

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

AMBASSADOR EDWARD HURWITZ

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is August 15, the Ides of August, 1996. This an interview with Edward Hurwitz which is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy.

I wonder if you could tell me a bit about when and where you were born and something about your family?

HURWITZ: I was born in New York City in March 1931. My family was rather typical Jewish middle class New York City types. My father was the son of a Russian/Jewish immigrant. My mother, herself, was an immigrant coming here at the age of three.

Q: When did your grandfather come over here?

HURWITZ: He came from Lithuania, which was then part of Russia, in 1885, or something like that. He was escaping what was then obligatory military service of 25 years for rural Jews. He left his family at the age of 16, never saw them again, and walked across Germany. He ended up in Brooklyn and over the years was able to open up a grocery store there. He did reasonably well. My father then became for a brief period a coffee salesman around New York having had that grocery background. He went to Boys High in Brooklyn, but didn't graduate, which was often the case. He met my mother, whose father owned a grocery store, while selling coffee on that route. She at the age of three had come from Romania in 1903. This is a rather typical story of Jewish immigration.

Q: You were born in 1931, a period of high depression.

HURWITZ: My father gave up the coffee business and opened up a hardware store in Queens, New York, in 1922 and gradually the business improved. It may well be that the depression somewhat helped that business because he was selling things that the small homeowners, who were beginning to populate that area, wanted, like nails, screws, etc. You didn't call up the contractor to fix your sink, you did it yourself. So, the business did rather well. In fact, during the depression, he not only held his own but probably did better than most. So, the family was quite middle class. We didn't really suffer during the depression.

Q: Where did you go to school?

HURWITZ: I went to Jamaica High School in Queens. Then I won one of the New York state scholarships and went to Cornell, entering in 1948. I had always had a great interest in foreign affairs. I recall at eight or nine on the playground in my elementary school telling the kids, I suppose rather pedantically, that I was very interested in foreign languages and did they know for example that the word lorry meant truck or that cinema meant movie. So, I was sort of moving in that direction already, even though my background was thoroughly parochial New York City.

Q: Did World War II have an impact on that interest?

HURWITZ: Oh, yes. During World War II I remember collecting newspapers. I had them many, many years later. It is probably true that kids of that era, partially because of the war, partially because of the way tradition, history and family was passed along by word of mouth, you didn't have TV of course in those days, the past was something that was interesting. I read historical novels. World War II meant that you knew as a child where Bosnia was, where Guadalcanal was, where the Marianas were, places in the Pacific, where Japan was. Today I understand you can ask kids where various places are and they don't know. But, you knew then, it was part of your life.

Q: Including Canada, I understand, sometimes.

HURWITZ: So, all of us in elementary school were very much clued into things. They were largely related to war, but they stuck with you.

Q: I had the same experience. What were you taking at Cornell?

HURWITZ: I took government. They didn't call it political science at that time. They had a very good department. I graduated from Cornell in 1952.

Q: Were you getting any information while you were in Cornell about the Foreign Service?

HURWITZ: Yes, I was very interested in the State Department, but I must say right away, as you probably know, at that time, unless you were fairly upper class the idea of going to Europe was unheard of. Today kids in high school might spend a summer in France.

Q: And Europe was devastated pretty much too so it was not the greatest place to visit.

HURWITZ: But, nevertheless, you studied and you had this interest and you followed what was going on. In 1952 I was facing, as a lot of us were at this time, the question of being drafted for the Korea War as well as "what are you going to do?" There were plenty of opportunities to work for the government. CIA, then a new outfit, I recall was coming around and recruiting. The Foreign Service was considered the creme de la creme. Because of a blood pressure problem I was declared 4F, which in a sense devastated me. I was the kind of coward that feared being marked as being different. And, as you recall, 4F during World War II was pejorative. Not that I was a hero, but I would rather have faced going to Korea than seeing my friends go off.

