

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

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REMINISCENCES
Germany, 1950-1954

My first post was Frankfurt, Germany - at first a very boring job in the budget division of the administrative section, later a more interesting one - as assistant to the Map Procurement Officer, actually an employee of the CIA. We absorbed the Publications Procurement Office in Berlin and I began to fly to Berlin to accompany the PPO, Mrs. Zawadzki, to the Soviet Sector to buy periodicals for U.S. Government libraries. Some of these were authorized for sale to foreigners, but the personnel were all German and most disliked the Russian conquerors and were willing to evade the regulations. One, who said she had kept heirloom rings on her toes, under her shoes, while she was subjected to intimate indignities at the hands of Russian soldiers, gave us every copy of the organ of the Ministry of Transport, using part of the subscription of the Minister himself and part of the subscription of another official. When we protested that we did not want her to be caught, she replied the minister would think it perfectly normal that he was getting only half his issues, since "we have socialism here now." We got many items refused to our man in Moscow.

Occasionally other items of very minor intelligence interests came my way. A German agency gave me some photographs of a new woman's auxiliary combat unit of the East German army, showing unattractive, slovenly young women aiming machine guns, etc. I thought I could trade them for some issues of the Russian Army newspaper, which the Counter Intelligence Corps bought from German urchins along with other documents which they obtained by tripping up and looting drunken Russian soldiers staggering to their barracks. Captain Thompson of the CIC looked like the gangster "Legs" Diamond, tall, slender, with suspenders chewing a long cigar.

He examined the photos one by one as I looked over his shoulder. "I suppose they think they'll have the advantage over us in that we wouldn't shoot a woman," I remarked.

"Yeah?" he snarled, turning to me. "I got news for dem dollies."

I once complained to his assistant, an uncouth young sergeant that Washington loaded me with impossible requirements--I was to obtain plans for new Russian submarines, nuclear weapons etc. which I, a lowly publications officer, had not the slightest chance of getting.

"Yeah, I know," said the sergeant. "They wanted me to get a 20-mm cannon from a MiG. My kids sneaked into the airfield and unscrewed one and brought it here on a bicycle. Now they want me to get the whole plane!" He explained that he employed German urchins even for this work.

Once I and Mrs. Zawadzki emerged from a bookshop with the proprietor. Facing us was a curious four-story building. The windows of the top floor were concealed behind steel plates which leaned outward so that light and air would penetrate over them. A loud noise came from the first floor.

"It's a building of the Staatssicherheitsdienst [secret police] explained the bookseller. They have a sawmill down below which they turn on when they're questioning somebody

so you can't hear the screams. They can't jump out the windows, either, because of the steel covers."

The first of May was a great celebration for the Communists, and I reasoned that if we could get into the Karl Marx Platz, we would get the official May Day slogans from handbills. These were prized by Kremlinologists as indicating shifts in Russian attitudes toward the communist and socialist parties throughout the world.

I suggested that we follow the May Day Parade into the center of the Soviet Sector. A CIA employee went with us after much hesitation. We started along Unter den Linden or its prolongation beyond the Brandenburg Gate until we came to a bridge over a canal. Here the parade filled the bridge, and there was no way to proceed without getting into the parade.

"Let's get in the parade. We can get out on the other side," I said.

"No!" whispered the CIA fellow hoarsely. "I'm not marching in any commie parade!"

"Well, go back to West Berlin then. It's just beyond the Brandenburg down the street - that big triumphal arch there."

"You can't leave me alone here!" In the end he agreed to join the parade. But, to our horror, we were unable to leave the parade on the other side. Ropes, guarded by grim Volkspolizei, kept the workers hemmed into their dreary ranks. Loudspeakers wired to lampposts blared the sound of cheering - perhaps some tape of a former Nazi rally - but the mouths of the sad-faced workers were closed.

"Oh, Christ!" muttered the CIA chap.

"Shut up!" I whispered. A Russian zone news camera atop a low pillar filmed us as we passed. The workers raised their fists in the Communist salute.

"Raise your fist, you idiot!" I snapped at the CIA chap. Together we marched past the bleachers, heads high, fists raised, faces turned toward such worthies as the infamous Walther Ulbricht, Marshal Zhukov, "President" Otto Gottewohl and the head of the dreaded Staatssicherheitsdienst.

The parade disintegrated beyond the bleachers. We waited until it had passed. The Volkspolizei had left their posts at the rope and had gathered in small groups to smoke and chat.

"Let's just act as though we belong here and go back by the way we came," I suggested.

We walked to the rope and I started to lift it so that the others might pass under it.

"Halt!" came a shout. A Volkspolizist came running. "Wo ist Ihre Erlaubnis in der Gegend der Ehrentribüne zu sein (Where is your permit to be in the area of the honor bleachers)?" he demanded. I was struck dumb, but Mrs. Zawadzki calmly pulled out her U.S. Army identification card and held it up to his face. He gasped. "Amis!" he exclaimed. Then he looked about to see who was watching and he himself held up the rope. "Okay, über schnell!" he said, motioning us under the rope. From that incident I learned the depth of popular support for the regime.

Back in Bonn my superior was fired, and I became chief of the operation, but not for long. An old school friend, Jonathan Dean, had been asked by the new head of the Political Section, John Paton Davies, Jr, to recommend young officers for that prestigious section. Jock mentioned me and Davies took me on and assigned me to cover relations with the Russians, Neo-Nazi groups, and Communist activities in the Western Zones - very interesting and politically delicate work.

Small Neo-Nazi groups had formed in Munich, Hamburg, and Bremen. Their size and influence were wildly exaggerated by the New York Times correspondent, Drew Middleton, whose New York readers were eager to hear the worst. The Times represented the body of opinion that the Germans were still unrepentant and a menace. Reports of resurgent Nazism was grist for their propaganda mill.

Such a large proportion of the members of these groups, each of which numbered only 30-100 members, were spies of the U.S., the British, the French, and the West German government that one aspirant "Führer," Maj. Beck-Broichsetter, in Hamburg, abruptly disbanded his group, alarmed by the many unfamiliar faces at the final meeting. I and Bud Ramsaur, our man in Bremen, became concerned lest we - and the other allied government agencies - were actually subsidizing the Neo-Nazis, because of the dues regularly paid by our many spies in the Neo-Nazi ranks - and seldom paid by the impoverished bona fide members. The leaders of the groups were hardly more than con men. One, in Munich, regularly lunched with a consulate political officer and brought him up to date on his party's membership and activities. Russian spies were also members, mainly to provoke the groups into unwise political acts which Moscow could exploit in its anti-Bonn-Government propaganda. If a French spy was known to be present, the Russian agent might shout "On to Paris!" in the middle of a rally. Or tip over tombstones in a Jewish cemetery.

My colleague Culver Gleysteen was about to be transferred elsewhere and I inherited his job as political adviser to the American delegation to the Four-Power negotiations on the use of the air corridors to Berlin.

These negotiations had been provoked by the Russians by their shooting down a British bomber near the entrance to the British corridor. The British Government was in weak hands at the time and were prepared to "compromise," i.e., yield. Working groups discussed different aspects of the subject, each producing an agreed solution to be incorporated in the final new agreement. One such working group agreement turned out

to be to the Russians' disadvantage. They simply disavowed it, and their member of the group vanished. Enquiries as to his whereabouts elicited the reply that he was "very sick." This continued to be the Russian strategy: achieve Allied agreement on the basis of "quid pro quo" and then disavow their "quid." They did this by pretending that it had never happened. When the Western allies pointed to the initials of the Russian air marshal on a particular document he changed the subject. We were losing ground with one concession after the other.

The head of the American delegation was an Air Force Brigadier General. Despite his explicit instructions not to yield one iota of our right to fly unhindered to and from Berlin, he apparently thought, like many others after him, that he would go down in history as the first man to achieve agreement with the Russians, that "if you can't get a dollar's worth of agreement, then ten cents is better than nothing."

Since only he had the right to sign telegrams to Washington on the progress of the negotiations, I had no way officially to warn Washington what was going on. I could only appeal to my chief, the head of the political section, an utter fool who had replaced Davies, exiled to Peru for alleged sympathy with the Chinese Communists. The highest point reached by his replacement, a former agricultural attaché, before he was appointed head of the most important political section in the world was "delegate to the Second International Conference on the Use of Unfermented Fruit Juices." He was my first lesson in the dangerous defects of the American political system with regard to foreign affairs. It was rumored that his wife had been a very close friend of the then President Eisenhower, whom she had met as a colonel in the Women's Army Corps during the war. She was a vamp-like blonde given to embracing and kissing young Foreign Service officers, with whom she was scarcely acquainted, when greeting them at cocktail parties.

My chief's response to my alarm was to seek a meeting with the British Deputy High Commissioner. All he said was, "Yes, Jack," many times as the Englishman expounded the British view, which paralleled that of our general, since the F.O. was under pressure from the capitulationist parliament.

I was desperate. One more meeting with the Russians and the general would agree to permit a Russian fighter to order any Allied aircraft to land at a Russian Zone airfield. The possibilities were highly dangerous: they would certainly seize German passengers; they could claim to have found on board espionage materials, dangerous insects (a theme of Russian propaganda was that Allied aircraft were dropping potato bugs on eastern German fields). Our secret contingency plan called for U.S. fighter planes to shoot down any Russian aircraft interfering with our access to Berlin. So an armed clash was possible.

Jim Ferretti, the Civil Air attaché, pointed out that if we could only get safely through the next meeting - chaired by the indifferent French - we could possibly stave off disaster, since a Foreign Ministers' Meeting was forthcoming in Geneva and it was unlikely that the Russians would resort to force during that conference and perhaps not thereafter.

I went to the Deputy High Commissioner, Walter Dowling, an intelligent career officer, going over the head of my section. I explained the problem, and also the risk I was taking in going over the head of my section.

He seemed to have had enough of the fellow himself, and said, "Let's not tell him about it." He summoned our general to Bonn and accused him bluntly of violating instructions. The general retorted, "Well, your man Harben here thinks if we can't get a dollar's worth of agreement, then we shouldn't have any."

"Mr. Harben was quite correct. Your instructions are perfectly clear - no concessions!"

After the general left I said, "That still leaves us with the problem. At the next meeting nothing remains to be done but sign the Russian agreement, which he has already agreed to do. I suggest that we explain the risks to the French and ask them to drag out the meeting somehow so that the signature would have to be postponed until after the Geneva Foreign Ministers' Meeting.

"No, don't do that!" said Dowling.

One has to know when to disobey, and this was obviously the time. My career was at stake. Antagonizing both Steere and Dowling would finish me, I was sure. But I called the French deputy delegate, an elegant little chap whose name I have forgotten. He came to see me. I explained the insubordination of our general. "France has been a rather passive participant in these negotiations," I noted. "You have few aircraft flying to and from Berlin. You are in the same boat with us, however; Russian pilots do not read Latin characters, and "AIR FRANCE" may look like "U.S. Air Force to them."

Fortunately the Russians had shot up an Air France plane recently, putting a 20-mm cannon shell through a fat German woman passenger, who survived (!). The Frenchman saw the point. "I'll see what I can do," he promised.

At the next meeting the French came with huge ozalid maps and an extraordinarily complex plan which took the entire meeting to explain. The Russian marshal sagged in his chair, defeat written on his face. I noticed that his underlings standing behind him were grinning with satisfaction. A hard man to work for, apparently. Ferretti's prediction was borne out. The Foreign Ministers' meeting was held and no more meetings on the air corridors were held. The Russians had dropped the matter. Incidentally, the French proposal boiled down to simply widening the air corridors by ten kilometers!

That was the only occasion on which I felt that I had influenced great events successfully. As time went on the career Foreign Service was diluted by outsiders who were given high rank and never again was a diplomat of such youth and low-rank entrusted with such responsibility.

Another example of the stupidity of our section chief comes to mind. I handled relations with the Russians. A moronic Russian private, Kulikov, had shot his way into West

Berlin while drunk, and when he had exhausted his ammunition was seized by the German police and handed over to us. Although he was too stupid to have any intelligence potential, his military captors fed him ice cream and told him he would surely be shot if he returned to Russian control. He asked for asylum. He knew nothing of interest. The U.S. intelligence authorities found him a room in Frankfurt, gave him a small pension, and ignored him thereafter.

One weekend he tried to break into the Russian mission in Frankfurt and was arrested by the German police. The Russians jumped to the conclusion that he had been trying to return to their control and sent a note demanding that we turn him over. American intelligence depended largely on defectors in those days before spy satellites and U-2s. If they got their hands on Kulikov they probably would have shot him in front of witnesses from every Russian unit and discouraged defectors for years to come. They would have given the impression that it was our policy to return defectors. They demanded a meeting with Kulikov. I called Charles Stefan, head of our Frankfurt office.

"What was that fellow trying to do with that break-in?"

"You won't believe this, Bill. He'd run out of money for booze and thought his old buddies would give him some."

"If we permit a meeting what is likely to happen?" I asked.

"He's so stupid that he might go back if they offered him a bottle of booze."

"So...no meeting!"

"If you can swing it, but the Russians have two of our soldiers who strayed across the border. If we refuse a meeting they'll probably say we won't get those two fellows back until they get Kulikov."

I reasoned that I had to discourage the Russians from insisting on a meeting by offering a meeting on terms unfavorable to them. I drafted a note of reply saying that we were ready at any time to arrange a meeting between Russian officers and Private Kulikov in the presence of representatives of the world press in Frankfurt at which Private Kulikov would express his detestation of communist tyranny, etc. etc. I doubted that the Russians wanted to run the risk of public humiliation at the hands of the half-wit Kulikov. But I had to clear my draft with the head of our section. He was appalled.

"Oh no, I understand this fellow is very shaky. If there's a meeting he'd probably go back," he said.

"Yes, sir. I know. So I'm pretending that he's not shaky and that we are supremely confident that he will not choose to go back and will denounce their government before the world press."

"I don't understand. We've got to avoid a meeting."

"I agree, so I'm trying to discourage them."

His mind was so unsubtle, however, that I could not explain the deception. He drafted a reply which would have meant disaster.

Again I had to go over his head to Dowling, who wearily said, "Have your original draft typed up for my signature and just don't tell him."

On another occasion I was duty officer. The French, in violation of an agreement always to act jointly with the Americans and the British in approaches to the Germans, had sent a note to the Germans without notifying us. The Germans, however, slipped us a copy confidentially. My section chief was in the office and asked me to translate it from French for a cable to Washington. I did, but my French was not perfect and I was not sure of the meaning of one word.

"Call up Berard (the French Deputy High Commissioner). He wrote it."

"But we are not supposed to let the French know we have it. It was given to us in confidence," I protested. He insisted. I said it was very high-handed for a junior American diplomat to call a senior French diplomat to ask how to translate a word.

"Do as you're told!" he snapped.

A French maid answered, and said that Berard was at dinner with guests. I told my superior. "Well, tell her to get him to the phone!" The Frenchman must have thought the Russian invasion had started. Never have I felt so humiliated as when I asked him to translate the word, the context of which also revealed that we had his text. He snapped the translation and slammed down the receiver. I cite these instances to show the damage caused by our habitually careless selection of senior officers and the confusion of others who, forced to work with them, are unable to follow their mental processes.

After only eleven months of his tour of duty, the blockheaded chief of the political section was transferred to a two-man post in Africa. According to report Secretary of State Dulles had been appalled by the man at the Foreign Ministers' Conference.

Another uproar over Neo-Nazis. The New York Times had reported that a new "Führer" had harangued 5000 "jackbooted Storm Troopers" in Lubeck. The Department asked why we had not reported this startling development. I checked with the Consulate at Hamburg. The truth: one of the leaders of one of the minuscule Neo-Nazi groups was a friend of the town bandmaster, whom he had persuaded to let him make a little speech before the Sunday concert in the square. There were 5000 people - music loving burghers with their wives and children. The speech contained some pro-Nazi remarks.

When our new U.S. High Commissioner, James B. Conant (former president of Harvard) arrived, I was assigned to him as Executive Assistant. He traveled all over Germany in a private train, visiting our consulates and German regional governments. It was an arduous assignment, for he was extraordinarily energetic. At the behest of John Paton Davies, Jr I was able to brief him on the struggle against the administrative "empire" built by the self-designated "Executive Director," Glenn Wolfe, who constantly added administrative staff while reducing the staff of the operating sections of the High Commission.

I was also the barrier between Conant and the American press. Conant did not want to see reporters until he was thoroughly conversant with the politics and economy of the country. The press, with its allies in the High Commission headed by Michael Boerner, constantly strove to break through. Boerner even convinced himself and his henchmen that it was a plot by the Political Section to insulate Conant. Once Boerner and a couple of sensationalist journalists barged right into Conant's office without consulting me, and were promptly thrown out by Conant, who came, fuming, to me. "I thought I told you I didn't want to give interviews!" he said. When I went to our press liaison section one fellow there bellowed, "The people have a right to know!" Their allegiance was not to the Department of State but to the newspapers to which they would return when their temporary appointments ended.

The greatest danger to a Foreign Service Officer is the press, which constantly tries to provoke a statement by a quotable government official which will produce a scandal. They had done so with the former High Commissioner, Walter P. Donnelly, who had assured them that no Nazi war criminals would be released while he was in charge - unaware that the U.S. Government had already agreed to release several of them.

Conant quickly absorbed information and soon was correcting erroneous statements to him made by subordinates. He asked me to circulate at receptions on our travels and make a 3" x 5" biographic card on every person with whom he spoke. These were kept in a drawer in his desk. When I would announce a visitor I would ask him to wait just a minute. When he entered, Conant would greet him like an old friend, asking if his daughter's leg had healed after her skiing accident, how his wife Gertrud was, etc. Though of a reserved, calculating nature he thus gave the impression of a jolly extrovert.

I was also instructed to draft letters of polite, but very firm refusal to all requests that he become a member of the board or lend his name to any organization, pointing out the grief of the many people who had incautiously endorsed organizations later discovered to have ties with the Communists.

I was transferred to the United States for Russian Language and Area Training at Columbia Univ. and Middlebury College. I already spoke Russian quite well, but, despite the fact that I had received a mark of 100 on the entrance examination in 1947 the Department was unaware of it, so that Middlebury was just a pleasant vacation for me.

I was assigned to the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Soviet Bloc Division, where I spent the next three years doing reports on all aspects of Russian foreign and domestic affairs. There was little of general importance until the end of my tour, when I wrote a study, "Soviet Internal and Territorial Waters," which appeared in the Navy's JAG Journal in, I think, 1957. In it I detailed the Russian annexation of international sea space, incorporating it in "internal" waters closed to foreign shipping. Canada and the U.S., by relinquishing claims to certain Arctic islands, Graham Bell Land and Wrangel Island, made it possible to claim all the sea between those islands and the mainland as "internal" waters. By seizing the Habomai Islands north of Hokkaido they closed the Sea of Okhotsk, making it Soviet "internal" waters and began to seize Japanese fishing boats accustomed to fishing there.

My article angered the Secretary of the Navy, who proposed to send a flotilla of destroyers into the Sea of Okhotsk to demonstrate our refusal to recognize this annexation, but the prevailing mood was to yield to the Russians on most issues particularly those which involved the possibility of an armed incident, which many incorrectly believed might ignite a general war. He was overruled.

INDONESIA

In 1959 I was assigned to our embassy in Djakarta, Indonesia as a political officer. The previous year a rebellion had broken out in Sumatra and Sulawesi against the frivolous President Sukarno, whose dictatorial tendencies were not mitigated by his preoccupation with the seduction of young women. The U.S. had provided arms and encouragement to the rebels, who, however, quickly faded to a few weak bands. Our ambassador, Howard P. Jones a former A.I.D. administrator, decided that there was nothing for him to do, *faute de mieux*, but curry favor with Sukarno. In pursuing this task he all but groveled before the brown satyr.

