on December the 28th, and try to interpret. He had an advance text, but the President paid no attention to it. It was completely extemporaneous.

Q: Was there a series of mistakes, or was there just one glaring one?

DAVIES: No, there was a series of mistakes, but the main thing was that this young fellow, he grew up in the Soviet Union, his mother was Russian, his native language was Russian, his father was Polish, and his father was a working man, so he'd heard this archaic, not literary but very colloquial, dialectical Polish, and he could carry on a conversation perfectly well in it, but it sounded a little out of date, and you know, afterwards the Poles said to me, "How is it that you've got so many Polish-Americans in your country, and out of all those people you couldn't get one?"

It was so embarrassing. And here I protested and sent telegrams back, but no, no, no. Oh, dear.

That really had nothing to do with it. If we had known that the situation was going to arise we would have found an interpreter. It wouldn't have been one of our Americans. If you are going to interpret into a language you've got to have a native speaker of that language, which is why I thought we needed Alex Wiechowski, and we did need him. Unless he is very able, it's very hard for somebody to interpret into a language that is not his native language. It's extremely difficult.

So that was the cause of that, and it was too bad. But of course the Poles took advantage of that in order to get a leg up. They were scared about Brzezinski, and they wanted to sort of get in the first punch, and they did.

Q: Now what about the future of ICA? Should it be the great independent thing that it is - I mean in size - or should it be back into the State Department? I mean what's the most efficient way to carry a message?

DAVIES: Well, I still think - and I know this is utopia - that it should be much more closely associated with the State Department than it is. But whether you can ever get that, get it all back - it's grown a lot now - whether you can get the rest of that camel into the tent is not at all clear to me now. But it should be much more closely associated with the Department than it is.

I thought the kind of relationship that existed in the late 1950s was very good. You had people - in the first place you had George Allen there for a while, you had some Foreign Service officers, either running or at the top of ICA, and you had some high ranking former ICA officers and USIA officers in the State Department. Andy Berding worked in both places, knew what the requirements were, somebody who was very conscious of what you needed to supply to the information agency for the overseas audience, high in the State Department, because Andy Berding always realized that you were talking to two audiences, not just the American audience. Important as that is, demanding as the American media representative always are, the effect of what you said would be very important abroad as well. And of course he was John Foster Dulles' public relations man, and John Foster Dulles was a master at using the media to communicate not only with the domestic audience but abroad as well.

But there is no awareness any longer in the State Department, that this is a legitimate function...

I mean everybody knows...

When people are overseas it's different, but back here in Washington the State Department pays almost no attention to this function, and it's too bad, because it can be very important.

The VOICE OF AMERICA is broadcasting day in and day out, all these media products are being churned out, and I am far from thinking that everything you do has to have a very heavy political message. No, sometimes the best political message is to have no political message. Indeed we've had some media products there - for example a magazine called Dialogue, which unfortunately I am afraid has been killed by the present regime at USICA - an excellent magazine, and people in Warsaw, the intellectuals, used to wait anxiously to get it, it was very high level. They took the best articles from the American press, including the academic journals and belles lettres, reproductions of American art, and it was a very high level product, admittedly an elite product - admittedly. We could have gotten rid of many thousands. I think we only got out about 5000 or 6000 copies a month. We could have doubled or tripled or quadrupled the distribution.

Q: Is the tendency of the new Administration to use VOICE OF AMERICA and the ICA to renew the Cold War and pound on Russia for its behavior in Afghanistan, or to preach American accomplishment?

DAVIES: I don't know what their tendency is going to be. I hope it's not going to be that kind of Cold War message. At the same time, I think we made the point pretty well about American accomplishments. We look at ourselves and say my God, what a mess we are in. Well, it's strictly a question of our being in the middle of the forest, because certainly from so many places abroad, at least from Eastern Europe, this is still the Promised Land, and everybody wants to come here. Maybe Western Europeans don't, but the Western Europeans - at least the bourgeoisie, the middle class and the intellectuals - never wanted to come here anyway. It was only the common people that wanted to come here. (laughs)

So I hope it's not going to be a Cold War message. We can do so much with these instruments, and we should do a lot more. We should really, really think about...

It's political, the whole thing is. These are political instruments, and in order to use them right you have to have a leadership that is prepared to say the things that may have the right kind of political impact, and for years we really haven't...

Now for example, I was down there a couple of days ago, and the word in USICA - I don't know how accurate this is - is that they have two candidates to be director of the agency, Charlton Heston and Shirley Temple.

Q: Really?

DAVIES: Yes. And who are the candidates to head VOA? Paul Harvey and Walter Cronkite, either one. (laughs heartily) I mean, take your pick.

I don't know, but somebody who is presumably in the know said Charlton Heston or Shirley Temple.

Q: Maybe this is the age of the actor.

DAVIES: Well, that is precisely what that individual said - look, Ronald Reagan has a lot of actor friends, and these are jobs...

Q: Well, that's in the genre of Frank Sinatra Ambassador to Italy.