So, what I did do was pass the junior management program, which was a civil service job somewhat similar to the Presidential Intern thing now. I came down to Washington in 1952 and got a job with the State Department, the part of it that was then the International Information Administration (IIA), which was a forerunner of USIA before it split off from the Department. It was interesting. I was doing congressional correspondence for

that organization, which was important at the time being the height of the McCarthy era, the height of McCarthy's attacks on VOA.

Q: Talk a little bit about the sort of correspondence you got in and the pressures on you re how you answered these things.

HURWITZ: I was 21 plus and very young and didn't have much responsibility. It was a question of the usual congressional correspondence. Why do we have such a program? Why are we doing this? Can you do something for my constituent? I wouldn't say there were pressures on me, I just did my job.

I came down in September, 1952 to take that job and stayed for a few days at the YMCA on G Street for \$3. I had taken a train down from Ithaca and then took the trolley from Union Station. It was a different city at that time. But, in early 1953 I began to think I would take another swat at seeing if I could overcome this 4F business. So, I reapplied at a different draft board. My first draft board was in New York. This time I applied down here as a Washington resident, and did pass the physical and was inducted here and went into the army. This made me feel a lot better that I was one of the guys.

Q: You were in the army from when to when?

HURWITZ: From May, 1953 to May, 1955.

Q: Where did you serve?

HURWITZ: I was lucky enough to get into heavy weapons training at Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky. I was then selected for what was known then as the CIC, Counter Intelligence Corps, because I was a college graduate and knew Russian at the time to a certain extent having studied it at Cornell. I went into the CIC school, which was at Fort Holzbird, Maryland and had a four or five months course. CIC was a lot of interrogation. It was counterintelligence and also helping out the military investigations with issues which could have involved intelligence. I was then sent to Japan and spent a year in Tokyo with the CIC. Because I knew some Russian at the time, they assigned me a unit that followed the activities of the Soviet mission in Tokyo. The Soviets had not yet set up an embassy. I believe at that time they had not yet signed a peace treaty.

Q: I'm not sure they ever have.

HURWITZ: They later had an embassy and I'm not sure what happened afterwards. The big problem with the Soviets there, of course, was espionage. The second issue was that the Soviets had mounted a very energetic drive to bring back to the Soviet Union the younger people whose parents had fled the Soviet Union in 1917. Most people went west to Paris, the more well to do, the less well to do by and large went east to Harbin, China, Tientsin, China. And then when the communist Chinese came in in 1947, a lot of these people picked up stakes and went to Japan, after the war. So, by the time I got to Japan in

1954 in the army, there were a lot of Russians there. The younger ones had never lived in Russia. So, there were a large group of Russians there, many who spoke Japanese and English. The Soviets were trying to lure these people back to the Soviet Union.

We were new at the counter intelligence game and it was sort of a strange operation and we really didn't know what we were doing. For example, I was 23 years old at the time and told that a Soviet visitor was coming who had served in the Soviet mission before. He was staying at such and such a hotel and I should see if I could get him to defect. But, it was an interesting and exciting time. My Russian improved. And, then my tour was up and I was sent back to the States.

Q: Was it still the occupation?

HURWITZ: No, the Japanese had adopted a constitution. You couldn't call it an occupation, although our troops were there in great numbers. But, the government had been turned over to the Japanese by that time.

I left the army in 1955 and then in the fall of that year I enrolled in the Harvard Russian Institute.

Q: You had the GI Bill by this time?

HURWITZ: Yes, I used that. It was to be a two year course leading to an MA. Along the way I became a little concerned...what would I do, why would I stay two years to get an MA, usually an MA is one year? What I really would like to do was join the Foreign Service and the MA isn't going to help me that much in the Foreign Service. I took the Foreign Service exam after the first semester in December, 1955 and passed it. I spent the next semester still at Harvard and then got the call from the Foreign Service that indeed I could come down and work.

Q: Do you remember anything about what you were asked in the oral exam?