Ambassador Hugh Cummings, then head of the Bureau of Intelligence & Research, to which I was attached in the Department, called me to his office before my departure and told me that Jones' optimism was mistaken, that Indonesia would soon go Communist, and the U.S. would intervene to prevent it. It sounded as if he expected me to back this assumption in my reporting. Jones, however, was determined that I paint a rosy picture of growing American (i.e., Jones) influence and a declining Communist Party.

My researches convinced me that the Communist Party was increasing its strength. Sukarno appeared to be protecting and encouraging them. An ever increasing number of red "Seksi Komite PKI" (Section Committee of the Communist Party of Indonesia) signs were being put up in front of bamboo structures in the villages, and the other parties viewed the PKI with growing alarm.

Java is vastly overpopulated and dependent upon food imported from the other islands, where the Communists were weak, and from the U.S. Sumatra, the stronghold of the feeble rebels, was mostly pious Muslim or Christian, and Sulawesi Christian, hence both

resistant to Communist appeals. Communist strength was concentrated in Central and East Java. West Java was strongly Muslim and harbored another smouldering rebellion, the hair-shirt Muslim Darul Islam.

I reasoned that while the Communists might seize power in Java, they would know that they would be quickly starved out. They had to establish a strong foothold in Sumatra, and this would take a couple of years at least. (Actually they did not feel strong enough for a coup d'etat until six years later, and that was crushed with great loss of life.)

Nevertheless, I strove to report the growing strength of the party, but was censored by the head of the Political Section, John Henderson, who was obedient to the ambassador's wishes. The views of the CIA unit, which he could not censor, paralleled my own. Fearing crucifixion by Senate conservatives for rosy reports signed by me if events culminated in a Communist victory, I reported the truth "under the table" in personal letters to friends in the Department, mainly Henry L. Heymann, who had just left Djakarta for assignment to the Indonesia desk in INR. I also produced a voluminous biographic file on 3" x 5" cards, on which the rise to influential positions of Communists and crypto-Communists was detailed. The Political Counselor never read these. Copies went to CIA. The Communists had created a crypto-Communist Party called "Partindo," which the ambassador professed to believe was merely leftist. My cards showed that its key officials had previously been officials and even treasurers of Communist front groups.

The tension between me and Henderson grew, and I was sure that he would give me a poor performance rating - which, coupled with that of my superior in Bonn, probably would have resulted in my dismissal. An inspection was due, however. Groups of inspectors made the rounds of posts every two years and heard the complaints of junior officers in private and wrote reports on each of them. I was near bankruptcy, supporting a divorced wife and two children on a very small salary. Their fate also depended upon this crisis. I had little hope of prevailing against the embassy "establishment." The chief inspector, Donovan, entered my office one day, looked down the hall to assure himself that he would not be overheard, closed the door behind him, sat down and said, "Harben, I want you to level with me. In your opinion is the reporting from this embassy rosier than is warranted by the facts?"

I trusted no one at this point, and replied cautiously, "That is the opinion of some of the junior officers, sir."

"Is it your opinion?" he insisted.

I thought a moment. "I think the answer to your question is in my pocket. I am about to carry the pouch to the Consulate in Surabaya. The consul, Jack Lydman, just reported a speech of Sukarno in that city denouncing the U.S. in strong terms and threatening to confiscate our property here. His report went directly to Washington, bypassing the embassy. I have in my pocket a letter to him from the ambassador telling him henceforth to clear all his reports through the embassy. This letter reflects the general policy here."

Donovan thanked me. His report on me outweighed whatever criticism Henderson had written about me in his confidential performance report and I was promoted in due course. The Deputy Chief of Mission, James Bell, also liked my reports.

Early in my tour of duty I met a beautiful divorcee at the house of Jane and Serge Taube, Meleen O'Brien, who was a secretary in the A.I.D. mission. Soon we were traveling throughout Java together. When she was assigned to a conference in Djokjakarta, in Central Java, I visited that area more frequently, officially to study Communist activity there. It confirmed my view that a diplomat, or an intelligence officer, can learn more by getting around a lot and having a good time than the drone who sits in his office all day. We drove over almost every road in Java together, sleeping in hotels where cockroaches as large as mice had to be plucked from the inside of the mosquito net around the bed, where the staff pursued scampering rats trying to swat them with tennis rackets, where late arriving guests crawled into bed with us. Hotels sold bed space, not beds. I awoke once in Banjuwangi with a whole family slumbering beside me.

On our honeymoon we visited the remote peninsula of Udjing Kulon with two other young diplomats whose wives at the last minute could not come. We continued to Djokjakarta, where I joined a group of Americans and one Indonesian vulcanologist climbing the extremely active Merapi volcano, 12,000 feet high. It was on the summit, amid the choking fumes of sulfur dioxide and steam, that I was stricken by an ailment which was to plague me intermittently for years thereafter. A sudden sharp pain in both knees forced me to sit! At 12,000 feet, on an active volcano, I could not walk! Later medical evidence attributed it to repeated parasitic infections, for which Java was notorious. One climber remained behind with me when the others descended. He cut some crutches from the trees after we had slid down the ash cone on our heels. Hours late, and crippled, we reached my bride below. I hobbled about on a cane for a few days and gradually the pain disappeared, only to strike suddenly and without warning at odd times for years later.

The romantic excursions with Meleen turned up interesting political intelligence. Darul Islam rebels lay in the tea bushes approaching Bogor, and we followed the army jeep patrol for safety. Several times we visited a deserted Dutch resort almost at the summit of the Tankubanprahu volcano outside Bandung. The staff was still there and lavished their services on the two American guests - strawberries with cream for breakfast, etc.

An unanswered question was whether the Communist Party maintained some kind of clandestine armed force, despite their near-annihilation in their uprising at Madiun in 1948. I suspected that it did - because of the truculence of its ideological positions. Their official organ in one issue declared "All disputes with imperialists must be solved by force wherever possible."

A band of "Darul Islam" rebels operated on the vast volcano and occasionally attacked the Dutch resort. One weekend, as Meleen and I were walking, I noticed a Communist Party

"Section Committee" flag hanging in front of a bamboo structure. This surprised me. The Darul Islam, fanatic Muslims, had no love for the atheist Communists. Wouldn't the Communists run a risk thus advertising their presence? A peasant was working nearby. My Indonesian was good enough for simple conversation. I asked him if the guerrillas did not attack the Section Committee office. "No, never," replied the peasant. I informed my Indonesian police contact of my suspicions that the "Darul Islam" band was actually Communist.

There was an unconfirmed rumor of the theft of arms in Central Java. I went down there and had dinner with friends, the Weatherbees, and asked if they had heard of the theft of weapons. Don Weatherbee had not, but Mary Ellen, his wife, related that while driving with another woman in a chauffeur-driven car, they had been stopped by an army patrol, which spoke with the chauffeur. When they got going again, Mary Ellen asked the chauffeur what the soldiers had wanted. "They were looking for guns, Njonja." It is from such fragments, gathered in the course of constant travel and contacts, that a mosaic of the truth can be assembled.

The Communists were becoming increasingly powerful, and President Sukarno was cooperating with them. I shared the suspicion of some that he had an understanding with them whereby he would remain as chief of state if they succeeded in seizing power. They would leave him his harem, which was all he cared about. I had been receiving visitors of the moderate Muslim Party, usually in the evening. They told me that they feared their party would soon be banned and they wanted to build an efficient underground organization, like that of the Communists. Could I help?

I asked Washington for materials on the underground structure of the Communist Party. I was sent a long, thick, learned study of the Rand Corporation, quite useless, since they had neither the time nor the Greco-Latin English to wade through it. But from the USIS Library I obtained J. Edgar Hoover's book on the CPUSA, which was short and in simple English. It described how the CPUSA operated under close surveillance. It was just what my contacts needed. What they learned from it prepared them for the day, five years later, when the Communists launched their bid for power.

In my travels I noticed that some Communist Party "Section Committee" signs which I had seen previously, had disappeared. Since the party was growing I thought it unlikely that local units were being dissolved. I told my Indonesian police contact of my discovery, and suggested that the party might be going partially underground, or at least making their local headquarters harder to locate in the event of a government (i.e., Army) action against them. I suggested that he get busy and locate all of these units before any more of them disappeared. I think this also contributed to the government's success later. I asked him once if I might see a list of Communists of any locality. He asked me to come to his house the next day and he would show me one. I had two motives: 1) I wanted to know how closely the authorities were watching the Communists, and 2) I wanted to see what kind of people comprised the rank and file. To my surprise I found several noblemen on the list of several hundred party members he showed me. "They're very

simple down there in Central Java. They don't know anything about ideology," explained my contact. I add this incident to show that the Indonesian Government had no need of embassy help in identifying Communists. In 1991 a young American woman created a stir in Washington by claiming that the embassy [after I had left] had supplied names of Communists to be executed in the failed Communist coup of 1964. Obviously if the authorities had lists of hundreds of names for individual towns they had no need of help from the embassy.

The rule of Sukarno was economically a disaster. Foreign exchange income was squandered on such things as Sukarno's annual global fornication tour of the world in a chartered PanAm plane with all his entourage, or on payments to Hollywood film companies of their profits on film showings - for which the film moguls expressed their gratitude by supplying "starlets" to the insatiable Sukarno during his Los Angeles sojourns.

Sukarno's physician asked me at a dinner, "Do you know where the President had the most beautiful girls of all?"

"No," I replied stiffly.

"China," he said, kissing his fingertips. "I have never seen such lovely women in my life."

Since he had broached the subject I felt emboldened to ask about a report that Sukarno, while on a visit to the Turkish Foreign Ministry, had made sudden sexual advances to a pretty Turkish secretary who happened to be sitting along the way. He had to be forcibly restrained by security guards. I asked the doctor if this rumor were true.

"Well, you know, for about an hour after the injection, he's uncontrollable." replied the doctor.

The embassy was very worried over the deteriorating economic situation and an inflation so severe that we could dine on Peking Duck in Glodok for 45 U.S. cents. At one point our servants refused to accept their \$3.00/month wages except in Dutch colonial currency, which had been specifically repudiated by the government. I decided to go to Central Java to learn more about the Communists and ended up learning something about inflation unknown to American economists to this day.

The head of the Political Section, like so many senior FSOs unschooled in the nuances of diplomatic protocol, insisted that I pay a call on the Sultan. While the presumption of a Second Secretary calling on the Brother of the Moon and The Nail of the Universe (two of his titles) was lost on the Political Counselor, it apparently alarmed Hamanku Buwono IX, Sultan of Djokdja, who probably feared a highly compromising approach by the CIA, since he knew full well that the American Embassy wistfully viewed him as a successor to the dreadful Sukarno. He wisely decided to receive me with a crowd of witnesses to the fact that nothing but banalities were exchanged. Beneath the royal pendopo - a kind of

baldachin - were gathered counts, barons, the hereditary Grand Vizier, the Pakualam of Pakualaman, and the Sultan, with whom I discussed the weather, the crops, the likelihood of another volcanic eruption, etc.

That out of the way I returned to my dark hotel (no lights, no electricity, no windows) to meet Professor Weatherbee and a British socialist, Donald Hindley, for a climb up the tallest peak of the West Progo Mountains. On the way we sweated out all the contents of our canteens and were mad with thirst when we arrived at a small village perched on a small terrace near the summit. The inhabitants had fled at our approach.

We looked about in amazement. It was as though we had found the Shangri-La of "Lost Horizon" or the Eden of the Old Testament - comfortable bamboo houses on stilts, a pond, cows, goats, chickens, ducks, palms, fruit trees and even a small rice field. We had drunk all our water on the way up. During the climb we had been joined by a peddler, who traded batiks and kerosene with the inhabitants in return for palm sugar.

The peddler climbed a palm and knocked down some coconuts. We cut them open and drank the milk. The inhabitants had begun to drift back and stood, examining us curiously. It was clear that they had never seen "orang-orang belandja" ("white" or "Dutch" men) in their lives. Their leader seemed to be a middle-aged matriarch. I felt we should pay for the coconuts and handed her a generous sum in rupiahs. She scrutinized the colored bills and then dropped them on the ground. The peddler leaped forward and scooped them up.

"These people are very ignorant, Tuan. They don't know about money and all that stuff. I can use it. I'm poor. They have all they need."

"Wait a minute," I said. "The money is for this woman!" I made him give it to me.

How were we to pay them? They obviously not only had no need of money, they did not know what it was! We finally decided to give them some empty soft drink bottles. With these they seemed quite satisfied. It was a pity I could not speak to them. They spoke only Javanese. I spoke only Indonesian, the lingua franca Malay.

I was able to report to the embassy that I had found people totally immune to the economic chaos wrought by Sukarno, and that there must be many more. It was a great lesson to me, too. These simple people had demonstrated to me that if one had a bit of land, a hoe, and an axe, one need never go hungry.

The Indonesians are a superstitious people. Gods, goddesses, demons, mermaids - all formed a part of their culture. The economic counselor, driving in Central Java with the minister of finance, laughed at a pink majolica statue of a blonde mermaid in a town square. "Didn't the Dutch know that the mermaids down here are brown?" he joked.

"Indeed they are," said the minister. "I used to see one sunning herself on the opposite bank of the river where my house is. She was quite brown - like us." Barger, the economic counselor, soon realized the man was serious. When embassy chauffeurs drove back to Djakarta from Boyor - a long, steep slope, - they would speed up at a spot where the road was particularly steep, frightening the passengers. The chauffeurs exclaimed that that spot was known to be haunted by evil spirits, and it was wise to hurry, lest one jump aboard and ride to Djakarta. When I entertained guests, my servants, Parijem and Djatim, would remove all empty chairs. Spirits looking in the window and seeing empty chairs would think they were invited and come in!

I began to hear of superstitions affecting politics, and politics was my business. For example, an American was standing beside an Indonesian acquaintance listening to a speech by Sukarno. The American commented that he was surprised that Sukarno would appear in public so soon after an assassination attempt. The Indonesian replied that he was in no danger - he still bore the flame. "What flame?" asked the American.

"There - just above his left shoulder - Can't you see it?" said the Indonesian.

I invited my Indonesian police contact to lunch and asked him about the power of the "dukuns" (sorcerers). He said they could inflict great harm on people.

"For instance?" I asked

"Needles, Bill! Needles! Inside you!" he shuddered.

"What kind of needles?"

"Sewing needles!" He seemed quite distressed at the thought. "They put them on the fence in front of your house!"

"Well, how do they get from the fence into your stomach?"

"I don't know! I don't know!" He seemed so upset that I ceased questioning him.

Two things puzzled the embassy: 1) why was Sukarno still popular after marrying his latest wife, Hartini, in violation of Islamic law, and 2) why was the revered Sultan of Djokdja apparently so indifferent to succeeding Sukarno when the famous prophecies of Djoyoboyo, a 12th century Indonesian Nostradamus, seemed to indicate that a Javanese prince would rule and a golden age would begin.

I discovered that many Javanese believed that Hartini was the incarnation of Dewi Roro Kidul, the goddess of the South Sea, and would infuse Sukarno with divine powers. From a friend of the Sultan I learned that the Sultan had been visited in a dream by his father, who told him that he would be the last Sultan of Djokdja.

One day we received word from Prince Bintoro, brother of the Sultan and head of the American section in the Foreign Ministry, that an American gunrunner, Frank Starr, and an American associate Wesley Broce, had been arrested entering the country and had with them a copy of a contract with the rebels to deliver to them ten million Straits dollars worth of arms. I was assigned to the case. The files revealed that Starr had been in Indonesia before and had swindled the government of a large amount of money by chartering to the government a ship he had rented from a British firm. He never paid the British, who seized the ship when it had to return to Hong Kong for repairs.

There was some doubt as to Starr's sanity, but no doubt at all about his young, athletic sidekick, who had escaped from a California asylum. Starr was also a homosexual, and Broce his catamite.

Unfortunately American consulates and embassies are required to seek the release of any arrested American, even the most criminal. After some delay, during which the Indonesians decided that he was more of a problem for the U.S. than for them, they agreed to release Starr to our custody provided that we guarantee that he would be imprisoned when he arrived in the U.S. Starr had picked up a lot of dangerous gossip in jail about alleged Army plots to overthrow Sukarno, and the Army did not want Starr to be talking to the press. I went with Vice-Consul John Heimann to get Starr's signature on repatriation loan papers. During the interview Starr suddenly pulled a knife and snarled that he was going to kill everyone in the room. There was a table between us which I thought I might throw up in his face if matters got out of hand, but John said sweetly, "There's no need to kill anybody, Mr. Starr. Do you have any property in California?" He sat with pen poised. Starr looked wild for a moment, then sagged into his seat, defeated. "I'll take that, if you don't mind," said Heimann, and Starr meekly surrendered the knife.

I thought I could persuade Washington to arrest him because he and Broce had attacked me when I visited them in prison, inflicting minor injuries. He also had a card identifying him as an agent of Naval Intelligence, surely a forgery. But I discovered that it is quite lawful to attack a federal official in the performance of his duty and to impersonate another. Much, much later Starr, in Washington, threatened to kill me in a letter to then Vice President Johnson. The F.B.I. said it could do nothing until he "acted." As a precaution I loaded my pistol and kept it handy.

Nothing could be done in Indonesia to release Starr, since he continued to write letters (on a typewriter lent to him by the director of the prison) threatening to "expose" prominent generals. He escaped once - they forgot to lock his cell - and came to the embassy, but was recaptured. He had exhausted the patience of the Indonesians, who finally shipped him off to a sort of "Devil's Island" off the south coast.

Just before I arrived in Indonesia the Central Intelligence Agency had been trying to help the PRRI-Permesta rebels. To strengthen the tiny rebel air force it had recruited a brave and daring flier, Arlen Lawrence Pope, who became a one-man air force, bombing Indonesian troop convoys with great success - until he was shot down. When he

parachuted to safety, the tail of the aircraft broke his thigh. The muscles had contracted, pulling one segment of the bone up alongside the other. To set it the Indonesian army doctors had to assign a couple of men to pull on his foot while others pulled under his armpits to bring the fractured bones into position where they could be set in a cast. Without anesthetic, the pain was excruciating.

I was assigned to his case. He was soon to come to trial and I had to find a lawyer. No one wanted to defend such a politically unpopular defendant, but at last one lawyer agreed. The trouble was that neither I nor the lawyer had any knowledge of the international laws involved. I dimly remembered that prisoners of war were entitled to good treatment until exchanged. The ambassador was trying to dissociate himself from Pope in the belief that if the embassy came too conspicuously to his defense it would give credence to the charge, levied by the Communists, that the U.S. was behind Pope's mission. Everyone knew this anyway. The result was, however, that my telegram to the Department of State requesting legal precedents was held up by the ambassador for a fatal two weeks, during which Pope made damaging admissions - i.e., that he had never signed any documents; he was not a regular member of their armed forces, and so on. This was the opposite of what he should have said, since only regular, uniformed members of an armed force in regular units are entitled to the protection of the Geneva Convention.

The Department's failure to supply the information without being asked, as soon as the trial was announced, is testimony to the legendary incompetence of that organization.

Before the trial Pope was "imprisoned" at the summer resort of Kaliurang, high on the slope of Mt. Merapi. He was given every opportunity to escape, and his guards even took him hunting with them. But he shrewdly calculated that "someone" wanted him to escape - and provoke a manhunt all over Java. "How far would a big, blond, blue-eyed fellow get in that island?" I agreed and expressed the opinion that the Communists were behind it and would take credit for his certain capture.

Pope was sentenced to life imprisonment, but served actually about four years. He was a model prisoner from our point of view. I often thought that if the United States could always muster even a small number of men like him, it could win any war.