DAVIES: Yes.

Q: It may be overdone a little.

DAVIES: I think so, yes. (laughs heartily) But, you know, it's not that glamorous a job, frankly. I mean these people will come for a year or two and that will be the end of it, they are not that interested.

Q: It's too bad, if you have such an instrument, such an agency that it's a sort of political football year in and year out.

DAVIES: Oh, it's a shame. You really ought to have somebody...

Q: I heard two candidates, Ben Wattenberg and Norman Podhoretz.

DAVIES: Ben Wattenberg is another name that's been mentioned.

Q: At least those are idea people.

DAVIES: Yes. I would really be quite happy with either one of those. Well, both of them would tend to feel that this has got to be a Cold War instrument.

Q: But they would listen.

DAVIES: I think they'd listen, and these are intelligent men who I think realize that you can't...

Q: They wouldn't be so remote.

DAVIES: No, no. Oh, I don't know. Well, we'll see what happens. I hope they come up with some good people.

Q: I don't think Cronkite would take the job.

DAVIES: I would be very surprised.

Q: John Chancellor had it once.

DAVIES: John Chancellor had it once, and I thought he did quite a good job. He was interested, and he really worked hard at it.

I think you do need somebody who has some comprehension that there is an audience - many audiences - out there, many audiences the needs of each one of which are different from those of all the others. There are certain things that you want to say to Italians that are not necessarily the same things that you want to say to Greeks. We don't spend that much time talking to people in Western Europe to begin with, and I think that's probably right, if you have limited resources. You don't need to convert a lot of these people.

Q: Do you think this idea that seems very traditional of every Ambassador automatically submitting his resignation is sort of antediluvian or it's just part of the American system? I mean of course the President can replace anybody, but why shouldn't just the political appointees only submit their resignation?

DAVIES: What happens is that everybody submits his resignation. There are two forms, as you know, Peter.

Q: I didn't know that.

DAVIES: Yes. Career ambassadors submit one form of resignation so it's quite clear that they are not asking to leave. Certainly if the new Administration wants to replace them, fine, but there are two separate forms. It's understood then that the resignations from political appointees will be accepted. The other kind may or may not be. It's kind of old fashioned, but...

Q: How would the British work it? Margaret Thatcher replaces somebody... Everybody doesn't leave.

DAVIES: No, because the Ambassador represents the Queen, so only when the monarch, the sovereign, dies, then you submit your resignation.

Q: But the professional British diplomat would serve Liberals or Conservatives.

DAVIES: Oh, sure.

Q: Isn't that a better system.

DAVIES: Oh, much more sensible, but here of course the President does have the attributes of the Prime Minister and the sovereign wrapped into one. We did create somebody who is half a king, and I think it's fair that everybody should submit his resignation. Then I would hope that they'd replace the politicos, and of course they may want to replace some of the career ambassadors. It's very understandable, why not. But you could take your time doing that, you don't have to rush.

I don't know. Really everything depends, it seems to me, on two people - the President and how he wants to run it, whether he wants this bifurcated system, and the Secretary.

We haven't had a Secretary for so many years who...

I mean Henry Kissinger was sui generis, he didn't really need the Department any more than John Dulles did. And for a long time we haven't had a Secretary who's used this - again, these are instruments, and it isn't easy to bend the bureaucracy to your will, but it can be done if you are strong and persistent and you know what you want. If you don't know what you want, well, you are not going to get it. (laughs)

Q: Your four years will be up.

DAVIES: That's right. Poor Edmund Muskie, he doesn't appear to have made much of a dent. He hasn't been there long, of course.

Q: He probably would have made a dent if he'd been there three years, wouldn't he?

DAVIES: Yes, probably. I wonder what he'll do. That will be interesting.

Q: There are some people out in the cold, Mondale...

DAVIES: Yes.

Q: Good people.

DAVIES: Oh, sure, sure.

Q: Well, why don't we conclude and then we are always open to add anything at any later time.

DAVIES: Very good. I've enjoyed this very much.

Q: Well, we can come back and add to it at any time. How many sessions have we had? I think this is the tenth, isn't it?

DAVIES: I think so, yes. Quite a few.

Q: So actually the equivalent of a book. I think it will be 400 pages or so.

DAVIES: Oh, my gosh.

Q: Are you going to put on WITH YOUR PERMISSION DURING YOUR LIFETIME? I think that's a good idea, and then you see who...

DAVIES: Yes, I'd like to do it that way.

Q: So you'll see who is interested, and some may be people you know and some not...

DAVIES: No, I'd like to do it that way so I get a chance perhaps to...talk or correspond...

Q: And you'll have the option, if our Army wants to... No, but I mean it's nice to know who is interested.

DAVIES: Yes, I'll be interested to see who is interested.

Q: Of course it will take a little time - it will be there - to get into the index, so that people will know it's available. That takes I guess 12 months.

DAVIES: Oh, that's fine.

Q: Well, thank you ever so much.

DAVIES: Oh, on the contrary, thank you for being so forbearing.

End of interview