HURWITZ: The oral exam was totally different. The written exam was also different. There was a very big language portion which I took in Russian and did very well on it. The oral exam, as I recall, was up in Boston and there was a panel of what seemed to me to be old Foreign Service officers. I was alone there and they were just throwing questions at me. They were heavily weighted toward what did I know, substantive questions, not how I would react. Nowadays you are all play acting. But then it was how quick were you on issues and how deep was your knowledge. It was what they could discern about your real interests in the Foreign Service from what you knew, had studied and concerns were. It was not hypothetical situations. One can argue both ways what is the best type of exam.

Q: So, you came into the Foreign Service when?

HURWITZ: In September, 1956.

Q: Will you describe a little bit the composition of your class and a little about the training?

HURWITZ: We went into our A100 course and FSI in those days was a red brick apartment, which today I think would occupy the space around where at New State in the front the flag pole on the right is. The class was some 30-35 people. A considerable number of women, although it was all white. A little more than half of the men were veterans of one kind or another. The oldest member was 35, a navy officer who had been in World War II. A lot of them were from eastern ivy league schools. The age was much younger than today. I was 25. Very few people had had prior work experience, coming directly from school, graduate school or the military. They all regarded the Foreign Service as a career. It was not something I heard later in B/EX, "Well, I would like to try it, try something new." Very few people, as was the case with myself, had traveled around a lot. Nowadays you take off for a couple of years, perhaps, and do a lot of traveling.

Q: Did you have any impression of the State Department as an organization at that time?

HURWITZ: Well, it seemed to me, through the eyes of a rather young person, to be rather August. You were very impressed with what you saw. At that time there seemed to be giants, names that you knew, like Dean Acheson, although he was no longer Secretary, John Foster Dulles, George Kennan. These were names that you had known from just knowing things the way kids knew more things in those days, at least kids of people I knew. So, it seemed like a very big deal. It didn't feel like just another civil service job.

Q: At the end of the A100 course they have this time when they read out where you are assigned. How did it work out for you?

HURWITZ: I was assigned to INR and for me it turned out to be a good job, although I would have preferred to have gone overseas. But, in those days two elements of the assignment process were just taken for granted: 1) you had no real choice, although you could express a choice, and 2) nobody had any idea that they might be assigned to anything other than political work. It was taken for granted that this is what you came into the Foreign Service for and nobody was going to say you were going to be doing consular work or admin or GSO. There was no such thing as that cone business.

Q: You were in INR from when to when?

HURWITZ: I was in INR from the end of my A100 course, which was something like February 1957 until May 1958. In May, 1958, for me to have gone to Moscow would have been going to heaven.

Q: Let's talk first about INR. What were you doing in INR?

HURWITZ: I was in a unit that dealt with Soviet internal affairs and my field was Soviet economics. There were others doing it, a lot of holdovers from OSS people, Russian emigres--Uber Richter did agriculture, Paul Gecker, Walt Pinter, who later went on to Cornell University and is still there as a professor of history. In the office doing external affairs was Jack Matlock, Sol Polansky, who later went on to be ambassador in Bulgaria. Hal Sonnenfeldt and Boris Klosson were in the office. So, it was old Russian or Eastern European hands.

Q: Russian internal developments in 1957/58 were obviously a matter of great interest to the United States but in a way very difficult to unravel. You couldn't go out and run polls. Where were you getting your information?

HURWITZ: If I recall correctly, it was largely FBIS, *Pravda*. There was also an output from CIA that we looked at, but I can't recall exactly what it was. It was largely open sources.

Q: FBIS being the open monitoring service which is actually published and available to anyone.

HURWITZ: And, of course, there was embassy reporting.

Q: On embassy reporting, what was your impression of the reports that were coming out of there?

HURWITZ: I was there a short time and really can't recall.

Q: How did we look upon the situation inside the Soviet Union at that time?