This case prompted an attempt at a bit of diplomatic detective work. The Communist press screamed that the butcher Pope had bombed the town of Ambon, on the island of Sulawesi (Celebes) on a Sunday morning, killing hundreds of churchgoers. The population was Christian and, more significantly, pro-rebel. But in questioning Pope I discovered that he had not arrived in Indonesia until a couple of weeks after the raid. Furthermore, he said the other rebel fliers hardly ever went out on missions, preferring to play cards in their barracks. Then who did bomb Ambon? Having been schooled in the devious schemes of the Russians I instantly suspected that the government air force itself had done the deed and blamed it on the rebels in order to turn the population against the rebels and in favor of Sukarno's government. Would the rebels have bombed their own people? Hardly likely. The head of the Indonesian Air Force was, moreover, very close to

both the Russians, who had given him most of his airplanes, and to the Communists. I expressed my suspicions to the Political Counselor, pointing out that the Russians had shelled their own lines as a pretext to attack Finland and that the Germans had painted French markings on Luftwaffe planes and bombed Freiburg im Breisgau at the beginning of World War II. "Let me go to Ambon," I said. "I'll poke around and try to find some of the bomb splinters and send them back to CIA for analysis to see where they were made."

The Political Counselor refused, probably fearing the government's reaction to an embassy officer going to a pro-rebel town. So the chance was lost.

I was an interested spectator of the struggle between the Indonesian Army and the Communist Party, and of the contrast between the blunt, unsubtle approach of the American ambassador and Political Counselor compared with the wily deviousness of the Javanese officials.

The Communist Party had invited foreign, mainly European Communist parties to send delegates to its national congress. Our embassy in effect demanded that the Foreign Ministry deny them entry visas, and great was the outrage of the embassy when Foreign Minister Subandrio blandly reneged on his promise to deny the visas, and unkindest cut of all, the American favorite, General Nasution, Chief of Staff, received the foreign Communists with great fanfare, with pictures on the front page of the Army newspaper. The Political Counselor arranged a meeting with the Machiavellian Colonel, who seemed to have political responsibilities.

"Why don't you lock up all these subversives!" demanded the Political Counselor. The Colonel explained in a suave whisper that that would be unwise. The Communists were trying to provoke a confrontation between the army and the President, which the Army felt would be to its detriment. It was therefore decided not only to admit the foreign Communists but to give their visit maximum publicity, so that all would know that the Communists were beholden to foreigners.

When Khrushchev arrived on a state visit the army lined the road over which Khrushchev was to travel to Bandung with a whole division of troops, giving the impression that Sukarno did not even control the countryside outside the capital. The nervous Khrushchev refused to go by car, and flew instead, leaving Sukarno to go by car. The Russian canceled a speech to students in Central Java, causing much disappointment among them. "We dropped a couple of pistols and a grenade under the seats in the hall, so that they would be found by the Russian security officers," explained the Colonel in his sleepy murmur.

There were two Communist parties in Indonesia. By far the larger and more menacing was the Partai Komunis Indonesia [PKI], headed by D. N. Aidit, and the Murba Party, very small, but very influential. This group was denounced by the PKI as "Trotskyite", but I sought out one of its leaders and in our pleasant conversations ascertained that they knew nothing of such European ideological nuances. Their main target was the rich

Chinese minority, which mercilessly exploited the peasants. Their spokesman explained that they had nothing against the United States, and they were offended that the United States was constantly inveighing against "Communists" of whatever persuasion. The program of the Murba Party probably would have been approved by the conventions of either of the two major American political parties.

WASHINGTON, 1960-1964

I was transferred back to Washington - and four boring years in "Public Affairs," which instilled in me a dislike of the Department. I and another fellow contrived to set up a "gray propaganda" unit, which published anti-Soviet tracts based on a careful reading of the Soviet press. I unearthed various historical facts embarrassing to Moscow, such as the fact that Moscow was selling aviation gas to the Luftwaffe just before the German attack on Coventry, England; that black miners in the Belgian Congo had higher real wages than Russian miners; that Karl Marx was a virulent anti-Semite, etc. I scoured the Russian press for criticism of defective production, organized the excerpts into a catalogue of items in alphabetical order and sent copies to those U.S. posts where there were going to be trade fairs in which the Russians were to participate. This last had devastating effect. One post demanded copies of the original articles for incredulous local businessmen. They were sent.

Using the Russians' and the Cubans' own published statistics I showed that the Cuban standard of living was much higher, although Moscow claimed that Cuba was only building socialism, whereas Russia had already built it. So, I pointed out, all the Cubans had to do to "achieve socialism" was to destroy such-and-such a percentage of Cuba's housing, confiscate half the shoes and burn them, etc.

One interesting exercise was the Russian-sponsored Helsinki Youth Festival, which lured leftist, liberal youth from all over the world to this mass indoctrination. There was an American delegation, which the CIA was trying to "pack" with argumentative, bright, liberal-leftist Americans. I was the State Dept. "front man." I had two problems. One - many of these youths aspired some day to join the Foreign Service and wanted to be assured officially that their having participated in a Russian-sponsored propaganda show would not be held against them. I asked the pertinent office to draft a reassuring letter, but in typically cowardly and cautious fashion the text was so evasive and weasel-worded that very few of these bright boys and girls would have felt reassured. We were not recruiting fools! I took the bull by the horns and, without any authorization by my superiors, sent out a letter under my own signature on the stationery of the Department.

The other problem was that the Army and a right-wing Republican youth organization backed by an arch-conservative Texas millionaire, wanted to send their own delegates. The presence of rich young Republicans and active military personnel in civilian clothes at this red rally would have provided Moscow with a splendid propaganda opportunity. The Army had already posted notices on bulletin boards in barracks in Germany asking

for volunteers speaking foreign languages for a "secret" mission, which almost immediately appeared in the Russian press.

The Army backed off under our protests, but the Republicans were adamant. I asked advice of various people, and one suggested that I contact Gwendolyn (can't remember her last name), a fiercely anti-Communist woman who had helped terrorize the Department of State during the McCarthy uproar. She had been forced out - onto the staff of the House Un-American Activities Committee, a blundering coterie of half-educated superpatriots which constantly dueled with the hated Department of State. I asked Gwendolyn to come over. I was surprised at her appearance - very good-looking, brassy, suspicious. She sat on my desk smoking a cigarette in a long gold holder while I made an impassioned plea to stop these young conservative ideologues from botching the CIA's carefully laid plans. She was reluctantly convinced. "Okay, I'll call Ronnie!" she said, and left. I found out that "Ronnie" was Ronald Reagan, who called off the young Goldwaterites and thereby enabled the CIA to pull off a brilliant success in Helsinki.

The American delegation published a small newspaper, one of which showed photographs of some very sleazy looking Moroccans, Africans, etc. nuzzling and groping pretty Finnish girls in some corridor. Angry Finnish youth pelted the Festival parade with rocks the next day. A later feminist leader, Gloria Steinem, was one of the leaders of the American delegation.

Work in the Department of State was often stupid, humiliating and strewn with political minefields. A Mrs. Katie Louchheim was appointed by President Kennedy as grand something-or-other for Women's Affairs. The "Women's Strike for Peace" - a left-liberal agitprop group was demonstrating noisily around Washington for unilateral disarmament and related causes dear to the hearts of the Russian General Staff. They demanded an audience with the Dept. of State to make their shrill complaint. Of course no Department officer in his right mind would want to be the public whipping boy of these pink viragos and the interview was bucked down to me. I refused, saying that they should see Mrs. Louchheim. That lady, however, was not about to involve herself in any "women's affairs" which might prove politically embarrassing and passed the buck back to me. I refused again, saying I had no intention of usurping her lawful function.

The Department of State is normally overstaffed with political appointees rewarded with grandiloquent sinecures for having contributed cash, time, or influence to the president's campaign. There was much unnecessary work generated to keep them reasonably busy. Once I was asked to clear with the Soviet desk a telegram to all posts informing them that a forthcoming period of time had been designated as "National Babysitter Week." Meetings were cooked up at which these people made speeches or proposed resolutions totally at variance with official U.S. policy. Citizens with hare-brained foreign policy schemes were sometimes referred to me to get rid of them. One proposed to assure peace between Russia and the U.S. by having each country send to the other members of the immediate families of their respective leadership as hostages. "Fine," I said, "Do you have

a list of the members of the immediate families of members of the Politburo of the USSR? We'd love to have it; it's a state secret."

"You mean you don't know?" asked the babe in the woods.

"We don't, and we have no way of telling whether any person sent from Russia to the U.S. is who he claims to be."

In Public Affairs we were given the task, by President Kennedy, of censoring the bellicose speeches of American generals, who sometimes spoke of war with Russia as imminent and certain. Moscow radio delighted in these proofs of American trigger-happiness. The speeches were farmed out among the various members of our office. The director of our office had volunteered our services for the task - so as to employ his underemployed staff. It sounded politically dangerous to me and I suggested that I draw up guidelines of statements which we would delete and get the Office of Soviet Union Affairs to endorse it. No fools, they refused to have anything to do with it.

As luck would have it the most frequent military speechmakers made essentially the same speech over and over again and they noticed that sometimes a particular statement was deleted and sometimes not, since different men in our office had reviewed them.

The office director had been sloppy, and, moreover, had missed a golden opportunity to add more staff. We might have organized endless meetings and gone over each speech together, sentence by sentence.

The discrepancies prompted an angry howl from the generals who claimed that the leftists of the State Department were blocking their attempts to inform the American people of the Russian threat. Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina took up the cudgel and demanded a congressional hearing. I begged my superior to let me read to the congressmen some choice excerpts from Radio Moscow, which gave the impression that the U.S. was in the hands of fire breathing lunatics yearning for war. The craven Department backed off, but was saved by a blunder of Senator Thurmond. Thurmond led a team of like-minded zealots onto the marine base and rounded up a group of wandering marines, herded them into a room and proceeded to give them an examination on the perils of Russian imperialism. The marine commandant flew into a towering rage and expelled them from the base, proclaiming that his men would fight anybody designated by the President regardless of nationality and without any indoctrination whatever. Scotty Reston, the columnist, wrote a humorous "examination" replacing Thurmond's. Sample question 1) "What is the length of the term of a U.S. Senator?" 2) "Why is it so long?" So it was laughed to death.

RWANDA, 1964-1966

I wanted to escape the Department. I am a good linguist and I was wasted in Washington, where I would soon be lost in the faceless masses of plodding, cautious bureaucrats. The

easiest way to escape was to volunteer for an African post, preferably French-speaking because of the dearth of French-speaking officers following the disastrous lowering of the standards of the service during the Eisenhower-Truman period, when the language requirement was virtually abolished.

Chad was discussed and rejected. Then the capital of Mauritania, a hamlet on the edge of the Sahara populated only intermittently by nomads. Finally they settled on Kigali, capital of Rwanda, on the eastern frontier of the Congo, which was then engulfed in a civil war between the Communist-backed Lumumbist (named for Patrice Lumumba, a much overrated Congolese who had been assassinated) and the central government, itself divided into quarreling factions. I was to be deputy chief of mission under Ambassador Charles Withers, who was not on speaking terms with Ambassador Dumont of Burundi, to the south, from which occasional raids were launched against Rwanda. Dumont's wife had seized a tea table intended for the Withers' which had passed through Burundi en route to Kigali.

My arrival was inauspicious. The small aircraft which was to fly me, my wife, and my small daughter Valerie to Kigali was otherwise occupied flying wounded combatants of the Congolese civil war to hospitals. Finally I managed to hitch a ride with an Italian construction worker driving to Kigali, but when I went to the airport baggage room to get our luggage a drunken guard threatened me with his rifle and refused to give it to me despite my protestations of diplomatic immunity etc., etc. I went to the office of the Belgian airport manager, explained the situation. He simply muttered a foul oath and left the office, I following. He went behind the baggage counter, pushed the drunken guard down on his back, calling him a "black monkey", and handed me the baggage while the guard crawled about mumbling, looking for his rifle.

The Italian was quite jolly, and was beginning to revive the spirits of my now terrified wife. Until she asked him if there were many snakes in Africa. "Si, Signora, Dey's a lotsa da snakes. Dey's a gaboon-a viper he's a bite and you die. Dey's a spitting-a cobra. Spit in you eye you go blind. But is a no trouble da snakes, Signora. When da snake he's a come-a to you in da night, you taka da blanket, shove in 'is face. He's a bite-a da blanket, you grabba his neck and pulla da blanket an' pull out his teet'. Is-a no trouble da snakes, Signora."

The Communist-supported rebellion of the Lumumbists raged in the Congo. The only airport from which the ragtag and only intermittently reliable government troops could be reinforced and supplied lay in Rwanda at Shangugu. Our main diplomatic task was to ensure that Rwanda remained friendly and continued to allow the Congolese Government to use this airfield. For this we - and the Western allies - had programs of technical assistance.

Our problem was complicated by recent Rwandan history. The country, like Burundi, had been a kingdom ruled by the Banyiginya, a clan of the noble class of Tutsi, a Nilotic race ethnically distinct from the 95% of the population belonging to the Bantu race. The Tutsi,

known as Watusi in America, were very tall - members of the royal family reaching heights of almost seven feet. The Mwami (King) Rudahigwa looked like a praying mantis. As pressure mounted internationally on the Belgians to grant independence, the Belgians strove to allay it until they could prepare the country for majority, i.e., Hutu, rule. The Tutsi nobles, whom no Hutu even dared look in the face, feared democracy and pushed for instant independence while they still held the Hutus cowed. To the Russians this meant that the Tutsi king and his barons were "progressive" anti-imperialists and, in the Marxist-Leninist scripture "the anti-imperialist struggle takes precedence over bourgeois-democratic transformation" (i.e., democracy).

The Belgian archbishop read a pastoral letter in the churches - Rwanda was 95% Catholic - saying, "that all men were equal in the eyes of God." The oppressed Hutu took this as divine sanction to rise in revolt against the Tutsi lords. They slaughtered about 60,000 with their families. The rest fled to Burundi, Uganda, and the Congo, where they received Russian and Chinese Communist arms and plotted to invade Rwanda and restore the Mwami to his throne. (Rudahigwa had died and was succeeded by Kigeri V.)

The Rwandans needed Western support against this threat. The Belgians and the U.S. supplied arms and the Belgians supplied a half-dozen officers who proved decisive when the Tutsis invaded Rwanda from Burundi and were routed by two Belgian officers with a mortar on a causeway after the Rwandan troops fled in terror at the sight of their former lords.

This Communist stupidity of arming and bankrolling the Tutsi aristocrats forced Rwanda to remain pro-Western and the use of the airfield at Shangugu enabled the Congolese government troops to keep the Congo, with its vast resources of copper, cobalt, and uranium within the Western orbit.

Too late, the Russians realized the blunder of their ideological priesthood and established diplomatic relations with Rwanda. The Rwandans agreed, due to the dimwittedness of their Foreign Minister, said some, but perhaps as a result of a shrewd calculation of the highly intelligent Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry, Martin Uzamugura, that a Russian embassy in Kigali would finally discourage the Tutsi exiles. [I am informed that Uzamugura was later murdered by a hostile political faction.]

Washington's craven stupidity almost destroyed our advantage while I was Chargé d'affaires ad interim in the absence of the ambassador. An impresario for the New York World's Fair had recruited, for the African Pavilion, a group of Tutsi exile youths in the Congo who had been court dancers for the Mwami - very folkloric - dressed in leopard skins, shaking spears, and all that. It seemed harmless, but not to Martin Uzamugura, who summoned me to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and demanded that the U.S. deny the Tutsi entry visas.

"On what grounds?" I asked.

"I know them and their Communist friends," he said (he had been Rwandan ambassador to the U.N.). "They will set up some sort of propaganda bureau in New York and stir up the other African countries against us."

"But I have to suggest some legal grounds. This World's Fair fellow will surely raise a fuss."

"I've read your McCarran Act," said Uzamugura. "It is so broad that you can deny a visa to anybody under its provisions." He was angry and unmoveable and said that if I had witnessed young Tutsi nobles kicking a pregnant white woman in the belly perhaps I would understand. The memory of Tutsi cruelty toward their serfs still enraged this brilliant and patriotic Hutu.

Our precious airfield was at risk! I sent a message to Washington asking that visas be refused and explaining the possible consequences. No reply. I cabled again. No reply. Uzamugura was pressing for a reply. Frantic, I cabled our embassy in the Congolese capital at Leopoldville and warned that they could lose the use of the airfield and therefore the whole Eastern Congo if the visas were granted. Our embassy in Leopoldville persuaded the Congolese government to declare the Tutsi exiles Congolese citizens under a U.N. resolution permitting host countries to declare exiles citizens. They then denied the Tutsi exit visas.

Months later a Department official, whose job I suspect had been bought by his rich wife passed through Kigali and I asked why the Department had not replied when our entire position in that part of Africa had been at stake.

"You don't understand how things are in Washington, Bill, Congresswoman Bolton of New York had a big investment in the African Pavilion..."

So the Department simply did not reply! All is not well that ends well!

We still heard rumors of a Tutsi force massing in Burundi for an invasion of Rwanda. The ambassador had aggrandized his embassy by unwisely acquiring a military attaché who had been expelled by Burundi. Underemployed, he spent such time as was not spent on his doctoral dissertation on drawing up alarming military contingencies. Despite the pathetic Tutsi performance in the past he frightened the ambassador into thinking that a Tutsi force, bypassing the border post in the Bugesera - bordering Burundi - could seize the Kigali airfield and block our escape. The ambassador ordered us secretly to fortify the embassy. Welders at night constructed a steel grate across the entrance. All hunting weapons were brought to the embassy. They were quite numerous since we shot most of our diet. M-16s were also flown in. Food and water was stocked. The military attaché drew up plans to barricade the windows with steel filing cabinets and assigned embassy officers to the defense of particular windows. Small planes were chartered and all women and children were flown to Nairobi. The diplomatic corps was astounded. Unaware of any threat, foreign civilians were enraged at their own embassies for failing to warn them.

Bonn cabled German Ambassador Steinbach demanding to know why he had failed to report the slightest deterioration of the situation when the Americans were fleeing the country. A small crowd of frightened Belgians besieged their ambassador, Standaert.

I had tried to convince the ambassador that there was no threat, but I was outweighed by the professional prestige of the military attaché and the massacre of whites at Stanleyville, which weighed on the ambassador's conscience. He did not want to be responsible for Tutsi atrocities against our wives and children, which comprised a greater proportion of our people than in the embassy in Paris. [And the Peace Corps had refused to send its people to Rwanda on the ground that it was too dangerous and primitive!].

Basically the problem was the ambassador's inability to assess probabilities, and the incompetence of the CIA representative, who, like the military attaché, saw Tutsi armies massing on all sides. (He once warned me not to drive through Uganda for my East African vacation because I would run into a Tutsi force coming in from Uganda). Contributing to the fear was the absence of a competent Rwandan intelligence service. The Rwandan government, like the American ambassador, was prey to the wildest and most improbable rumors, which panicked the ambassador into foolish alarms even before I could verify the facts. Since he had no staff meetings one could never tell what blunder was being prepared until it was too late.

The military attaché and I drove one day to Nyanza, half way to Burundi, to speak to the Belgian commander of the few hundred men of the Rwandan Army. He claimed that a Tutsi force of two thousand was poised just over the border. While the Belgian conferred with a black scout who had just arrived I expressed doubt that any African was capable of counting such a force, even if they were drawn up in formation on a parade ground. The attaché mused that the Belgian colonel had a strong motive to exaggerate. If the Rwandans fled the battle he could claim that he was overwhelmed by superior numbers. If the Tutsi fled, he could claim victory against heavy odds. The threatened invasion never occurred, though there were more false alarms later.

On another occasion I was on a trip to the northwest border. When I returned I found that the ambassador had sent a NIACT (night action) telegram to the Secretary of State, who was awakened and informed that "the armed forces of Burundi" had invaded Rwanda. The facts, which the ambassador had not checked, were laughable: some Hutu serfs who had fled with their Tutsi lords to Burundi three years before were determined that those who had remained should not harvest their manioc, which they had planted before their flight. They crossed the border to get the manioc and were set upon by the Hutu on the Rwandan side - a scuffle with cudgels. A Burundi policeman in uniform came over and broke it up. He was the "armed forces," magnified hundreds of times as the report was passed from one uneducated official to the other to Kigali.