HURWITZ: Well, this was the time of the anti-party group when Khrushchev was consolidating his position. When he first came in in 1953 after Stalin's death he was sort of sharing power with Malenkov and Bulganin. He later dispensed with them. How things were settling down in the wake of Stalin's death in March of 1953 was a major issue.

Q: At that time was there much talk about the various nationalities?

HURWITZ: No, that really came later. The question of the nationalities, especially in the Baltic area, was always kept alive by the various Baltic communities here, but other issues, no. There might be some efforts to bring to the attention of the government the emigre exposes. But, a lot of emigres had been written off as being super anti-communist. People who had been communist and later discovered the truth, or what they said was the truth. So, you really couldn't evaluate it. It turns out that a lot of it was actually true.

Q: Yes, I think many of us had this impression because these were not very impressive people.

HURWITZ: That's right.

Q: After INR, in 1958 where did you go?

HURWITZ: In 1958 Llewellyn Thompson had just recently arrived in Moscow and he wanted a staff aide. Now, prior to me, not acting as staff aide, but living in the residence, Spaso, was a bachelor officer who had come from Indonesia. He had a job in the embassy but because of the housing shortage and Spaso was a big rambling house, he lived there. Well, Thompson wanted to have a staff aide who would actually live in the residence and also take care of the ordering of his food from commissaries in Frankfurt and deal with the household staff, do his accounts, etc. So, I went out and considered it one of my greatest opportunities in my life, and lived in Spaso.

It is a curious story, though. Once I got out there, Thompson really didn't give me anything to do particularly. At one point, Mrs. Thompson, Jane Thompson, was saying that "Tommy, Ed has to have an office right here at Spaso and I will work with him on a daily basis." Thompson said, "Oh, no, no, he has to come to the embassy every day." So, I went to the embassy every day and Thompson gave me his correspondence. He got lots of letters from the States. The Soviet Union was just opening up to tourism, etc. He would throw these to me and I would answer them. He was very anxious, correctly so, that these letters be answered politely and with as much information as could be given to the writer. I remember one case, for example, where he got a letter from a kid who was collecting soil from around the world. He wanted some Moscow dirt. Already becoming an adept bureaucrat, I said, "Okay, I will assign this letter to be answered by the agricultural attaché." Well, he let it sit until finally what happened was that the kid getting no answer from the American embassy in Moscow, wrote a letter to the Soviet embassy in Washington which dutifully sent the kid some dirt. Probably they went out in the back garden of the Soviet embassy in Washington and dug up some dirt and sent it to him, but at least they responded to him. We found out about it because the kid's congressman wrote to the State Department saying, "See, our American embassy doesn't help us out, but the Soviet embassy did." Thompson was a little annoyed at that. This was precisely what he was trying to avoid with these letters.

So, I did that sort of thing. I did deal with the staff. But, still it took up only a little of my time. The rest of my time I was spending very fruitfully going around to lectures, but that is another story. It turns out the reason Thompson didn't give me anything to do was very curious. We had an inspection, Ed Gullion was the inspector. He later became ambassador to Vietnam. Gullion brought in all the political type officers and staff aide into his office, one by one. When my turn came he said, "Sit down Ed. I have always wanted to see one of you." "One of me? What do you mean?" He said, "I have always wanted to see an FSO who was a member of the CIA." I said, "But, I am not a member of the CIA. I am an honest FSO." He said, "Well, the ambassador thinks you are. Let me go back and check." There were secret files apparently and it turned out I was an FSO. But, Thompson thought because he wanted a single officer and they sent out a Russian speaker

that I was really full time CIA. We settled that, of course, and from then on I did a lot more work in the residence.

Q: From your perspective, how did Llewellyn Thompson operate in the Soviet Union?

HURWITZ: Thompson was very self-contained. He wasn't a very articulate guy. He played a lot of things close to the chest. But, he had long experience there during the war. He knew a lot of people. He was able to get along with the Soviet leadership. And, this was a time when Khrushchev would show up occasionally at the embassy, Khrushchev would deal with the diplomats, other Politburo members would come to the Fourth of July. It was a totally different atmosphere from either before or after during the Brezhnev period. So, we saw a lot of the Soviet leadership.

Q: You said you went around to lectures, etc. What were you getting out of these?

HURWITZ: There always had been during all my tours in the Soviet Union, a system of lectures. Some were completely open to the public, some were not publicized. I was an inveterate walker, walking the city endlessly and would see notices on clubs, writers club, etc. about lectures on political, cultural subjects and would go. My Russian by then was getting very good and in short sentences ("I want a ticket to get in" or "What time is it?") they couldn't distinguish me from maybe a Latvian or someone like that, so I got into a lot of these things. The lectures might be straight party line, but the questions often were incredibly revealing about how people felt, their complaints, their living conditions. People would say things you would never see in the press. Why are so many people denied housing? I have been living in a hovel in a basement and nobody is interested in my welfare, I can't get any food. Things that were diametrically opposed to what you would be reading in the Soviet press.

I recall one that was very revealing and we used it quite a bit. I heard a lecturer say point blank at a time when this was not supposed to be known that Castro was a communist. He was getting full support from the Soviets. This was at a time when Castro was trying to force himself off as a home ground revolutionary having nothing to do with the Soviet Union. I remember we got a call from the guy who was then assistant secretary for ARA. I did this throughout my career and turned up a lot of very fascinating stuff.

Q: You were in the Soviet Union this time from when to when?

HURWITZ: This was 1958-60.

Q: Were you able to take any trips outside of Moscow?

HURWITZ: Oh, yes. I went to a lot of interesting places. Most of them by train. For example, one of the more interesting trips was to Yakutsk, way up in eastern Siberia. I went to Vilnius. I went to the out of the way places, Kishinev, which is in Moldavia;

Kirov, which is in western Siberia and had just opened up. I did an enormous amount of traveling by train.

Q: How would a typical trip work? What were you trying to do?

HURWITZ: You were just trying to see what was going on. On the typical trip you would go with somebody else, very often a Brit, Canadian, or Australian. We would go to a town and just look around. Go to the market. Go to bookstores and try to buy books that were not on sale elsewhere. We had a very active book buying program but everybody participated. There was a publications procurement officer, but everybody picked up stuff. We would go to restaurants. At that time restaurants were crowded and you were virtually always seated with people who were already at a table. If they felt nobody was listening and they felt you were an American, which was easy for them to determine, they would really open up on what the problems were. So, we were able through these trips into the countryside, where you have to realize that you may have seen this in Visket, but you go 50 kilometers outside of Moscow and you are going back a hundred years in time--people pulling water out of wells with the yokes. Through this we were able to present a picture of the Soviet Union which was totally different than the one that the propaganda machine was trying to purvey and making it clear to what extent the Soviet effort to mount a space program or to what extent the emphasis on military development was really costing the Soviet Union in economic terms, an enormous amount.

Q: Did you have any problems with the KGB during these trips?

HURWITZ: Yes. I was young and silly, I think, my first tour. Rather early on I began to notice the same people around. Someone I had noticed in a crowd last week was there again. So, I began to play a few games with them, which was a big mistake. For example, going down into the subway and then waiting until the last minute to board a train to try to avoid them. I should have realized that from their standpoint that is not a game, that it appears suspicious or malicious. So, I had a few run ins. They got annoyed and began to follow very closely. During my second tour I didn't do that at all and I can't say I wasn't followed all the time. When you went outside of Moscow you would be followed. The local KGB or police were always much more enthusiastic and concerned about having something happen on their turf.

Q: I found this true in Yugoslavia.