The Lumumbists tried an invasion - across a bridge over the Rusizi River from the Congo. A Rwandan platoon under a Belgian lieutenant slaughtered hundreds as they crossed the bridge drugged with hashish. A photo taken by the military attaché from a

small airplane showed a pile of bodies blocking further progress over the bridge. Bodies had fallen off the pile into the rapids below, where they were caught on rocks. I was to see nothing so horrible until Cambodia.

After so many abortive attempts we heard of an invasion across the Nyabarongo River in the southeast in the prefecture of Kibungu. I warned Ambassador Withers that it was surely another wild exaggeration and asked permission to go down there to see for myself. I would report by hand radio to Third Secretary Du Bose posted atop Mt. Kigali. The ambassador agreed, but told the USIA rep and one other fellow to accompany me in our Jeep Wagoneer, the worst 4-wheel drive vehicle ever manufactured. We set out equipped with hunting weapons - always a good pretext if one encountered officials - mine a .375 Winchester, the others with similar buffalo-caliber rifles. We reconnoitered the area of the reported invasion - mostly off the roads. On one road we met one very taciturn Rwandan official fleeing in a Peugeot, a machine pistol on the seat beside him. He would say nothing.

While driving down one side of a shallow valley toward a mine the USIA fellow, who was driving, decided we would do better on the other side. I warned him that the vegetation in the middle, which we had to cross, was very green, which meant soggy ground. He ignored the warning and sank in up to the hubcaps. We were stuck, and the Tutsi horde might pour over the ridge at any moment. I decided to head for the mine on foot to seek help.

With the heavy Winchester on my shoulder I headed south. Suddenly I heard the engine of an airplane, which soon flew directly overhead at an altitude of no more than 200 feet. The one-plane Rwandan Air Force, a U.S. gift, flown by a couple of Belgian officers. I looked up and waved. When I got back to Kigali I discovered that they had reported a "Cuban adviser" among the enemy. My dark complexion had darkened still further in the African sun.

At the mine I found only one half-crazed Belgian, who, however, had a Landrover. With it he pulled our Wagoneer loose. When we arrived back at the mine several truckloads of "soldiers" drove up, headed by the Prefect of Kibungu. I asked him about the invasion.

"There were ten thousand of them. We killed a hundred and the rest ran away. We captured a mortar."

I asked him how many enemy weapons had been captured. None, except the "mortar," which turned out to be a length of galvanized iron water pipe open at both ends. One unarmed body had been found - obviously a peasant shot down as he was hoeing his bean patch. I explored the rushing Nyabarongo and found a dugout canoe hidden in the reeds, another a few hundred yards further on. It would have taken several days to move even a few hundred men across the Nyabarongo with such transport. I radioed DuBose from the summit of a high hill. The Prefect of Kibungu asked me to review his troops, a mass of sleepy, dirty Hutus with zombie-like expressions. When they lined up they were all

dressed in frayed and ragged ladies' overcoats - obviously rejected Salvation Army stock bought up by Arab traders and shipped to the interior of Africa. Bits of fur hung loose from collars, big plastic buttons flashed in buttonholes surrounded by Hungarian hussar embroidery, and big black bare feet stuck out from below the hems. The Hutu are very short, shorter than the ladies who had donated the coats.

They held their ancient rifles at parade rest. The bores looked abnormally large. "They can't have ammunition for those guns," I said to the crazy Belgian. "They look like castoffs from Von Lettow's [black German] army in the First War!"

"Oh, they don't shoot with them, Monsieur L'Ambassadeur. They hit chaps on the head with them!"

The "invasions" petered out when a Belgian recluse on the Rusizi River border with the Congo shot about a dozen Lumumbists trying to cross his rope bridge from the Congo side.

The embassy tried to foment economic development in a feeble way. As a former geologist I was sure that much tin could be dredged from the alluvium in the Nyabarongo River Valley. Such a dredge might have used hydroelectric power from the power line which followed the course of the river. There was gold in the Kamiranzovu Swamp, and vast deposits of peat could have replaced the loss of trees due to firewood cutting. Methane gas in the water of Lake Kiwu might have powered trucks, but was used only to run a brewery. But nothing was done - or even planned.

The indolence of the natives was best illustrated by a conversation I had with Motani, a Pakistani who owned a primitive soap works which consisted of nothing more than several steel barrels perched on rocks beneath which wood fires heated the contents. Above each barrel, standing on a stool, a Hutu stirred the contents of the barrel. I asked Motani how much he paid these miserable drudges. He named a ridiculously low figure. "I only barely break even," he explained. "The government fixes the prices. I run this soap works only to have the right to stay here. I actually make my living speculating in currencies by telegram. Once in the market I asked the price of manioc and calculated that my workers could make three times what I pay them if they simply cultivated manioc on the vacant land on Mt. Kigali. I asked them why they didn't do it, and they replied that when they are home they do not like to work. They work for me because I make them work."

The Anglican Church had an agricultural missionary in the Bugesera who was at his wits' end. He toiled in the hot sun making a garden for the instruction of the natives. Once he asked why they did not help him. One replied, "Oh, you Bazungu like to work; we don't like to work!" Too lazy to walk their cattle to the nearby lake they diluted the milk with cows' urine. "Frightful taste!" said the missionary.

One day the capital (pop. 7000) was aroused by a report of a Tutsi attack on an agricultural experiment station on the Burundi border next to the vast swamps of the Nyabarongo. Just a few shots in the night, no casualties. A couple of weeks later the Rwandan Government issued a "white paper" denouncing the attack and the harboring by Burundi of Tutsi exiles. I read it, and idly examined the title page, at the bottom of which were a few lines of small print such as one finds in any publication. Among other administrative data was the date the text was sent to the press - two weeks before the attack! I went into the ambassador's office and showed it to him.

"They attacked their own post to blame it on Burundi," I said. The ambassador was very nervous and lamely protested that it could not be true. I asked permission to visit the site with the disreputable Count de Hagenau, a Belgian remittance man now on our staff. The ambassador agreed. I searched the grass outside the high wire fence of the station compound, hoping to find spent cartridges which I could send back to CIA for analysis of their origin. I found none. Much later I decided that it was a scheme of our CIA man and perhaps some government officials - with the approval of the ambassador.

There were various frightening incidents typical of Africa: a Polish count who was driving into the Congo to pay the workers of a plantation of which he was in charge forgot to bring his pistol and was ambushed by natives who had blocked the road with rocks. Meat with white skin attached was seen on sale at the Goma market a few days later. (I never went anywhere unarmed.) The pouch run to Burundi was fraught with danger, since armed rebels along the flight path often shot at the small aircraft we chartered for the purpose and drunken guards at the Bujumbura airport often brandished their rifles menacingly when we took off without bribing them.

On rare occasions I crossed the border into the Congo at Gisenyi, on the north edge of Lake Kivu. One had to run a gauntlet of drunken Congolese border guards, who staggered out, loaded machine pistol in hand, brandy bottle sticking out of a pocket, the other arm around the waist of a simpering prostitute. I always had a revolver in my lap to discourage "confiscation" of my car.

One incident in the Congo near Bukavu brought home to me the awful crime committed by Western liberals in inflicting independence on the helpless peoples of Africa. All around the town bullet-riddled shops and demolished factories used as mines for building materials for huts gave testimony to the recent fighting between the government and the Lumumbists. The latter were finally annihilated in that area when, dazed by hashish, they drove in trucks down the main street of Bukavu while Congolese troops leisurely shot them all from the sidewalks

As I strolled about an African approached me and asked if I could bring him to Rwanda. I told him that I could not and asked him why he did not wish to stay in the Congo, which was obviously very fertile and a much easier place for a peasant to prosper. He replied in his primitive French that if he built a hut and planted a crop the soldiers would come, rape

his wife, burn the hut, and steal all the food. Then he asked, "Monsieur, when will the independence stop?"

Surprised, I questioned him and discovered that he thought the French word "independence" meant "murder, pillage, rape" and so forth.

CONSUL IN YUCATAN, 1966 - 1969

Having been Chargé d'Affaires ad interim for many months in Rwanda, and having deplored the mistakes of the ambassador, I decided that I could run a post better, and I longed to cease being a subordinate, who is often blamed for the errors of his superiors or blamed for failing to prevent his superiors' errors. I asked for my own post, be it ever so small. I was assigned as Consul in Merida, Yucatan, Mexico, a consulate with one American vice-consul and eight Yucatan employees. In addition there was the American director of the American library, cultural center and English language school who was, however formally independent though vaguely subordinate to me.

About eighty percent of the population were Maya Indians, about half of whom spoke little or no Spanish. The rest were mestizos, a small Lebanese commercial caste, and a thin stratum of almost pure Caucasian aristocrats who had once owned the vast sisal plantations. My predecessor spent most of his time cultivating this last group. I could hardly blame him; their exquisite manners, charm and friendliness were unequalled. I quickly decided, however, that these people were of little interest to Washington. A consul's duties revolved mainly around immigration visas, visitors' visas (both issued according to regulations and requiring little work on my part), drug smuggling, aid to American businessmen and tourists in trouble, and American criminals wanted in the U.S. for crimes committed in the U.S. or who had committed, or were about to commit crimes in Yucatan.

On my first day on the job I asked the capable Vice-Consul, James Gormley, what pending business we had.

"Well, an airplane on the way from Belize to Florida crashed in the jungle. The two pilots were unhurt and came out and I arranged their departure to the U.S."

I asked him to show me on the map where the plane had crashed. He pointed to the spot.

"But those fellows were not en route directly to Florida. That place is due west of Belize. Florida is due north. Pilots don't make ninety degree errors in navigation," I said. It turned out that they were smugglers of ancient Maya archeological treasures. This aircraft, overloaded with stone sculpture, had crashed on take-off from some jungle airstrip. Gormley had quickly exfiltrated the pilots, who had made their way out of the jungle to the consulate, and thus saved us the bother of the trial and imprisonment of some American citizens. Actually they could easily have bribed their way to freedom with the

help of the lawyer to whom we invariably steered such cases, but it would have been a great nuisance.

One day we received a telegram from the Department saying that a man named McMasters had kidnapped his two toddler daughters from their mother, the San Francisco heiress Dolly Fritz, who had custody, and had fraudulently obtained passports for them at one of our consulates in Canada. Mrs. Fritz and some private detectives and a lawyer were on their way to Yucatan, where McMasters was believed to be hiding, and we were asked to assist them and seize the passports when the children were found. They did not need much help, since they bribed the Yucatan police force into dropping everything else and working for them "en forma economica" as the local dialect delicately puts it.

The lawyer was a good-looking athletic fellow, a classmate of mine at Princeton, where he was a member of a prestigious eating club, with which fact he tried to impress me. In his law firm he apparently had no duties other than managing the complex legal affairs of Dolly Fritz.

The police turned up a pretty Yucatan divorcee who admitted to a recent, brief intimate acquaintance with McMasters, who had then disappeared.

We, Gormley in particular, were troubled by the overwhelming force deployed against McMasters, who had no legal counsel and who did have some rights under Mexican law, since his marriage to Dolly Fritz had taken place in Mexico and there was some question whether the California divorce, and the award of sole custody to the mother were valid in Mexico. When Vice-Consul Gormley politely raised these doubts the lawyer observed that some Foreign Service Officers with cloudy vision with regard to certain realities, had been known to suffer instant rustication to hell-holes like Vietnam if their obstinacy persisted.

"Are you threatening me?" asked Gormley.

"Oh no," replied the lawyer. "I was just making a comment, that's all."

I had invited the lawyer to a large dinner I was giving. He arrived a bit late, breathless but triumphant.

"I found the son-of-a-bitch! I was walking down the beach near Progreso and there he was, swimming with the kids. I had a nice talk with him. He was quite reasonable, but just to make sure I assigned one of the Yucatan detectives to watch the beach house where they are staying."

"Which Yucatan detective?" I asked, as the maid placed the food before us.

"The one who questioned his Yucatan girlfriend."

"Oh, dear me! I'm afraid I have bad news for you. He's not watching the beach house."

"What! How do you know that?"

"I met her. She's very pretty. She came to me about a bad check which McMasters had given her for pesos. Having lost both her lover and the money she undoubtedly needs much consolation. As a student of Yucatan masculine human nature I can assure you that the detective has gone to question the woman further," I explained.

"You don't mean it!"

"I do," I said.

"Christ!" shouted the lawyer, who jumped up and dashed out the door. The next morning he reappeared, unshaven and disheveled and related that he had caught McMasters in the act of decamping. The detective was of course not there. McMasters had said something in Spanish to the Indian maid, who dashed off and returned with the police, who apparently had been told he was a burglar. They hauled the struggling lawyer off to the jail and kept him overnight in a cell next to the urinals. McMasters escaped, only to be found a short time later in Campeche. Gormley drove down to get the passports.

"Look carefully!" he said, throwing them on my desk. I instantly noted the extraordinary resemblance of one of the girls to the lawyer.

Some time later McMasters again kidnapped one of the girls and spirited her off to England, where the minions of Mrs. Fritz followed and appealed to a British court. The judge, impressed by McMasters' claim to have been deprived of his children in a highly prejudicial manner by pistol-whipping Mexican police, hesitated to return the child to her mother. The lawyer called me and asked if I would sign an affidavit saying that it was all a pack of lies. I replied that a British judge was likely to take a very jaundiced view of his hiring the Merida police to act for Mrs. Fritz in a private capacity.

"Did you put that in your report?" he asked.

"I did, and the report is unclassified and I could hardly contradict my own report, could I?"

McMasters sojourned a while in Merida and proved an interesting fellow. An antique dealer, he claimed to be an intimate of the greatest nobles in Europe, and to have earned the gratitude of the Prince of Thurn and Taxis for returning to him a crested soup tureen which had been looted by American troops and which ended up in McMasters' inventory. His claim to intimacy with the British royal family seemed far-fetched at the time, but in the light of recent developments (1992) it seems in retrospect quite likely that they admitted such raffish characters to their family circle. His recollections of the

kleptomaniac of the Dowager Queen Mary was embellished with much detail, such as her having invited herself to lunch at the new flat of an impoverished guardsman who was obliged to follow custom and place some suitable treasure in view for her to steal. All he had was a jade carving, and he tried to keep an eye on it, but when Her Majesty was gone, it too was gone, and he received a note from a lady-in-waiting: "Her Majesty has commanded me to thank you for the exquisite little gift..."

McMasters claimed to be the rightful heir of the Lairds of Inness, and we called him "The Laird" thereafter. He had with him a teenage son by a French countess who, listening to his father, often interjected, "Mais tu exageres, Papa!" He undoubtedly did. The Laird was the most accomplished linguist I had ever met, and could imitate even regional dialects of French and Spanish perfectly.

He disappeared, and the last I heard of him was from a Yucatan couple who spotted him at the airport in Madrid. He seemed impatient not to prolong the meeting because he was smuggling some "national treasure" out of the country.

I generally avoided the local aristocracy. Although very pleasant and exquisitely polite, they knew little of interest to the U.S. Government (drug trafficking, international fraud, desperadoes fleeing justice, etc.) and almost to a man belonged to the Partido Accion Nacional, more or less permanently out of power.

Nevertheless, Gormley and I were invited to dinner at the residence of Fausta Peon de Mediz, widow of a famous local folklorist. There we discovered how raw was the nerve of the Yucatanians with regard to the "Mexicans." To make pleasant conversation, Jim remarked that he had spent a very pleasant year in Mexico City, whereupon our hostess snapped, "Well, I hope you did not pick up any of their barbarous habits while you were there."

One day we got word that a small airplane, stolen by some American beach bums on Isla Mujeres was seen crashed in the great coastal swamp north of Campeche. Gormley went to investigate. Towing a flat-bottomed swamp canoe with an Indian guide in it behind a hired launch, the police and Vice Consul Gormley made their way up the coast, losing the Indian and the punt (found later), capsized on landing (ruining an expensive U.S. Government camera) and made their way inland assailed by swarms of mosquitoes, in the blistering sun. No bodies were found.

I was happy to have a vice-consul who could deal with dispatch with the assorted lunatics who came our way, like Cornelius Rockefeller Vanderbilt Harriman the Fourth, who came to the attention of the police at the airport for drunkenness and insulting behavior. Approached by Gormley, who accused him of being drunk, this self-styled scion of America's richest families opened his suitcase, vomited into it, closed it, and proceeded to shout abuse.

Pathetic drug addicts were part of my job. One pretty red-headed girl of Jewish extraction used to sit in the Cafe Express with a dazed expression typical of an addict. She had been abandoned by a boyfriend, also an addict, about whom I will write more later. I asked her if she needed help. She sneered and spat some insult. Day after day she sat there. I knew she stayed in the hotel a few doors away. One day she was absent, and I overheard a group of typical smugglers joking about "la gringa." One had just come from her room and said to another, "Go on up, it's your turn." A few days later she was back and a waiter handed me a note: "I want to go home." I called her stepfather and asked him to wire plane fare to Boston. "Tell me this," he said, "is she going to need a fix when she gets here?"

American smugglers became a large part of my work. The professionals, like these pilots, always escaped scot-free, and worked with Yucatanean or Merida confederates who kept the local authorities bribed. I discovered that the local official in charge of protecting the ancient sites even advised the smugglers of the price they should ask and received a commission. The guard at the ancient ruins of Oxkintok, which I visited, came to the consulate a few days later and offered to sell me an idol.

Many of the treasures were forgeries produced by local crooks such as Mario Diaz Triay, who specialized in stone, and Enrique Gottdiener Soto, who did jades with a dentist's drill. Mario, whom I knew well, was caught once and accused of robbing a ruin. He feared to tell the court that the works the police confiscated were fake because he felt that if it were to get out his business would be ruined. He tried to bribe the judge, to no avail. Mexico City had ordered a crackdown. Moreover, "experts" had come from Mexico City and had testified that they were genuine. Finally he told the disbelieving court that they were forgeries, and took them to his workshop, where Indians were busy carving idols from small photographs taken in the ruins.

Mario offered me one for the garden in his New York gangster accent. "Anything ya want - rain god, corn god. My boys carve it up real good; put strings all over when they put it in the acid bath, like root marks. Sprinkle a little iodine on, like those brown spots on the rocks in the boonies; pee on it, leave it out in da sun a while so it looks like it was layin' aroun' in a milpa somewhere."

A peddler of Mayan and colonial antiquities sometimes came to my door and tried to sell me choice objects. It was technically illegal to remove pre-Columbian artifacts from Mexico, or indeed from the site where they were found, which the peddler had certainly done. I soon discovered that he was a goldmine of information about the activities of criminals in whom Washington was much more interested, and I bought a few items in order to keep him coming - and talking. The embassy on one occasion asked what I knew of a certain Yucatanean who lived on the road to Progreso. I asked the peddler.

"He has a business of shipping documents," he said. "For example, if a shipload of American wheat is on its way from New Orleans to, say, Nigeria, he has documents which make the ship deliver the wheat somewhere else - to one of his partners."

I asked him one day about Moreno Chauvet, the heroin czar of Mexico, who was a Yucatecan, and the peddler told me that one of Moreno's assistants came from Mexico City once a month to Progreso, the port of Merida, "to go fishing".

"But when he comes, it is always when the ship from Antwerp in Belgium arrives!"

I passed considerable narcotics information to Washington, and, although I asked that thanks be conveyed to my Mexican informants in the local bureaucracy to give them credit with their superiors, it never was.

There were about 30 clandestine airstrips all over the peninsula from which small planes carried drugs and archeological treasures to the U.S. and to which they smuggled American appliances, watches, and guns in return. Some American shrimp boats, instead of catching shrimp, traded merchandise for shrimp caught by Mexicans in Campeche. Sometimes they would tie their craft together at anchor and engage in drunken parties off Campeche. Whores would go out in motorboats to add to the fun and were sometimes thrown overboard, unpaid. I refused to become engaged in these insoluble problems, other than to bury the occasional American shrimper shot to death by his roistering comrades in some brawl and thrown overboard. A Campeche woman we called "The Dragon Lady" had a lucrative business salvaging American shrimp boats deliberately scuttled in very shallow water by their captains, whom she bribed.

Occasionally American desperadoes came to Yucatan. One hijacked a small airplane, holding the young pilot at gunpoint, and ordered him to fly to Cuba. The pilot protested in vain that he did not have enough fuel. The craft crashed in the ocean. The pilot was killed, the hijacker saved by the Coast Guard (U.S.). When I radioed the Coast Guard to land him at a Mexican court to face justice, the C.G. refused and delivered him to a Florida hospital, from which he was quietly released by the FBI. Our despicable policy was always to keep American citizens out of the hands of the Mexican authorities, regardless of the heinousness of their crimes. No one has ever been extradited in either direction under the extradition treaty.

The brother of the pilot, mad with grief, went gunning for me, thinking, apparently, that I had somehow prevented the hijacker from being arrested. He was caught and disarmed.

The hijacker had left his automobile at the airport. The Mexican police asked us to be present when they searched the car, and even permitted my vice-consul (not Gormley) to search the trunk. A couple of months later I was thumbing through the file on the case and found a piece of paper with the name and address of "The Dragon Lady" on it. I asked the vice-consul how it came to be there.

"Oh, I found it in the trunk of that guy's car," he said nonchalantly.

I flew into a rage. "You mean you deliberately withheld evidence in a criminal case?" I shouted. I forget his idiotic answer. The selection process of foreign service officers varies according to the ideology of the White House. This fellow was of very humble origin, and was to cause much grief. I had to bring the piece of paper to the Mexican authorities with my apology.

The vice-consul's next outrage involved the disappearance of two American airline stewardesses and a Mexican drug peddler/addict on a tiny rented hotel sailboat off Cozumel Island. The vice-consul was to spend the day in Campeche on a consular matter and I was to take our pouch to Mexico City. On the eve of his departure I reminded him that the post must at all times be manned by an American and that he must return before dark because the ambassador had prohibited driving by night. Next day, when I arrived at the embassy from my hotel in Mexico City I found the consular section in an uproar. Frantic parents of two girls lost on a sailboat had called the consulate and no American was on duty! The vice-consul had decided to spend the night in Campeche! The girls were never found, despite a search by Coast Guard aircraft.

The final blow by this gem was when I received a note threatening harm to my daughter Valerie and my wife unless I delivered a large sum on a lonely road at night. I went to the police, who prepared a plan. On the evening designated by the extortionist I would leave the back door of the consulate open. The vice consul would conduct them inside and I would meet them there and together we would go to the now "staked-out" rendezvous. We (I and the vice-consul) were to tell no one, since one of our servants might have been in collusion with the extortionist. I went to the consulate and found it locked. I went to the vice-consul's house alongside and there were the policemen, machine-pistols in their laps, being served coffee by the vice-consul's wife. At this moment my own wife arrived for some housekeeping reason (we lived next door) and found this armed band. Why was she not permitted to know what the vice-consul's wife was permitted to know? Again I was furious. I drove the consulate station wagon, with the police concealed on the floor, to the rendezvous, but nothing happened. I could see the cigarettes of other police glowing in the dark alongside the road, so perhaps the criminal had been alerted and frightened off.

I co-opted a resident American smuggler, Tom Kingsbury, as an informant. One of his tasks was to apprise me of the presence in Merida of any dangerous American. He had introduced me to Licenciado Eduardo Palomeque Perez de Hermida, a half-mad pharmacist who operated a snack bar cum drugstore near the market. Suspicious characters seemed to end up eventually at Eduardo's, attracted like the flies struggling in the saucers of strawberry jam he set out on the counter as fly bait. I dropped in at Eduardo's one day and was introduced to a customer - a balding, blue-eyed man, about 40 and six feet tall, with a wife who could have been no more than twenty, and two small boys, about 2 and 3. The customer said his name was "Ward" and said vaguely that he was looking for business opportunities.

Some weeks later Kingsbury came to see me and reported that a highly suspicious gringo was in town - Ward. "He talks about killing people all the time," said Kingsbury.

"A lot of people talk big, but it's all bluff," I said.

"Maybe so," said Kingsbury, "but I'm worried. One of the people he talks about killing is me!"

"Why would he want to kill you?" I asked.

"Because he found out that I know you and he's afraid I'll tell you what he does for a living."

"What does he do for a living?"

"He buys cars in the U.S. under an assumed name, pays one installment, drives them to Mexico and sells them. Forges birth certificates and drivers' licenses for wetbacks, too."

"Well, nobody is going to get very excited about that," I observed, "but if it will make you feel better I'll call the FBI at the embassy. I asked for Nate Ferris, the "Legal Attaché" (i.e., FBI chief).

"Say, Nate, there's a guy down here, about 40, blue eyes, half bald, very young wife, two little kids..."

"Hold 'im! Don't let 'im out of your sight! That's Bolin, public enemy No. ____." (I forget the number)

"Well, Nate, I have other things to do, and the fellow I would use to watch him is scared to death of him, but I'll try to keep tabs on him."

Ferris alerted the Mexican Government, which sent two powerfully built detectives to Merida with huge pistols in their briefcases.

"He's at the Hotel Miramar in Chetumal," I told them. They captured Bolin and delivered him to the FBI at the border at Brownsville. Bolin got only a year in jail because they could not prove a murder he had committed. I bought one of his guns of the designated caliber from a gun fancier who had bought it from Bolin's wife. I fired it into my swimming pool and sent the retrieved bullet to the FBI, but it proved to be from the wrong gun. Nevertheless I received a letter of commendation from J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the F.B.I. for my alertness in the capture of Bolin. Later I kept Bolin's 9 mm Browning automatic under the seat of my car in Cambodia. On my first leave from Moscow a little more than a year later I read in the Washington Post that Bolin had been killed while trying to hijack a Texas shrimp boat - just about the most foolhardy scheme

imaginable. Curiously this was precisely what he was planning to do when I arranged his capture.

Americans in Yucatan had more to fear from their own countrymen than from the mild Yucatanians. One day I received a call from a man named Ben Haggott in California. His son-in-law had sent a cable from Yucatan informing him that his daughter had been killed in an automobile accident. Could I verify this? I called him back later and told him that neither the police nor the hospitals had any record of a fatal accident. Haggott replied that meanwhile his son-in-law had returned to California and announced that she had died of a heart attack; he had invented the automobile accident "to spare my feelings," said Haggott, who thought this very fishy. He was coming to Yucatan to investigate. I promised to help.

The woman had died on Cozumel. Haggott went there and found that the doctor of the small army unit stationed there had certified the cause of death as cardiac arrest - largely on the statement of her husband, a cosmetic surgeon. Mexican law prohibits the movement of cadavers by public conveyance more than 24 hours after death, so the woman could not be exhumed and autopsied elsewhere. But Haggott, a rich man, paid the expenses of a forensic medical team from Mexico City, which conducted the autopsy and found barbiturates in her muscles, but not in her stomach - proving that it had been injected.

In the meantime I had found a raffish character, Conrad Ream, who, with a Yucatanian, testified that they had both danced with the pretty, 38-year-old woman during a previous visit of the woman to Isla Mujeres with her husband. Ream recalled that she had told him that her husband had once tried to smother her.

There has long been an extradition treaty between the U.S. and Mexico, but no one has ever been extradited in either direction. Defense lawyers in the U.S. always claim that their clients would not get a fair trial in barbarous Mexico, and the Mexicans for nationalistic reasons refuse to hand over criminals to the U.S. unless they are U.S. citizens, and in that case they just push them across the border without ceremony. So, it was impossible for Haggott to have his son-in-law extradited to Mexico for murder. Instead, he filed a "wrongful death action" in California. The motive of the murder? California is a community property state. Haggott's daughter apparently had grounds for divorce, which would have netted her half her husband's fortune. Conversely, by killing her, he would get all her considerable assets. Unbeknownst to him, however, she had written a will leaving all her assets to her mother!

Mexico is the ideal place to murder a spouse. Another fellow, a youth in his twenties, simply took his fifty-ish alcoholic wife swimming off Progreso and drowned her. No witnesses, indifferent police. He inherited her money.

One day I received a letter from a man who described himself as "The Black Orpheus" an American Negro musician, saying that he was visiting Yucatan and would be willing to

give a concert at the American cultural center, in order "to relieve the arid cultural climate" of Yucatan, as he put it. Before I could discuss it, however, I received a letter from a court in New York asking me to serve a summons on the fellow, one Pritchard, for paying for three plane tickets to Santo Domingo with a rubber check. I could not legally do this.

Knowing the political sensitivity of anything having to do with Negroes in the U.S. I replied by letter to Pritchard in terms of 18th century courtesy, thanking him and saying I would take his offer under advisement. He wrote again, suggesting a meeting, but I politely put him off. In the meantime the Department responded to my request for information on Pritchard. The thick pouched dossier was a catalogue of fraud and blackmail on three continents. Pritchard, a homosexual, had seduced the private secretary of the president of Senegal, ingratiated himself with the director of the U.S. Information Service (always soft touches for Negro culture-bearers) and used these connections to commit various frauds. In Liberia he rented the house of a deceased politician from his widow and threatened her with a revolver when she came to collect the rent. He had used the rubber check to buy airplane tickets to Santo Domingo for himself and two Lebanese homosexual friends, stayed a month in the Holiday Inn and refused to pay on the grounds that the manager, a Southerner, had uttered racial slurs at him.

I knew then that if I ever found myself in the same room with him he would claim that I had insulted him with racial slurs. So I avoided him.

He began to cultivate young men in Merida, and the mother of one of them came to me and said that Pritchard had given her son a check and promised to get the boy a scholarship at the Julliard School of Music. Unable to cite the Department's dossier, I merely cited the summons from the New York court, which was a matter of public record. She got the point.

Pritchard wrote again, insisting that I host a concert for him. I claimed I was about to go on a trip. Another letter announced that he had been invited to join a "secret Nazi study group" of Yucatanians, and threatened to write a book exposing them. Another letter said that he might be forced to accept the offer of the Cuban consul to give a concert there. He did give a concert at the Cuban consulate. One of my volunteer spies said the music consisted of simple pieces used as exercises by piano students.

A Belgium Communist named De Ridder suddenly appeared on the scene. I thought perhaps the party had assigned him to "manage" Pritchard in the manner most useful to them. An informant then told me that Pritchard, who was now living in a rented beach cottage at Sisal, had usurped the pulpit of the church in Hunucma and had harangued the Indian congregation on racism, American and Mexican. This was my opportunity! I went to Governor Luis Torres Mesias and said that heretofore Pritchard had been a purely American problem, but with his speech at Hunucma and the threatened book he was interfering in Mexican politics and attempting to stir up racial antagonism in Mexico.

To my surprise the governor replied, "We have been watching them ever since one of the Negro's assistants was in an automobile accident and a group of students came to demand that he be freed. We noted that all these students had been to Cuba. My men kept the beach cottage under observation and heard the sounds of firing practice. We believe they were in contact with Cuban trawlers off the coast. So today my men broke in and arrested them all. They will be sent to Mexico City and then expelled from the country."

The "firing practice" was undoubtedly duck hunters, for Pritchard and his pansy cohorts were hardly the stuff for guerrilla warfare. To the leftists in town my influence now seemed enormous. I went to see the governor and within hours poor Pritchard was in handcuffs! At Brownsville Pritchard gave an interview to the local newspaper saying that De Ridder was a spy of mine whose task was to get him into trouble.

Later, when Vice Consul Gormley was in Washington, he sent me a clipping from the Washington Post which said that Pritchard had defrauded a national Anti-Vietnam War Committee of thousands of dollars it had given him for "expenses" in the recruitment of major musicians and orchestra conductors for the noble cause, these worthies being close friends of his, according to Pritchard. As the date approached when these famous artists were to speak, or play, at a great meeting organized by the committee, a nervous functionary had called them and was told that they had never heard of Pritchard! Pritchard refused to be interviewed, saying that he was suffering from porphyria, "the royal disease" which affected George III and he must not endure anything upsetting.

Then there were other less thrilling tasks - like remonstrating with the University of Yucatan for allowing one of its staff to sell medical school degrees to Americans who had never attended that university, and complaining to the state government about the sale of false Mexican passports to applicants for US immigration visas. The passports fraudulently identified them as close relatives of Mexicans already legally admitted.

* * * * *

Yucatan had tried twice to secede from Mexico. In 1848 it had requested admission to the U.S.A. but was turned down. In 1917 the Yucatanians, under a military adventurer named Argumedo, had rebelled and were crushed by the invading Mexican army of Gen. Salvador Alvarado, who shot and hanged many of them, while others fled to the U.S. A general dislike of Mexicans persisted - and there was a small, clandestine independence movement. Two men who had given me a wall calendar inscribed to me as "ambassador to Yucatan" invited me to a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce - which I normally would have attended. But some suspicion kept me away. At the meeting they presented an appeal to the United Nations to pressure Mexico to grant independence to Yucatan. If I had been present the Communists would have claimed that the Yankee imperialists were behind it and some gullible sections of the ruling party would have believed them. Gullibility is a common Mexican failing. When I sold my Volkswagen to a young P.R.I. official when I left, a Communist leader said that the car was a gift from the CIA and in it the purchaser would record conversations of politicians by means of a listening device

implanted in the purchaser's knee. He had been in an automobile accident and had had to have an operation on his knee.

Yucatan was overwhelmingly in favor of the conservative Partido Accion Nacional, but the ruling P.R.I. regularly rigged the elections to keep them out of office. Too close acquaintance with PAN activities was compromising, so I carefully balanced my contacts among both parties. I had excellent sources of information and I was beginning to get evidence that the PAN was going to make a determined effort to frustrate the rigging in the forthcoming mayoral election. So firmly embedded was the P.R.I. suspicion that the U.S. secretly backed the PAN that the governor told me that if they continued their agitation he would be obliged to "force" the election. He obviously intended that I convey this threat to the opposition. Of course I did not, but, convinced that the PAN might actually win, I decided to leave Merida for Cozumel before the election, so that I could credibly deny the later inevitable charges that I masterminded a PAN victory. How could I have? I was not even there! The PAN won - by shaming the troops guarding the polls into not letting the governor's thugs steal the ballot boxes. I was able to cite my Cozumel absence to convincing effect. The leftist leader Lombardo Toledano made the expected accusation in the press, as did the small Merida Communist Party in wall posters.

The Mexican press is rather more venal than the American press. One day a Mexican (not a Yucatecan) visited me in my office, said he was a journalist from Guanajuato, about 1000 miles away. He blandly said that unless I would pay him a certain sum he would publish highly damaging articles about me. I held my temper and replied very politely that I was indifferent to whatever articles about me which might appear 1000 miles away. "But your embassy...?" he began.

"Is quite satisfied with my work, and I would not even have to explain myself should such articles appear. Furthermore it is far more compromising to a foreign representative to give money to a journalist in the country of his assignment, for he could then be accused of interfering in the country's internal affairs. I might add that such articles as you might publish in Guanajuato would not be republished here. The editors of both Yucatecan dailies are good friends of mine..." He left, obviously chagrined.

It was one of my local newspaper friends who came to see me one day to report that his yacht had been stolen by "gringos" and the Indian watchman on board kidnapped. This was serious! How did he know they were gringos? Witnesses said some were tall and blond and spoke what they thought was English. I told him I would investigate and call him later.

I went downtown to the Cafe Express, a smugglers' den at that time - where I picked up useful information from time to time. I think I spent more time there than at the office. A good diplomat - or intelligence officer - should spend as little time as possible in his office.

I greeted newcomers as they entered the cafe and asked each to sit down and have a "cafecito." I asked each if they had seen any suspicious gringos in town lately. Finally one said that his cousin, a receptionist at a cheap hotel opposite the bus station, told him that five or six gringos carrying golf bags had spent the night there and would not allow the bellhops to carry the bags! The receptionist had noted that one of them had a tattoo of "the world with an anchor behind it" [the Marine Corps emblem].

I called the FBI and gave them a description. Later the FBI called back and said that the group was known as "The Anti-Communist Liberation Army" headed by one Frank Sturgis, and they were on their way to liberate Guatemala. I protested that Guatemala was not a Communist country. "We know that; that's why we threw the report away at first. We decided the informant was giving us a cock-and-bull story."

I summoned the owner of the boat and told him I had reason to believe his boat was headed south along the coast of Quintana Roo, where a two-knot current flows north. Together we calculated the fuel consumption and decided they would have to put into Belize for fuel. I cabled Tepper, our consul there, and asked him to inform the British that heavily armed pirates would be arriving. The British arrested them all.

Some months later I had lunch with the British ambassador to Mexico, Peter Hope, and asked him what had happened; I had heard nothing since the arrest.

"Well, just as you said, they were heavily armed - but none of the ammunition fitted any of the guns! We asked the Mexican consul if he wanted them extradited. He said he wasn't interested - I understand he is interested only in smuggling for his own account."

Frank Sturgis later achieved notoriety as the commandant of the Watergate burglars. I assume his Guatemala expedition was some sort of fraud perpetrated against some densely ignorant millionaire who put up the money.

Dealing with lunatics is a large part of any American consul's work. One morning, in the middle of breakfast, there was a knock on my front door. I opened it to find a man in a fedora wearing dark glasses.

"Harben?" he asked, in an authoritative basso.

"Yes, what can I do for you?"

"You'll be getting a message from Washington filling you in on my mission in a day or two, but I thought I'd touch base with you before I got down to work. I'll check back in a week or so and go over a few things with you."

"Yes, of course, thank you," I stammered. He turned and left. Very angry, I called the Embassy and said I thought I told those people down the hall to inform me when they

send somebody into my district. I blew the cover of the last one. "Now there's another one at my door!"

"We didn't send anybody down there," said my supervisor after checking. "Must be another nut." And so it was.

In succeeding weeks "008" as the habitues of the cafes soon were calling him, sat in corners, eyeing people suspiciously and scribbling in a small notebook. He told too many people he was a secret agent of the CIA, which worried me. I sat down at his table and said, "Look here, you could get yourself in a lot of trouble if anybody suddenly believes you. So get out of here before that happens!"

He replied rather rudely and said that I had better watch my step. If I interfered with his mission I would find myself transferred to some pesthole.

There was nothing I could do except discreetly spread the word that he was mentally ill. One day the airport called to say that he had been arrested for insulting the officials there, whom he accused of diverting a special aircraft sent by President Lyndon Johnson to bring him back to Washington for consultation. I found him weeping in a jail cell, his mind having cleared sufficiently to recognize the shattering of his pretense. I had him shipped back to the Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare for hospitalization.

Another maniac, a Trotskyite living on a collective farm (ejido) in a remote village used to visit me and was so impressed with the Marxist learning I had picked up in my Columbia courses that he wrote a letter to the New York Trotskyite newspaper describing me as "a foremost Marxist scholar."

To give the devil his due, my insubordinate vice-consul was a marvel with maniacs. I sent him to handle a huge, crazed American who was threatening several people with a machete. He not only disarmed him but brought him meekly to my office. He was very helpful in still another tragic case. A discolored body of a young woman, covered with feeding crabs had been found on the mud flats near Chetumal, in Quintana Roo. When this "cadaver" was brought to the morgue, however, it showed signs of life. She was also heavily drugged. It took a month for the hospital to bring her back to health, but it was discovered then that she was insane, and even attacked the doctors and the nurses. Since dangerous patients must be accompanied on international airlines, it took some time to find a reliable person to accompany her to the U.S. During that time she lived with the Vice-Consul and his family, and he somehow managed to keep her calm. She had the disconcerting habit of suddenly stripping off her clothes in restaurants, but did not attack anyone while in the Vice-Consul's care. The young woman had come down to Mexico with two burglars and had been abandoned by them. She was pregnant. Her mother was in an asylum. It would be interesting to know how many hundreds of thousands of dollars she and her progeny have cost the government thus far.