HURWITZ: The only real incident I ever had was in 1970 when the Jewish Defense League in New York was really being very nasty with Soviet diplomats and families. It was really scurrilous what they were doing--spitting at wives, etc. So, one day I was taking my morning run in January and as I was running around the area where I lived a car came up onto the sidewalk where I was running and a guy got out blocking my way. He said, "Hurwitz, some day you are going to fall off the platform of the subway or walking under a building and a brick is going to fall from the top of the house." From that day on for two weeks, it was lock step. If I went into a bookstore and stood in front of a

shelf, there was a guy at my shoulder. They never touched me. They were very disciplined. This went on for two weeks and then it ended with a crescendo and stopped. The crescendo was that I was in a car with my wife coming back from a reception and there was the follow car which was right on my bumper. I stopped for a light, they stopped and somebody got out (I didn't see him) and went up to the back window and smashed it in. Then it stopped. Sol Polansky was in the embassy at the time and also shared a little bit of that. They may have singled us out. But, their purpose in doing this was from their standpoint perfectly logical and reasonable. We kept telling them in New York, for example, "Look, this is New York City jurisdiction and we can't do anything about it. We have no control over the courts." They couldn't understand this and they turned out to be right because in the wake of all this what happened after they started harassing our people we had some laws passed protecting diplomats.

Q: That was a very difficult period for you. But, back to the time you were there first, 1958-60. You were there during the U2 time. How did that work out?

HURWITZ: I got married in Moscow to the daughter of the Norwegian ambassador. She came in 1958, we met and got married in 1960. Our plan had been to go out of the country, to Vienna for a honeymoon. I think those plans were interfered with by the prospective visit of Eisenhower. In fact, the Soviets were building a golf course some place for him. But, then the U2 stopped the visit. We couldn't resuscitate the Vienna trip at that point. I was leaving pretty shortly. Yes, the U2 was a big deal.

Q: What about demonstrations against the embassy?

HURWITZ: Demonstrations were the order of the day depending on the issue. In July, 1958 there was a huge demonstration outside the embassy in connection with our having landed troops in Lebanon. It was the typical well organized demonstration, by the numbers, with the very carefully done placards saying "Hands Off Lebanon" and that sort of thing. There is an extraordinarily wide, broad street in front of the embassy, Tchaikovsky Street, and it was just solid with people. There was the throwing of ink wells, breaking of windows and that sort of stuff. But, here again, throughout all of this I was never really concerned about my safety vis-a-vis these goons, as we called them, or the demonstrators. It was all thoroughly orchestrated and controlled and almost nobody had any real spleen. The average person, whether organized to do this or not, really liked the United States. That is the strange part of it. So many conversations that I had made that clear. So many people, especially the older people, were appreciative for what the United States had done. So many people would talk about "I remember the canned ham, spam, and the jeep", etc. Even during the darkest days of the Cold War, the United States was still loved by the average Soviet.

Q: Did you get out into the crowds during these demonstrations?

HURWITZ: At that particular one, the Lebanon one, I had been at the ambassador's residence, which is about a fifteen minute walk from the embassy, for lunch. The

demonstration had begun while I was having lunch there and the street was filled. I later went back and stood around the fringes of the crowd, without, again, the slightest bit of concern for my personal safety. It is not as if you are in a Pakistani demonstration or something like that.

Q: What was the impression during the time you were there of Khrushchev?

HURWITZ: Khrushchev was considered a wily, but very unorthodox by Soviet standards, person. An earthy, peasant type, who was interested in not having a real confrontation with the United States. He was somebody who Thompson could talk to. He came to the embassy. He talked to any number of American visitors of the Rockefeller type. He was interested even at that time in seeking some kind of common arrangement to avoid confrontation. It was a totally different atmosphere from Stalin and from what came later with Brezhnev. It was an “otopel”, a thaw from what had gone on before. It was a period when Solzhenitsyn was being published and the theater was opening up. A period of blossoming of something that had been suppressed.

Q: Was there a feeling that sort of on the cultural side things were more open?