On another occasion I had a violent American citizen shanghaied back to the U.S. - certainly a violation of his civil rights and all that. He came to the consulate and demanded a passport, which we were not authorized to issue. When my pretty Yucatecan secretary told him so he abused her in foul language and said he would come back in a few days and he'd better have his passport or there would be blood on the floor. A quick call to the Department revealed that he was a dishonorably discharged soldier who had defected to East Germany but beat up so many people there that the Communists had pushed him back across the border.

My secretary had elicited the fact that he was staying in the port of Progreso, where there lived a kindly, middle-aged gentleman who was very pro-American and had helped the consulate with Progreso problems before.

I described the fellow to Arturo Milan Gonzalez and told him that the American had used language with Lolita, my secretary, which no man should ever use in the presence of a lady, much less to a lady. Arturo, who admired Lolita, was shocked. He would see to it, he said. Next day he called to say that they had found this gringo in a bar and bought him drinks - many drinks. When he passed out Arturo and his friends put him on the vegetable boat headed for Pompano Beach, Florida. When awakened he was halfway to the U.S. and out of my hair. It cost me a bottle of rum.

Some time later the embassy sent a cheap form letter, signed by the ambassador, to be sent to special friends of the consulate. I told the embassy I would not send such a trashy looking piece of paper to anyone, and insisted on a proper letter, on letterhead bond. I got it. Arturo has it to this day, despite the slights of a later consul who remonstrated with him for giving the impression that he had some official connection with the consulate.

I had some minor economic responsibilities. The embassy asked me to report on the "Alliance for Progress" - a scheme of President Kennedy whereby the U.S. guaranteed collateralized bank loans in Latin America for worthy projects. Mostly it was used to finance capital flight out of the recipient countries; in Yucatan it was used for smuggling. "It's like this," a banker told me. "You borrow or rent a herd of cattle from a friend and use it as collateral for a bank loan for some fictitious industrial project. Then you buy a couple of truckloads of Scotch whiskey in Belize, pay off the customs, drive it into Mexico, sell it, and pay off the loan. The banks like it; everybody likes it." The embassy was silent, as all embassies usually are when they discover the failures of a project dear to the White House.

A request came to find some technical assistance project which might be used for propaganda favorable to Pres. Johnson. I had just the thing - a letter from an humble Indian in a remote village begging for a pump to irrigate the fields of the village. It was written in the "Great White Father" style which would look fine in a USIA pamphlet. We got the money and with enormous difficulty transported it over a very rocky road to the village. So afterward I began to receive visits from angry Indians from the village who complained that the Indian who had requested the pump, and on whose land it was

located, was demanding exorbitant payments for the water and was threatening them with a shotgun when they refused to pay.

MOSCOW 1969 - 1971

In late 1969 I was posted to Moscow as Science Officer in charge of negotiating scientific exchanges and reporting on scientific developments in the USSR. I was the only Russian-speaking Foreign Service Officer with a scientific degree (geology). As it turned out, the job was primarily political - I was constantly dealing with American scientists expelled as "Zionist spies." Before leaving, however, I received a superb month-long briefing on all aspects of science - high energy physics, space exploration, chemistry, medicine, meteorology, etc.

My opposite number in the Soviet Academy of Sciences was a steely-eyed old colonel in the secret police who masqueraded as Head of the Foreign Relations Section, Stepan Gavrilovich Korneyev. At the State Committee for Atomic Energy I dealt with Ivan Smolin, assisted by a tall, full-lipped young woman interpreter, Valentina Kondratova, who was probably KGB and assigned to watch me and Smolin, who was, however, a Russian patriot who had lost parts of several fingers in the tanks in the Second World War.

During my Washington briefings I was told that my predecessor had sent many translations of newspaper articles on scientific subjects which were not needed, since they received all the newspapers in Washington, where they were translated by experts. But my predecessor, Christopher Squire, had moved up, not out, and was my superior. Although I told him of Washington's disinterest in the articles, he constantly instructed me to make reports of articles he thought were interesting, which kept me away from more important things. Due to the close KGB surveillance normal diplomatic practice was impossible and the embassy staff underemployed and kept busy reading newspapers which were sent to Washington anyway.

As I said later in a letter to the Washington Post, we lived in apartment blocks to which no Russian without KGB permission was admitted past the guard. We were driven to and from the embassy by KGB chauffeurs, and closely followed whenever we left the embassy. As a result the political section could do little but read the newspapers, summarize articles, and send them to Washington with bland comments. Despite the fact that we had no real secrets, all rooms contained listening devices, as did our apartments. Our presence served only to justify the reciprocal presence of an equal number of Russians in Washington, where they used their abundant freedom to collect all sorts of military and technical information.

In the exchanges of scientists, too, it was mostly a one-way street. The Russians always arranged to have their scientists visit the U.S. first. There they were briefed on the latest scientific research, shown laboratories, etc. When the American return delegation went to the USSR they were shown very little. Many were infuriated by their treatment, but, in the

interests of detente, were persuaded to write highly favorable trip reports on their return home. One General Electric researcher banged on Korneyev's desk and swore that he'd never again let a Russian near his laboratory. A high-energy physics delegation called me on the phone to say they were going home, for the Russians were showing them nothing. I asked them to come and see me first. They did, and I wrote on my blackboard that their telephone conversation with me had been taped by the secret police, who were undoubtedly alarmed; if they would return to their hotel they would certainly find some sheepish Russians waiting to take them to see what they wanted to see. Which is what happened.

During that period the Russian government was strongly anti-Semitic - partly for historical reasons, partly because of demonstrations and attacks on Russian diplomats in New York by fanatic Zionist groups demanding free emigration of Soviet Jews, and partly because Zionism - an allegiance to a foreign state - was incompatible with Soviet patriotism. About ten percent of the Soviet Academy of Sciences were Jews. They were hard to punish or persecute because they were indispensable. The secret police seemed to be trying to prove that the discontent of these Jewish scientists was due to foreign, mainly U.S., spies and agents. As the American Science officer I was the obvious choice as mastermind of a fabricated plot. Literally carloads of KGB agents followed me, ransacked my apartment and my car when I was out, in search of some incriminating detail which could be embroidered into a "plot." Had I had sinister motives, however, I would never have executed them due to the tightness of the surveillance.

The disparity between the view of Russia held by the liberal scientific community in the U.S. and reality made my job very difficult. American scientists were quick to accuse embassy officials of being "cold warriors" and yet it was my job to ensure that they did not unwittingly play into the hands of the KGB. I briefed them in a jocular way, frequently praising the Russians but remarking that they were suspicious and not to be alarmed at surreptitious search of their baggage, warning that "pickpockets" in Moscow were especially fond of address books (here I would wink).

I had to try to protect their Russian scientist counterparts from their naivete. An opened and resealed letter (with the new KGB glue drooling out from beneath the flap) from an American scientist asked me to thank a Professor So and So next time I saw him, for the valuable information on his research. This was sent right through the open mail! Once even a letter from some office in the Pentagon which had simply been dropped in a street mailbox! Since this missive concerned Russian civil defense and was classified, it was quite impossible to dispel Russian suspicions of me, and Russian civil defense was not in my area of responsibility anyway!

Stepan Gavrilovich was extremely thorough. The Viglierchio case gave me some insight into the workings of his mind. He summoned me one day to inform me that a Dr. Viglierchio, a specialist in nematodes (a less military subject cannot be imagined) was a "Zionist spy" and had to leave the country immediately. Amused, I replied, "Mr.

Korneyev, in Washington they'll believe almost anything, but not that anyone named Viglierchio is a Zionist anything. Why not say he's an agent of the Mafia?"

"The competent authorities have determined that he is a Zionist spy," Korneyev insisted stonily.

So I had to find out why poor Viglierchio had been singled out. He was stunned.

"What have you been doing in the past few weeks?" I asked.

"Working on Nematodes with Prof. ___!" he replied.

"What else? Any social activities?"

"Well, he took me to a party one evening."

"Who was at the party?"

"A lot of Russians," said Viglierchio.

"What did they do?"

"Mostly we listened to poetry of some poet who was there."

"What kind of poetry?"

"I don't know. I don't understand Russian."

I took Viglierchio to McKinney Russell, our cultural affairs counselor and explained the problem. Viglierchio thought he could recognize the name of the poet if he heard it again. Russ recited the names of "bad" (in the eyes of the KGB) poets, and Viglierchio cried "That's the one!" after one name of a Jewish poet. This coupled with the fact that a Jewish journalist Anthony Astrakhan, had left his card in Viglierchio's box at the hotel was enough to convince Korneyev, apparently. So Viglierchio left, and gave me a large number of gift scientific books to send by embassy surface pouch, since he would be overweight otherwise.

Next a young physicist named Stephen Solomon, from the University of Oklahoma, fell into Korneyev's net. I worried that Solomon might be a target because of his juicily Jewish name. Tactfully the KGB launched its shocking expose of Zionist skulduggery just after Solomon's departure: a full page article describing how he received from traitorous Soviet Jews rocket secrets in men's toilets, etc. McKinney Russell was named as the spymaster of the whole operation.

Why not me? Russell had never even met Solomon. I was passed over probably because I was in a position to exact revenge. Some months before, I had been detached, with a Jewish embassy officer, to escort three Congressmen around Moscow. One of them insisted on visiting the synagogue. When we were leaving the Congressmen's hotel the infuriated KGB was smashing my car and that of Martin Wenick, my colleague. An obvious KGB officer was impassively supervising the destruction. I walked up to him and said, "Tell your boss that this is going to cost you about a billion dollars!"

A young man stepped off the sidewalk to help me change my slashed tire. He apparently thought I merely had a flat. The KGB plainclothesman muttered something to him and his face suddenly became a mask of fear. He stumbled quickly back into the passing crowd.

The embassy was always short of cars for errands. I used my personal car for business when my wife did not need it. In it I used to deliver scientific information of incalculable value to the State Committee for Atomic Energy from our Atomic Energy Commission. So when the material came I just stacked it in my office and in my bugged living room I told my wife, "I'm not going to deliver anything until I receive all the parts for the car from Germany. And if this happens again I'll throw all this nuclear technology in the river and they can swim for it!" This may have been the reason I was not named as Solomon's "spymaster." The AEC material was desperately needed by the Russian nuclear energy program. There must have been some angry exchanges between Smolin, the GRU man at the State Committee and the thugs of the KGB

The delivery was humiliating anyway. I had to bring the boxes - cubic yards of technical data - to a small, one-story brick extension to the State Committee. Inside there was a narrow room about the size of a small apartment kitchen. The floor consisted of a hinged trap door so that the workers behind the roll-top steel curtain along one side could push a button and send any suspicious visitor hurtling into the cellar. There were two buttons on the wall. One was marked "SECRET;" the other "non-secret." They never opened the curtain if I pushed "non-secret," so I pushed "SECRET." On a couple of occasions they refused to accept the shipment. Once because it was "non-secret" and the other time because it was addressed to a certain professor by name and they claimed not to know of him. Infuriated, I replied that delivery to the proper office was their problem, not mine, and as far as I was concerned they could throw it all in the garbage if they wished, and I walked out. I held up the Soviet nuclear energy program about six months. The VW parts were slow in arriving.

I don't recall if it was before or after this that Dr. Glenn Seaborg, Chairman of the AEC, arrived for a visit with several prominent American scientists. They were particularly interested in meeting with Dr. Flerov, at Dubna. Flerov claimed to have discovered Element No. 116 in nature. Seaborg spoke in awed tones with his colleagues about this discovery, which was far over the heads of the KGB (and mine), who would have prohibited the article in which Flerov announced it, had they known of its implications. Unlike U-238, which splits into only two parts, Element 116 split into very many,

releasing incomparably more energy. A revolver bullet made of the stuff would blow up a city (if the problems of manufacture could be worked out).

Radioactive elements leave traces in glass caused by the particles emitted. A study of these tracks indicates what element is emitting the particles. On the earth's surface cosmic rays leave such a multitude of tracks that they obscure everything else. Most radioactive elements occur with lead and disintegrate into isotopes of lead. Lead began to be used in bottle glass in the late 18th or early 19th century. Dr. Flerov reasoned that exuberant drunkards often threw their empty bottles down wells, which, if deep enough, protected them from cosmic rays. It was in such bottle glass that he found the tracks. Seaborg said, "This is a very sobering discovery, Dr. Flerov!" The KGB people looked at each other in confusion.

Apparently they decided to educate themselves by stealing Dr. Seaborg's attaché case in Leningrad, claiming it was a burglar. Seaborg's assistant called me, very agitated. "Don't worry!" I said, "I'm quite sure they will catch the burglar before Dr. Seaborg departs." The attaché case was returned the next day.

The Russians had pirated several of Seaborg's books and gave him several thousand rubles which they said were "royalties" just before he left. Seaborg thought he might buy a few dozen watches with the money, but I warned that few of the watches worked, and not for long. The stores were out of cameras, so he had to buy art books. These being very bulky, I offered to pouch them along with any other papers. I did so.

I then uncovered still another example of American bureaucratic stupidity. I began to be bombarded with telegrams from Seaborg's staff asking where his pouched books were, and letters from Viglierchio making the same complaint. I had been told by the security officer (why Washington would send such an idiot to Moscow was beyond me) that the classified pouch (i.e., secret) was taken to embassy Helsinki by an embassy officer on the train. I had sent other parcels to other scientists via this pouch and all arrived within three weeks. Seaborg and Viglierchio were the only scientists whose parcels had been pouched who were of special interest to the KGB. I went to see the Security Officer and asked him to tell me, step by step, what happened to the pouch on its way to safe hands in Helsinki.

"Well, an embassy officer takes it with him in an embassy car to the station and he takes it onto the train with him and accompanies it to Helsinki."

"In his compartment?"

"Oh no. It's too large for that!"

"Well, where the hell is it?"

"In the baggage car," replied the fool, as though it were the most natural thing in the world.

"You mean the Russians have our secret pouch in their sole possession for fifteen hours?"

"Well, yes, but it's sealed!" Such stupidity was beyond belief. I remembered Brautigam, the prewar German consul in Tiflis telling me in Germany how the Tiflis and Kiev consulate pouches were received in Berlin with the seals reversed. So I had to explain to Seaborg and Viglierchio that the delay was caused by the secret police going through the contents of their parcels and that they would receive them in due course.

One day a visitor to the embassy called me from the Marine desk. An American scientist. He insisted on seeing me although I was very busy and asked him to come the next day. I offered him ten minutes. He was a paleontologist specializing in the Permian - a subject even more harmless than Viglierchio's nematodes. He was quite agitated. When he tried to hail a taxi at the Academy of Sciences Hotel to come to the embassy a man in front of the hotel said something in Russian to each taxi and they drove off. Finally he had walked up the street and caught one and managed to leave.

"And that isn't all," he continued. "The Academy fellow who came to the hotel asked if I had any foreign literature, and I said I had copies of Time and Newsweek but hadn't read them yet. I said I would gladly give them to him when I had. Then he wanted to take me on a tour of Moscow. I said I was too tired. Then he asked if I could buy a gift for his mother-in-law in the foreign currency store. I was specifically told in Washington I wasn't to do that. I think he wanted to get me out of the room so that somebody could search my baggage."

"I can't imagine why they are interested in you, particularly," I said. "They could always look in your baggage at the airport before they bring it out where you pick it up. They often do."

"Well, I arrived a day early, so..."

"Aha! So you slipped by them..."

"I guess so. But I wanted to see you anyway because a fellow named Solomon at my university asked me to deliver a package to some friends of his at Novosibirsk, where I'm going."

I was stunned. "Didn't Mr. Solomon tell you that he had been exposed in the Soviet press as one of the most sinister spies ever to set foot in Russia?" The paleontologist's eyes bulged. "So now we know what they were looking for. But how did they know you had it?"

"Solomon said he'd write a letter ahead. I guess they intercepted it."

"My God! And where is this parcel?"

"Here. I brought it with me." He held it up. I took it and opened it. A Hebrew grammar, a history of Israel and similar subversive literature.

"Okay. Here's what you do. Go to Novosibirsk. At some point somebody - obviously a KGB agent - will sidle up to you and ask if you brought a package for someone. Tell him very nonchalantly that you were going to but you were afraid your baggage would be overweight and you had to leave it. Apologize profusely."

It happened as I predicted and the fellow had no further trouble.

I love wild mushrooms and had studied them for years. The Russians are also avid mushroom hunters and will travel tens of kilometers to get to a suitable forest to look for them. I therefore was very puzzled to see one of the most succulent mushrooms of all, the "shaggy mane", or *Coprinus comatus*, growing abundantly and untouched all over Moscow's parks and vacant lots. Together with a mushroom-loving colleague I spent weekends and lunch hours happily gathering them and eating them in every way imaginable. Once, as I stooped to pick one, a passing Russian said, "Nyet - poganyy!" (No! poisonous!)

Our KGB tails became frantic. Why were the imperialist spies picking poisonous mushrooms? I had examined the official mushroom identification chart and "shaggy mane" was missing! Shown, however, was a related species, *Coprinus atrementarius* which is somewhat poisonous when taken with alcohol. The state had decided to omit "shaggy mane" lest it be confused with *atrementarius*, or rather, vice versa. I had planned to return to a spot near the embassy to get some that were just emerging the day before and found them all stamped flat. The KGB, of course. I mentioned it to the new security officer, who said, "Obviously they think you're picking up microfilm wound around the stems."

The Nixon administration was eager for some spectacular joint venture with the Russians in order to impress the voters, and, as I was told after my return to the U.S. by a colonel in the NSC, to gain the votes of the many NASA employees in Florida and California. Thus the Apollo-Soyuz space linkup was born. The Russians were wary, but Washington moved patiently. The scheme alarmed me, since it would involve a massive transfer of space technology to the Russian space program, which was entirely military. With such technology the Russian goal of an orbiting space station would be greatly advanced. I forwarded to Washington translations of articles in the Soviet press which spoke frankly of such military uses. An article by Academician Zuyev said that from such a station targets on the earth thousands of kilometers apart could be located with an accuracy of a few tens of centimeters - i.e., missile targeting. Articles in Red Star, the organ of the armed forces, even spoke of launching missiles from such a platform.

For forwarding these translations I got the reputation in the White House and in NASA as a "hard-liner." This underscores an interesting problem of Foreign Service reporting. If an

officer does his duty by reporting facts which tend to call into question the desirability of a particular project or policy he may be accused of a personal distaste for that project or policy. If he fails to report such facts and the project results in disaster, he may be accused of concealing essential information. I thought I would avoid risk by expressing no opinion of my own and relying entirely on the published utterances of those with whom NASA proposed to enter into a joint venture. I was wrong.

I did what I could to bring the scheme to fruition, but there were other pitfalls along the way. A Foreign Service Officer must learn to disregard the official designations "Secret" and "Unclassified." In fact much that is stamped "Secret" can be revealed without risk, and much that is "unclassified" should never be revealed. During the period when NASA was wooing Moscow it offered, in an unclassified telegram to me for delivery to the Russians, to help the Russians with the latter's unmanned lunar landing, which was in difficulty. The McGraw Hill correspondent, Axel Krause, came to see me and asked if NASA had offered cooperation in the Russian space program. Some instinct made me deny it. That very day the NASA functionary who had sent the telegram was asked by suspicious Congressmen the same question, and he denied it! If I had told the unclassified truth to Krause I would have been accused of "poor judgment" if not sabotage.

Finally a NASA delegation was to arrive in Moscow to start talking. Since I learned by experience that visiting American scientists had to wait as long as an hour to get their baggage at the airport while the KGB picked the locks of their suitcases I advised the delegation not to lock their suitcases. The trouble was that the clumsy KGB, after examining the contents, locked the suitcases and two of the five NASA engineers had not brought keys. A locksmith got one open, but the other had to be broken open. Upon their departure there was an embarrassing moment when we had to search high and low for a string to tie it up with!

There was another embarrassing moment at the technical meeting. Lunney, of NASA, had brought a model of the crucial docking mechanism. When he put it on the table to show how it worked, it would not! "God damn, the thing worked perfectly when I packed it in Houston!" he cursed. The KGB had obviously taken it apart at the airport, and, unable to get it back together, had forced it and bent something.