HURWITZ: Yes, by all means. We had our first contingent of IREX students. We had the Sol Hurok exchanges. We had “Porgy and Bess” coming there. You know, when I was there for a young Foreign Service officer, it was absolutely...I was in seventh heaven. We had Adlai Stevenson, Eleanor Roosevelt, Carl Sandburg, Saroyan, Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington, Gary Cooper and Edward G. Robinson. All of these were opportunities for enormous outpouring of interest on the part of Russians. It was a very active and interesting time. Perhaps the most influential, the most striking evidence of this was a triumph of USIA and US policy initiative there, the US exhibition in 1959. The big kitchen debate venue. This was really a masterpiece because it was all geared to American consumer items. Things that blew the Soviets’ minds. It was done in a very effective way. There were American hairdressers doing Soviet women. There was a huge book exhibit at which we knew the books would disappear. Some genius in USIA had the idea of having a Yiddish book section which was fantastic. I stood there frequently and watched people gaze up at these books and be almost afraid to touch them. I had many really revealing conversations at that area. I would reach up and pull down books trying to encourage other people to pull them down. They were sort of quaking. As I say, the books disappeared in enormous numbers. It was really a great triumph and opened up people’s eyes in the Soviet Union, those who may have believed America is okay if you are rich but for the working person it is no good. They had this theater in the round, a 360 degree film, which even the Soviets would say you couldn’t fake. It showed, for example, a Ford plant with the workers leaving the plant at the end of their shift, going out into the parking lot which was a sea of private cars. So, that was a really beautifully executed...

Q: Did you get any feel for how the famous kitchen debate between Vice President Nixon and Khrushchev went?

HURWITZ: I wasn't there at that particular debate. Nixon said a few things later on TV that weren't taken too well. But, by and large, the atmosphere was just...

Q: Were people involved in the arts, ballerinas, musicians, etc. given a little looser leash as far as contacts with the embassy?

HURWITZ: Oh, much so. I was just reading one of the letters I wrote home. We had a number of dances, Mrs. Thompson arranged this, to which ballerinas were invited. I remember writing home that I hoped to be able to dance with Ulanova, who was the queen of Russian ballet. Well, it turns out I danced with somebody else who later became famous. That was something that faded away in time during the Brezhnev years.

Q: You left there when in 1960?

HURWITZ: In July.

Q: What was your impression whither the Soviet Union at that time?

HURWITZ: There was no inkling on my part that it would come to grief later. That the propaganda was totally just that and the realities were completely different. That there were great dissatisfactions. But, that even at that point they were beginning to live better. They had gone through this period of terror, had gone through the war, deprivations of all kinds, but things were better. Whether they would continue to get better, I didn't really consider. But, even then you knew it was physically an enormously rich country. I had the feeling that the people (and this became clear later) despite everybody saying that they wouldn't work, that the system simply discouraged real work, could be motivated to work and that the average person was against war and really did want peace. The people couldn't really be mobilized to fight against the United States unless they were invaded. So, I think I felt the Soviet Union was not destined to come apart by any means, nor was it destined to rule the world, that neither Khrushchev nor the people in charge were interested in doing that sort of thing.

Q: You left in July, 1960, where was your next assignment?

HURWITZ: Because I had been in Japan in the army, I was interested in studying Japanese, having been very taken with Japan. My second choice for language training was Korean, to make the Japanese sound really plausible. Well, I was sent to Korean language training, which I'm glad of in retrospect. FSI didn't teach Korean in those days, so I was sent to Yale.

Q: How long was the period of studying Korean?

HURWITZ: It was ten months at Yale. Then in September, 1961, I went to Korea to Yangtze University which had a course basically for American missionaries learning Korean. It was not a good course.

Q: I remember Yangtze University because I was barracked there during the Korean War. I used to monitor the Soviet air force. I had gone to the Army language school to take Russian and that was where we were located. Can you describe an American taking Korean? What are the problems?