Ambassador Beam was a quiet, but perfectly honest man. He signed my warning communications without demur.

CAMBODIA, 1971 - 1973

I was transferred to Vietnam just as President Nixon announced the beginning of the withdrawal of U.S. forces. I suggested that it made little sense to put me in a pipeline when I was not going to come out at the other end and they changed my destination to Cambodia as chief of the two-man Political Section (excluding myself). Because the capital, Phnom Penh, was besieged by the Communist Khmer Rouge and several Americans had been killed, I was to go alone. I packed "Mad Dog" Bolin's 9-mm

automatic and started for Hawaii, where I was to receive a military briefing, which I found puzzling. The Khmer (Cambodian) Army comprised about 80,000 men, the enemy half that. The lieutenant colonel spoke of a crisis due to the imminent departure of Australian mechanics who serviced the army's trucks. I asked why that was a problem, since from one front to the other was only forty miles. Robert E. Lee had led 80,000 Confederates 200 miles to Gettysburg without a single truck. The colonel replied that the U.S. Army had abolished its mule corps in 1921 and "we wouldn't know how to help them with horses." I began to see that the U.S. Army was wrapped in a straitjacket of high technology. In Washington, just before leaving, I had had lunch with a General Metaxis, just arrived from Phnom Penh, where he had been head of the Military Equipment Delivery Team. Several others went along. The general was saying that he thought he might obtain the lumber for the non-com training school in the Philippines. I asked, "What does the enemy use for non-com training schools?" No answer.

When I pointed out to the briefer in Hawaii that the figure for enemy casualties he had given me was less than the number of men reaching military age in North Vietnam and therefore we were losing, he admitted "certain negative demographic factors." English really is two languages - Anglo-Saxon and Greco-Latin. One can always conceal embarrassing facts from the untutored masses by using the latter without being accused of suppressing information. Military matters were not in my area of responsibility, however. When I arrived in the beautiful, pagoda-studded capital of Cambodia on the banks of the great Mekong, I set about perusing the files.

The first thing I noticed was a U.S. newspaper article by one Dennis Cameron, described to me as a locally stationed journalist who was addicted to marijuana, claiming that a wizard monk named Mam Pram Moni was Marshal Lon Nol's principal adviser - conjuring hexes against the Khmer Rouge, developing magical cotton T-shirts which would deflect enemy bullets, etc. "Has anybody checked this out?" I asked. No one had. (My predecessor had been an administrative officer.) If the country and the direction of the war were being run on the basis of magical incantations, Washington ought to know about it, I thought. Taking with me a Khmer-speaking subordinate, Donald Jameson, I went to the pagoda cited in the article as the wizard's residence. We approached a group of monks and asked for him.

"Oh, he's not here any more. He lives at the palace of Chamcar Mon, where he advises the Marshal," translated Jameson.

My heart sank. "All right, let's look into the bullet-proof shirts." I had heard that one was on display in the Buddhist Museum. We went there and the woman curator showed us a shirt covered with curious designs and inscriptions. I photographed it as Jameson held it up.

Even before I could ask, the curator said, "A man from the palace came. He wants to mass-produce this shirt for the army. I told him it wasn't made to ward off bullets, but

arrows, and anyway, it is the prayers recited by the bonze who paints the shirt which make it effective."

In the succeeding weeks I had gathered much evidence of Lon Nol's superstition. It was clear, to me at least, that the reason that a large part of the Khmer Army was besieging the ancient temple of Angkor Wat was the Marshal's belief that the possession of this abode of the Khmer soul by the enemy prevented victory. An avenue to the palace which had been built for the deposed Prince Sihanouk was torn up in the belief that it exercised a magical influence favoring the return of Sihanouk, who was siding with the enemy.

Remembering how well received my long airgram on Indonesian mysticism had been, I compiled many accounts of Marshal Lon Nol's superstition, almost from published Cambodian sources and recent books. I entitled it "The Anthropological Lon Nol." The ambassador, already made nervous by the leaks of his secret telegrams to Washington columnists and intimations by the administration that "negative reports" would be unwelcome, was aghast. He watered it down considerably and edited it to put the Marshal in a more favorable light and finally let it proceed. The White House was displeased, and during a subsequent visit of Gen Haig an NSC functionary, Negroponte (according to a witness informant) drew the ambassador aside and said they did not want any more reports like that.

The embassy was, in effect, muzzled, which led to tragicomical consequences. The following I heard from colleagues: In the Pentagon they had devised a way of monitoring the progress of the war in Vietnam by computer. The number of skirmishes, the numbers of arms captured, enemy defectors or prisoners etc. were fed into the computer by province or district and the trend analyzed. It was decided to do the same in Cambodia, with the data furnished by the Political-Military Section. The work was complicated by the fact that the Marshal was selling governorships of provinces - since indirectly the Americans were paying their salaries, and having run out of provinces began dividing existing provinces in two, creating terrible confusion for the computer. The intimidated embassy had not reported that most of the provinces were partly or wholly occupied by the enemy and that the "governors" lived in besieged Phnom Penh. To unravel the confusion Washington proposed to send a team to sort things out "on the spot," whereupon the embassy had to warn that "security conditions" impeded free circulation (to say the least). Actually one risked a bullet in the head if one drove more than 20 kilometers in any direction, although convoys did go regularly north and west with only occasional ambushes.

Shortly after my arrival I was Chargé d'Affaires a.i. for a few days. I had an experience which convinced me that unless something like a revolution occurred on the government side, the country was doomed. I wrote Desk Officer Frank Tatu as follows:

"Dear Frank:

It is another lonely, idle Sunday afternoon, and since I believe that a bit of detail not directly relevant to our work may be more useful than "pertinent" information in conveying the atmosphere of this place, I have decided to spend it in describing the "Bal des Cineastes" in war-torn, beleaguered Phnom Penh, where the Marshal recently enjoined his people to dig trenches in preparation for the imminent enemy onslaught. The Bal des Cineastes was a benefit performance for war cripples, sponsored, I gather, by Long Boret's Ministry of Information.

I hate balls of any sort and had planned to stay away, but, as I was sitting in Enders' office as acting Deputy Chief of Mission, his secretary said that an American businessman who knew Enders was on the line. By "knew" I mean he had spoken to him a few times. The businessman, whom I shall call Schlechter, invited me to attend the affair as his guest. I hedged, pleading a busy schedule and said I would call him back when things looked clearer. I went down to see Wedeman and asked him who Schlechter was. He replied that he was a Miami promoter out of Saigon who was head of, or public relations man for a Cambodian-American company called Ratanakar, which had some connection with Colonel Prince Norodom Chantarangsey, Wedeman thought. I told Schlechter that I would be glad to attend.

When he showed up at the office I thought he was very unprepossessing. He came to bring me the tickets, which he took from an attaché case in which lay a roll of \$100 bills bound with a rubber band, which aroused my suspicions. My suspicions deepened to paranoia when he assured me that a "hostess" would be provided. I told him firmly that a hostess would not be necessary, but he mumbled something about having to "fill up the table" for the benefit of two Khmer generals, Pak Saman and one other.

When I arrived at 5:00 p.m. at the Palais du Gouvernement, hundreds were already seated around tables placed in the grassy area lying between the two colonnaded, open porticoes which extend, thirty feet high, from the north side of the Palais.

Schlechter was sitting with his obsequious Khmer assistant at a table next to that of Long Boret, who was there with his youngest wife (according to someone nearby of whom I enquired) and several other Khmers. I had chosen "tenue de ville," following the invitation's alternative of that or "tenue de soiree," but Schlechter was in his Miami promoter's garb -- loud tie, flecked shirt with dangling stalagmite collar points, and a brownish-gray suit with wide zigzag lapels. His heavy-lidded, deadfish-blue eyes nervously swept the crowd as he greeted me. His thinning hair was plastered in rat-tails across his bald spot.

"The generals will be here in a minute," he said, and snapped an order to his assistant, a thin, unctuously servile fellow in a tight Edwardian suit, who bounded like an ape to get chairs and drinks. He also turned up a while later with my unsolicited "hostess", who, I was relieved to see, was quietly dressed and worked respectably in a travel agency. Very beautiful, but heavily painted girls glided about in Louis XIV coiffures and expensive silk and satin gowns, sparkling with gems and gaudy Hong Kong watch-bracelets. Some

moved in twittering pairs; others hung on the arms of cinematic fops or Cambodian colonels and Ministers curiously austere in Chase National Bank executive suits.

Schlechter's generals were nowhere to be found, however. I, realizing that he needed me to impress them with his Embassy connections, enjoyed his fury. "What the hell happened to them?" he snapped at his lackey, whose capacities did not extend beyond drinks and girls.

"Perhaps they are out on patrol, Mr. Schlechter", I suggested. He threw me a baffled look, as though he did not know how to take that. Finally Colonel Tim Phan appeared -- a youngish fellow with an Angkorian face and a Jayavarman smile of opulent satisfaction below smoked glasses, which always inspire me with as much trust as rolls of \$100 bills. He said he was general manager of Ratanakar, of which Chantarangsey was president. Chantarangsey, he said, had established Ratanakar for the good of the people, for whom he had spent all of his own personal fortune (earned while directing one section of Sihanouk's gambling casino). Even his villa was now up for sale.

As daylight faded, I saw the silhouettes of infantrymen carrying American rifles clambering along the tops of the colonnades to take up positions to protect from the enemy the glittering company below, and I wondered what they thought of the fops around me with their flared trousers and coattails, 20-carat topaz cufflinks, violet ruffled throat pieces and lacquered curls-- all denizens of the still swollen Phnom Penh film community founded by the Prince and in which Schlechter confided that his firm had bought an interest.

Jazz bands in colored regalia filled the stage and began to rend the night air with hideous nightclub music. A European master of ceremonies with a strong Belgian accent announced a parade of film beauties. A side door opened and these vedettes, each with a gigolo-type on her arm, minced suggestively across the stage one by one, the spangles and bangles on their swaying derrieres and quivering bosoms flashing under the glare of the stage lights. Their gowns, of gold and silver lame, satin, and silk, must have cost a couple of hundred dollars apiece.

Soon a handsome film idol was declaiming something patriotic into the microphone. The girl at my side murmured ecstatically in her little-girl French, "Oh, that is (inaudible). He was captured by the Viet Cong near Kompong Speu. Isn't he handsome!"

"Captured?" I asked. "How did that happen?"

"He was at the front photographing a battle," she replied.

"Did he escape?" I asked.

"Oh, no! He just told them he wasn't a real soldier and they let him go," she explained.

"Hurrah for the Khmer Republic!" shouted the war hero..."

I carried "Mad Dog" Bolin's 9 mm automatic under the seat. In the event that any Khmer Rouge soldiers blocked the road and tried to flag me down, I planned to abandon the car, dive into the bushes and make them keep their distance with a few shots from the 13-shot magazine.

My own section's reports continued to be censored, which weighed heavily on my conscience. If we had been instructed in writing to conceal the deterioration of the situation we might have felt that we had done our job as well as the limitations of government allowed us, but that was not the case. Furthermore the reports of our embassy in Laos, of which we received some copies, were very frank, particularly in regard to corruption, which we were required to gloss over.

Lives were at stake. When the enemy overran certain villages, or military camps, containing women and children, all those found therein were massacred. If the enemy were to overrun Phnom Penh a bloodbath would result. But even I did not suspect the dimensions of the mass murders which later took place. The embassy regarded most journalists as hostile, which was natural, since the truth was unrelievedly unfavorable and very easy to discover. The embassy would not even report Khmer newspaper articles. Unable to report directly and finding it very dangerous to talk to the many journalists steered to me, I refrained from saying anything myself, but recommended that they visit certain people from whom I believed they could get the truth without involving me.

On one occasion I thought a breakthrough was possible. The Marshal issued a presidential decree ordering the arrest of anyone seen buying rabbits in the market. These were enemy agents, said the decree, and would tie timed explosives on the backs of the little beasts, which would hop into the army's entrenchments and blow them up! Since it had been broadcast on the state radio I knew that it would be circulated all over Washington by the FBIS in unclassified form. To make sure, however, I drafted a SECRET cable reporting the text. My superiors refused to send it. This led to a confirmation of the bureaucratic lesson I had learned in Moscow: the officer who reports an event which could be used to back criticism of a presidential policy will be suspected of political partisanship. If he even brings such reports to the attention of his superiors he runs an unacceptable risk.

And so it was that an emergency high-level mission from Washington was sent to Phnom Penh after a day of spectacular disasters which could not be concealed by any censorship. By then it was too late. One member of the team was a young fellow on the National Security Council who covered Cambodia.

"Why is the situation so much worse than we thought it was?" he asked me at lunch in my villa.

I told him that the ambassador had been discouraged from reporting the truth, "but anyway, there was enough material in the public print for any sensible person back there to realize that this place is going down the tube with its present leadership - like the rabbit bomb decree."

"The what?" He had never heard of it. Apparently no one in Washington had dared send the item upstairs. The government had concealed the truth from no one but itself.

The evil of political censorship which afflicts the Foreign Service derives, in my opinion, from defects in the U.S. Constitution, which, as George Kennan has observed, was not written for the conduct of foreign affairs by a great power. Election and reelection is the focus of the political system. 1972 was a presidential election year, and nothing should be reported or done which would detract from the votes for the incumbent president - and all foreign service officers serve "at the pleasure of the president." Until the armed forces and the foreign service are responsible only to some non-elective council with life tenure, like the Supreme Court, Foreign Service reporting on subjects of internal U.S. political importance are worse than worthless. In the case of Cambodia the result was that a million men, women, and children were shot, bludgeoned, and bayoneted to death, and some slowly put to death by means so horrible that I will not describe them - but none were U.S. voters.

The day of disasters was March 21, 1972, the anniversary of the overthrow of Sihanouk. Brigadier General. Lon Non, the Marshal's younger brother, had shamelessly rigged the presidential election. My report detailing the methods was not permitted to be sent as an airgram, but rather on blank sheets of paper, in one copy only, to the desk. On March 21 a pilot lover of the Princess Bopha Devi, daughter of Sihanouk, stole an air force plane and dropped a bomb on the palace of Chamcar Mon, residence of Marshal Lon Nol, killing about 60 guards - the bomb hit their barracks - and flew away to join the Khmer Rouge. Just before this event agents of Lon Non threw grenades into a crowd of demonstrating teachers. Splinters hit the Volkswagen of the Khmer political section employee whom I sent to cover the event. The following day Lon Non, fuming over a "royalist plot", arrested every prince in Phnom Penh, including Sisowath Sirik Matak, the darling of the Pentagon, which was always dazzled by his elegant French and exquisite manners.

Also arrested was old Prince Monireth, who had served in the French Army in the First World War. He had a reproduction of a trench with barbed wire in the cellar with dummy French infantrymen in moth-eaten uniforms leaning on the parapet, rifles at the ready (according to the description of the Comte de Saint-Simon, the French military attaché). During parties Monireth would excuse himself for a moment to go down and have a drink with his comrades.

The embassy seemed paralyzed. No instructions having been issued, I drove to Prince Monireth's shabby mansion, now guarded by some of Lon Non's soldiers. There was nothing I could do, of course, but I knew that if I shouldered my way through the guard saying "American Embassy, get out of my way!" it would get back to Lon Non, who

might thereby sense American displeasure. Having done so I commiserated with Princess Monireth and a couple of frightened women relatives and assured them that the Prince would soon be released. He was.

Lon Non was a loose cannon, devoted to protecting his paralyzed brother, but actually all but sinking the ship as he crashed about. He also seemed to aspire to the presidency as his brother's successor, since Lon Nol had had a stroke and might at any moment die or be coaxed into retirement by the Americans. Likely competitors for the job, like Sirik Matak, seemed to be his special targets. The powerless prime minister, Son Ngoc Thanh, was another. One day someone in ambush pulled the lanyard of a claymore mine as Son Ngoc Thanh's car drove by, but pulled too late, and the charge of shrapnel pocked the wall beyond.

At some point even Lon Non began to read the handwriting on the wall illegible to Washington, and began to prepare to ingratiate himself with the victorious Khmer Rouge. The ambassador having gone on leave, the DCM, Thomas Enders, was being picked up in the ambassador's armored limousine to be taken to the embassy. I thought a grenade had been thrown into my garden and ran out with my pistol, but realized that the explosion must have been more distant. I passed the scene on the way to the embassy. The ambassador's partly burnt vehicle stood in the middle of the avenue. A blackened peasant with a completely calm expression on his face lay on the asphalt, still on his bicycle, killed instantly by the concussion. The bodies of some Khmer MP outriders lay on the other side of the car. The explosive charge had been on the sidewalk and had been detonated by a string leading part way down a side street. The armor had saved Enders, but the motor had caught fire. He had proceeded to the embassy in a jeep, where he presided over the staff meeting with admirable calm.

It was clear to me that both the attempt on Son Ngoc Thanh and Tom Enders were the work of Lon Non. If they had been the work of the enemy, both would have been killed. The enemy's sappers were quite competent, and had expertly blown the Friendship Bridge over the Mekong and had used frogmen or mines to sink several small freighters in the river. Any ordinary military rifle bullet of .30 caliber would have penetrated the armor if striking at a right angle.

A rumor circulated about a possible assassination attempt against the Marshal. I halfheartedly checked it with one of his ministers, who laughed and said, "The enemy would burn alive anybody who touched a hair of the Marshal's head. He's the greatest asset they have. Any of the servants in the palace would kill him for 2000 riels (about \$8.70 U.S.). You can wander in there and run into him sunning himself in the garden. The guards won't stop you."

I dropped this bit of news in the staff meeting and met with icy stares. The fact was that both we and the enemy were protecting Marshal Lon Nol, and one of us was wrong. On the radio Sihanouk even described Lon Nol as the best asset of the FUNK, the exile government which fronted for the Khmer Rouge.

At one point the ambassador asked my section and the Military Attaché's office to prepare a report on the political attitudes of the Khmer Army. We had not gone very far when we discovered that a military coup d'etat against the Marshal was being planned. The ambassador was shocked. General Cleland, head of the military equipment delivery team (MEDTC) promptly threatened the Khmer generals that the United States might terminate all aid if the Marshal were overthrown. It is hard to tell at what point the doom of the Cambodian people was sealed. It might have been on this occasion. Or it might have been the failure of the attempt of In Tam, the incorruptible opposition leader, to lure away a part of the enemy's strength - the so-called "Khmer Rumdoh" - local peasant militia. In Tam and some others, notably Madame Nou Neau, a mystic who commanded the Khmer equivalent of the Women's Army Corps, were in contact with Khmer Rumdoh. In Tam reported to me that he would be able to bring over to the government side thousands of Khmer Rumdoh on several conditions: 1) their leaders wanted the same pay and rank as officers in the Khmer Army, and 2) they wanted to be left in control of the areas in which they lived. In effect he proposed to buy them off. I asked where he would get the money to pay so many men. Following is his reply, as verbatim as I can recall it:

"Monsieur Harben, your own government admits that Lon Nol's officers are stealing the wages of sixty thousand non-existent soldiers in their ranks. With that much money I would buy off the whole enemy army." In short he expected the U.S. to crack down on Khmer Army corruption and use the money for this "rallying" effort.

Of course, with that many Lon Non-hating former enemy troops in the Khmer Army Lon Nol's position would be even more insecure and he knew it. He ordered that In Tam's rallying scheme be placed under the command of his brother, the infamous Lon Non. The embassy reported this affair as an item in the weekly report, made no comment and took no action. At a staff meeting the only reaction I can recall was an exclamation of Gen. Cleland, "Negotiate, hell!" - apparently under the impression that some sort of political compromise with the whole enemy regime was contemplated.

The bottom line was that a U.S.-supported army of 80,000 men (officially 140,000) equipped with tanks, artillery and the support of modern aircraft - later even B-52's - was being beaten by an army of 40-50,000 with none of these advantages.

The corruption, about which the embassy seemed so complacent, particularly affected the army. Colonels would submit to the War Ministry a roster of, let us say, 500 men and would receive payment for wages and family allowances for that number. They would then deliberately keep their force at, say, 300, and pocket the difference, with which they would build fine villas with imitation Angkorian bas-reliefs, some of which they would then rent TO THE AMERICAN EMBASSY!

A member of the opposition came to me one day with a man from Kompong Chhnang, a town to the north, who related how the colonel in charge of that town was selling Khmer Army gasoline to the enemy. On a map he described the exact routes by which the

gasoline was shipped. Some was floated downstream to the enemy. Since this was military, and not political, I could only report it at the staff meeting, with little hope that anything would be done. The general had previously demanded that all copies of my internal memoranda to the ambassador concerning cases of similar military corruption which had come to the attention of my staff be burned. When I asked the ambassador to confirm this, he replied that henceforth I was to limit such reports to him and the general. The corruption of this particular colonel later came to the attention of a more patriotic Khmer officer, who removed him from command. What struck me through all this was the mildness of the punishment for such transgressions, if they were punished at all. In most armies in time of war they would have been shot. But probably not in the U.S. Army. We seem to have become so tolerant that we were no longer capable of inspiring in our client allies the iron discipline needed for their survival.

As a desperate measure to turn the tide we threw in B-52's. Each carried 30 tons of bombs which would kill every living thing on the surface of the earth within a "box" one by three kilometers - a typical American response to compensate for the weakness of discipline on the ground.

Immediately the hostile U.S. press, some of the representatives of which frankly supported the enemy, began to write of enormous casualties among the innocent peasantry. Undoubtedly there were some, although we were very careful to try to avoid them. In my office one day I idly cut a small square of paper to the scale of one by three kilometers by the map on the wall and found that I could not orient it anywhere on the territory of Central Cambodia without covering a named populated point. Since our Air Attaché and the Political/Military Section were claiming that there were no civilian casualties at all I thought that any journalist who made the same comparison could ridicule our claims. I so informed the Political/Military Section in a memorandum. My demonstration was not entirely accurate, since many villages had been depopulated and their inhabitants had fled to Phnom Penh, but it was quite clear that we were killing some civilians, as we of course did in France in the Second World War.

One day a university professor came to see me and told me that two or three hundred peasants from a village called Saang had walked into a B-52 "box" when they went into the woods for the funeral cremation of a revered bonze. All were killed. Although the whole capital would shake from the seismic waves caused by these attacks I had no way of knowing where last night's attack occurred. But when I mentioned the name Saang at the staff meeting I saw from the expression on Tom Enders' face that the report was true. At that moment I did not envy him his heavy responsibility as a member, or, I believe, chairman, of the committee which selected the targets, the existence of which I had heard from others. Not long afterward the B-52's, which dropped their bombs by triangulating on two or three radio beacons, were guilty of a pilot error. One of the beacons was located at a Khmer Army base on the Mekong south of Phnom Penh. Instead of aiming at the intersection of the beacons they dropped their bombs on the base, killing about 100 Khmer soldiers and their families. Much later I read that the beacon had previously been located on the embassy itself. Were it not for that decision to move it the entire embassy

AND Chamcar Mon Palace itself would have been destroyed and all of us - ambassador, DCM, the general, and myself, annihilated.

I had never paid much attention to the Cooper-Church amendment, which prohibited United States forces (or diplomats) in Cambodia from taking any direct part in the military operations. (The bombers came from bases in Thailand.) I was only dimly aware of its provisions, since politics was my bailiwick. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee sent two investigators, former FSO's Moose and Lowenstein, to S.E. Asia to report on various matters, including adherence to the amendment. The embassy reacted with great alarm. The DCM circulated a memo telling the staff to list all classified documents shown to this pair. This sounded like an indirect way of discouraging us from showing certain documents which might be of use to them. Since my files were now cleared of material on military corruption I saw no reason to comply. Tom Enders also drew up a schedule of briefings, dinners, interviews, and cocktails which would keep the visitors tied up during their visit and told me to meet them at the airport and give it to them. When I handed it to Lowenstein he glanced at it, tore it up and said, "Tell Tom I'll see him in a couple of days - after I've poked around a bit."

During their poking around they dropped in on a woman journalist, Sylvana Foa and asked her if she had any evidence that the embassy was involved in military operations. "Certainly!" she replied, "You can hear the embassy directing bombing strikes on the radio." She turned on a small VHF receiver and they heard themselves. Later I was told that this was well known and had been reported by journalists, but that editing by newspapers in the U.S. had stricken it out for lack of space and because interest was focused on Vietnam. I myself had known nothing of this activity until the scandal broke. Lowenstein demanded to visit every room in the embassy. His demand was refused. He cabled the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which ordered the embassy to show him everything. The practice was stopped.

LA COMTESSE DE PLAUD

The British widow of a French officer, this harridan was a fine example of the mischief which can be wrought by dilettante amateur practitioners of foreign relations. Desirous of penetrating behind the curtain into the realm of the wizards who cast hexes for Lon Nol, I consulted a member of a friendly embassy who had been in Phnom Penh some years. He suggested that I contact Madame Nou Neau, reputedly the most beautiful woman in Cambodia, who was commandant of the Khmer Women's Army Corps. She was most concerned with supernatural matters. On one occasion my informant and his wife had been strolling at the foot of the sacred Wat Phnom, in the heart of Phnom Penh, and heard strange music coming from the summit. He climbed the Wat and found a dozen or so ancient crones dancing in an enclosure, brandishing scimitars. Leading this ballet was Madame Nou Neau. Bonzes stood to one side, muttering disapproval. To get to Nou Neau I must first contact the Comtesse de Plaud, he said. He gave me her address - in a decaying apartment house on the Mekong.

She greeted me and the conversation proceeded satisfactorily. I invited her to dinner and asked her to convey an invitation to Nou Neau. On the appointed evening they arrived, Nou Neau accompanied by her handsome young "garde de corps," whose duties, I believe, quite literally corresponded to his title. She was, indeed, breathtaking. Raising her hand I said, in French, "It is true, Madame, what I have heard. You are the most beautiful woman in Cambodia!"

I was startled by her reply, delivered in a tone of weary resignation, "Oui. Tout le monde veut coucher avec moi: Je ne sais pas quoi faire!" [Yes, Everybody wants to sleep with me. I don't know what to do!]

"Do you realize, M. Harben, that Madame Nou Neau is the reincarnation of a famous queen of Angkor?" said the Comtesse de Plaud during dinner.

"No. Is this true, Madame?" I asked, turning to Nou Neau.

"So the phantoms say," she replied diffidently.

The dinner did not result in any introduction to the phantoms or their intermediaries, but it did result in having the Comtesse in my hair for some time.

Shortly afterwards I heard a knock at my bedroom door while I was shaving. Thinking it was my cook I opened it, clad only in my sagging pyjama bottoms. It was the Comtesse. "Come quickly! I want to take you to a very important man who has been talking to Khieu Samphan!" [an enemy leader who we thought was dead].

She took me to the Tuol Kork quarter, where she introduced me to a mild little man, Dr. Moch Lean, who said Khieu was alive and that he had talked to him near Kompong Speu a couple of weeks earlier. He had been his family physician, he said. His story sounded plausible, but exasperatingly vague on points which would have clinched its veracity. I warned him to reveal it to no one and to stay away from the Americans, since Lon Non would probably murder him if he found out.

A few days later he walked right through the front door of the embassy to request compensation for his orchard near Kompong Speu which had been destroyed by U.S. aircraft. This contact led nowhere, but La Plaud's fertile imagination soon conjured up another scheme. She came to me claiming that she knew of an island in the Mekong near Kratie where the Khmer Rouge were holding captured American journalists. About 20 were missing and all were presumed dead. She asked me to procure a disguise from the CIA to enable her to pass through enemy territory to the island and get a message from the captives. The idea of a 70-year old white woman who spoke no Khmer sneaking through the jungle was so ludicrous that I decided she was suffering from senile dementia.

Not long after this another political crisis erupted, and the Khmer prime minister, Hang Thun Hak, invited the top echelon of the embassy to a dinner behind closed doors with him and the cabinet for a frank and confidential discussion. At the head of the table, eyeing me triumphantly, was la Comtesse de Plaud!

"What is that woman doing here?" I asked Um Sim, the Foreign Minister. "I thought this was to be confidential."

"Well, she's the personal representative of Dr. Kissinger, isn't she?" he replied in surprise.

"She's the personal representative of nobody!" I fumed.

For years after my retirement, even as late as April 1993, I received transatlantic telephone calls from her in Oxford, where she had gone to live with her son after the collapse, trying to enlist me in mad schemes of her own devising. I finally said I could not discuss anything with her because the Russians tapped the telephone lines!

As my own desperation rose, I came increasingly in conflict with the complacency of my superiors. Perhaps complacency was too strong a word. Paralysis of the imagination in totally unfamiliar circumstances for which there was no guide in the rules with which we were bound. The Marshal could not be removed by a coup, lest some officer's trigger finger slipped and the Republican administration be accused of complicity in an election year, as was the Democratic administration in the murder of Diem in Vietnam, fresh in memory. More American military power was blocked by the Cooper-Church amendment and the rising outcry over our bombing of the countryside. In addition there was the ambassador's reluctance to interfere in the internal affairs of the country, which took the form even of refusing to express a preference on a list of prospective appointments when the Khmer Government asked that he express a preference.

I thought there was a way out. I had read that the cabinet of the Portuguese dictator Salazar, like Lon Nol felled by a stroke, regularly met at his bedside to report that his decrees had been faithfully carried out when in fact they were ruling the country as they saw fit. Since Lon Nol's ministers, almost without exception, would have welcomed such an arrangement, why not try it? I wrote it up in a memorandum, but the ambassador replied that he thought I was joking. Lon Nol slyly acted in any case to defuse such plots against his authority by expressing his intention to go to Hawaii for treatment "soon." He repeatedly delayed his departure as the situation worsened. Once I orally suggested that we simply send a squad of marines to the palace and bundle him into an Air Force plane and take him away by force. This at least would preclude assassination by any Cambodians.

All solutions blocked, gloom deepened. It was then decided to pressure him into agreeing to the formation of a "Supreme Council" consisting of Prince Sisowath Sirik Matak, opposition leader In Tam and two other respected politicians. In Tam was reluctant, since he was expected to consult with the Prince, and the last time he visited the Prince he was

left waiting in an anteroom for an hour and departed without seeing him. (I had heard from an irreproachable source that the Prince was often unavailable at such times since he was accustomed to enjoy intimacies with young women, from whom it was difficult for him to drag himself away).

On the telephone In Tam demurred at a meeting, on the grounds that it would be too "delicate."

"Are we to tell the United States Senate that this republic is dying of "delicatesse?" I said. There was a silence, and then he said, "All right, I will go."

Even then I regretted what I was doing, since collaboration by the popular In Tam with the now hated Marshal would surely diminish his popularity - and we would need a popular replacement for the Marshal if and when he left. And, true to form, Lon Nol immediately began to ignore the advice and decisions of the Supreme Council, often, according to In Tam, by simply saying "this matter is classified."

At the time of the arrest of the princess after the aerial bombing of the palace I urged In Tam, who had the title of Prime Minister, simply to go to the houses of those arrested and order the guards to disperse. He objected that if he did, he himself might be arrested. I replied, "Politically that would be the best thing that could happen to you. You would be a hero overnight." The crisis slowly was dispelled, however, and In Tam lost his opportunity. He and I both knew now that the country was doomed. He bought a small farm close to the Thai border from which he was able easily to flee to safety when the end came, while the foolish Matak was instantly executed when the Khmer Rouge captured Phnom Penh. He had been offered a place on the new ambassador's departing helicopter, but in a final display of nobility refused and remained to face certain death after writing a bitter note to the ambassador the text of which was censored by the Washington Post, whose partisan editors probably felt that its eloquence might inspire last minute support for American intervention.

Khmer government troops fought bravely -- particularly the Khmer Krom, the Khmer minority in South Vietnam, who came to Cambodia to defend their fatherland. The fact that they were beaten by an army half the size of the government army and possessing none of the aircraft and heavy weapons of the latter is proof enough that the rot was at the top, and it was this thin slice of Khmer society which was most susceptible to American influence. Yet we stood by in silence when Lon Nol rigged the election and offered no denial when he warned that the US would withdraw if he lost. We said nothing when Lon Nol scuttled in Tam's rallying program, and, through General Cleland, threatened the withdrawal of aid if the army staged a coup to overthrow the corrupt and incompetent dictator. Most of this reluctance was attributable to the fear of the White House that any abrupt changes might provide grist for opposition propaganda in the election year of 1972. Our constitution precludes efficient management of proxy conflicts that last more than a few months.

MBFR, Vienna, 1973-1975

The "Mutual Balanced Reduction of Troops and Armaments in Central Europe and Associated Measures" was the subject of talks which began in Vienna in 1973 after a prior discussion of the subjects covered. As frequently happened in negotiations with the Russians, disparities in translation, usually deliberate on the Russian side, affected the course of the talks. The title of the talks in Russian was "Vzaimnoye Sokrashcheniye Voysk i Vooruzheniye v Tsentral'noy Yevrope i s nim Snoshennyye Mery". The two little underlined words meant "with it," i.e., reduction, and were omitted from the English version. When the NATO side attempted to discuss large-scale maneuvers of armies close to the borders of contiguous states - a method of intimidation used by the Russians against Romania - the Russians replied that they were authorized to discuss only measures associated with reduction, not maneuvers. The NATO side made its presentation anyway. Agreement was, in any case, as unlikely on the subject of reduction as on the subject of maneuvers.

I cite it only as an example of the sacrifice of precision in language in order to achieve an agreement which looks well in headline just before an election, but which contains linguistic loopholes rendering it useless. The most flagrant instance was the Nuclear Test Ban Agreement, the crucial clause of which reads differently in English than in the equally valid Russian. The Russian version prohibits only those tests which result in fallout, whereas the English version prohibits any test which contaminates the environment. The Russians maintained a testing ground on the island of Novaya Zemlya, where ground and sea water were contaminated. The meaningless of Mr. Kissinger's Paris Accords on Cambodia has already been noted.

Such negotiations had a value beyond the possible achievement of agreement on the subject of the talks, however. By maintaining contact with the Russian colossus at as many points as possible, its twitches and sensitivities noted at one or more of such points of contact might give advance warning of the intentions of Moscow. In the case of MBFR NATO faced the problem of growing popular pressure for unilateral reduction of armaments. This section of public opinion was soothed for a while by the hope for corresponding Russian reductions through negotiation. The frequent contact of so many Russian officials and their KGB "watchers" with so many Western diplomats abroad must also have had the effect of dispelling some of the suspicion and ideological suspicion of the Russian "establishment."

Shortly after the beginning of the talks I could see that there was no possibility of an actual agreement to reduce forces. This was indicated by two small words in the Russian proposal for a token reduction of 5-10% as an evidence of good faith: "including firepower." Alarmed by the rapid development of defensive weapons which might soon negate their immense superiority in tanks and aircraft, the Russians hoped to freeze this development. It appeared to be a halfhearted hope. The Russian military seemed to view the talks with disgust, and sent only an alcoholic colonel as its representative.

In one private conversation a Russian delegate pointed out, with disarming frankness, that the populations of Russian-occupied Eastern Europe might think that the millennium had arrived if they saw Russian troops packing up to go home. A repetition of the events of 1956 in Hungary or 1953 in Berlin might result. This view was mentioned also in a column by Times correspondent Sulzberger, who, however did not cite a source.

For whatever reasons, however, the task assigned to negotiators is to negotiate in good faith, and the NATO MBFR delegations, the U.S. in particular, assiduously explored every possible angle.

The hints by Russian intelligence sources that even a partial withdrawal might set a match to the Eastern European powder keg seemed to assume that NATO would be just as alarmed by such a prospect as they. After all, in the case of the Berlin uprising of 1953, the Hungarian-Russian war of 1956 and the Prague events of 1968 the West could only stand by and watch, its impotence revealed for all to see.

This little episode also seemed to reveal the tight compartmentalization of Russian decision-making. While it was clear to me that there would be no agreement, it might not have been so clear to some sectors of the Russian foreign affairs establishment. We now know that Brezhnev was hardly more than a vegetable at that time. No one could be sure what mad instructions might reach the Russian delegation. So some Russian intelligence people probably feared that some sort of agreement might be possible. The Russian representative Khlestov had slyly proposed a "token" reduction. Some people apparently feared that NATO might just accept it.

As I have noted above, the Pentagon seemed to take the talks seriously, and fretted about the loss of barracks and officers' clubs.

In the midst of the talks a Vienna newspaper published an expose of a Russian plan to use Vienna as a staging point for an invasion of Yugoslavia. The KGB agents, masquerading as "Croatian partisans" would leave Vienna in ambulances full of arms, allegedly to seize power in Yugoslavia. The Russians would then invade to suppress "fascism." The source was a Czech general who had defected with a satchel full of plans in 1968. Khlestov took time to denounce this "plant" as a scheme to sabotage the talks. It seems inconceivable that the CIA was responsible - they had people on the U.S. delegation. Was it possibly Khlestov's own worried intelligence people? At any rate the delegations shrugged off this flea bite and continued as before.

The impossibility of obtaining from the Russians accurate figures on their troops and arms in Central Europe proved the greatest problem. Even if the Soviet Government had desired to present us with the true figures, I doubted that its negotiators would do so, since it was punishable by death under Article 58 of the Penal Code and many had been shot in the 30's for acts authorized by the Soviet Government.

The French, moreover, viewed MBFR as still another bit of American foolishness and would have nothing to do with it. Nor would they provide any information on their troops and arms on German soil, which included tactical nuclear weapons capable of causing immense losses to Russian forces attempting to cross the Rhine. Since the Russian goal was a race to Gibraltar to preclude the establishment of a NATO redoubt in Spain, the absence of France from the Hofburg negotiating table robbed MBFR of any interest it might have had for the Russian marshals.

Despite the stagnation of the talks it was deemed necessary to conceal the fact from the press. Although there was little work to do, the U.S. delegation was maintained at its initial strength. Meetings at the Hofburg, at first twice a week, at which each side made a presentation, were changed so that only one side made a presentation at each meeting. Later the frequency was reduced to one per week.

Press awareness of the stagnation might have resulted in ignorant charges of lack of zeal on the part of the NATO side (and nothing could be further from the truth) and popular pressure for concessions to the Russians which would increase the danger of war.

My role was limited to following the "Warsaw Pact" (i.e., Russian) position by maintaining a loose-leaf book containing excerpts from the Russian statements on every conceivable aspect of the talks and to translate, along with a young British diplomat, each Russian presentation. The latter involved the compilation of a glossary of the special terminology which had developed in the course of the talks so as to ensure accuracy and general agreement between both sides as to the meaning.

There were some interesting details which I observed during the talks. On several occasions the Russian chief delegate, Oleg Khlestov, whom I had known in Moscow, decided to respond immediately to some new NATO approach. He first scribbled his response on a slip of paper, gave it to a subordinate, who carried it to the East German representative for his approval.

On another occasion Khlestov made a statement praising the Soviet Union for ending racial and religious animosity. This had absolutely nothing to do with the talks, and I realized that Khlestov was of Jewish origin and felt the need to demonstrate publicly his loyalty. His son was also in the diplomatic service.

Russian discipline on contacts was everywhere evident. At a reception I ran into Smolin, with whom I had had frequent friendly contact in Moscow. He cut me dead in Vienna. In my hotel two young women - secretaries on the Russian delegation - sat at my breakfast table. When they realized I was an American, they froze, and I never saw them again.

When I went to the British Embassy to collaborate on the translation with Richards, the British "Sovietologist," I was "tailed" when I left [as I had been in Bangkok during my infrequent visits there]. Typical Russian surveillance people. I assume that in Vienna they were trying to observe my contact with members of their delegation.

The talks dragged on for another fourteen years and the Russian Empire collapsed before any agreement could be reached. I retired in February of 1975.

End of interview