HURWITZ: Well, the problems were that there were no real text books and very few tapes. The reason I went to Yale was not because Yale had any established academic program in Korean. What Yale was doing was playing host for a crash course for people who were doing just what you were doing with the Soviets, that is monitoring. These air force enlisted men were really focusing on listening to numbers and that sort of thing. When they finished this course, if they were good enough, they would be sent to Korea and go along the fringes of Korea, either up the coast or along the DMZ, listening to North Korean military broadcasts or communications. So, that wasn't really good. I did well in it because I studied hard and the teacher, a Korean, took me aside and worked with me. When I went to Yangtze, I did six months with that group, and then I did six months alone with an instructor.

Q: You were in Korea studying from 1961-62?

HURWITZ: Right. I joined the embassy in July, 1962, the political section.

Q: While you were at Yangtze, one of the preeminent schools of South Korea, were you able to get any feel for the students, the campus?

HURWITZ: No. I went to Yangtze in the afternoon. The morning I spent with an older, very interesting, Korean woman, a Methodist laywoman, who had been in jail during the Japanese occupation and was part of the independent movement. She had a little office near where I lived where I went to study. One of her other students at the time was Jim Laney, who was a Methodist missionary at the time and is now ambassador. I studied in the morning with her and in the afternoon I went to Yangtze and was in this course. I had nothing to do with the regular student body at that time. Later, when the student demonstrations against the Japanese treaty in 1964 started, I got a little involved.

Q: What was your impression of Korea at the time, 1960?

HURWITZ: I came right on the heels of the Park Chung Hee military takeover. You had the student riots of 1960, which deposed Syngman Rhee and then you had in May, 1961, the Park Chung Hee military takeover. So, the embassy was dealing with a military government, which was not committed to democratic ideals by any means.

Q: You were at the embassy from when to when?

HURWITZ: I joined the embassy in July, 1962 in the political section. The political counselor was Phil Habib. I was dealing with the government party largely. I stayed there until January, 1966.

Q: So, 1962-66, a long time there. I am interviewing right now Dan O'Donohue.

HURWITZ: Dan and I were there together.

Q: Let's talk a little about personalities. What was your impression of how Phil Habib operated?

HURWITZ: Phil had to be every young Foreign Service officer's hero. Phil knew everybody, played cards with the Prime Minister, went hunting with this minister, was constantly on the move. He was a very brilliant guy, hard worker, terribly loyal to his staff, moved by the highest standards of morality and fairness. A good boss in the sense you would write something and he would look at it and say, "Hurwitz, I wouldn't have done it exactly this way, but get it out of here, send it." He was not a nitpicker. He would back you 100 percent. Really a fine guy.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

HURWITZ: It was Sam Berger when I first got there and then it became Winthrop Brown.

Q: From your impression, how did Sam Berger get on with Habib?

HURWITZ: Very well. The DCM at that time, Magistreti, was sort of cut out. Berger was not really a Korean or Japanese hand.

Q: He got his real renown for being a labor officer in England where he knew the Labour Party when nobody else did.

HURWITZ: Yes, and he was close to Governor Harriman. Phil, at one point had also been a labor type. I guess that is how they knew each other. Berger, I think, gave Phil a rather free hand and sort of bypassed Magistreti, who didn't seem to be doing very much. And that continued when Brown came in, with his DCM, Ed Dougherty.

Q: When you came into the political section, how did we look upon the Park Chung Hee government? This was very early on.

HURWITZ: The effort was to try to get Park Chung Hee to come around as fast as possible and restore civilian government. To try to make sure he didn't ride roughshod over civil rights or the free press. There was a strong authoritarian bent to them, which was hardly surprising in Korea at that time. As I recall we were trying to get them to reinstitute normal government instead of ruling by military fiat.

Q: What was your particular focus while you were in the political section?

HURWITZ: It wasn't really divided up that much. I did deal with the DRP, the government party. Kim Jung-pil was head of the government party. My Korean by that time was pretty good, in fact, at one point, because we didn't really train Korean speakers and we really didn't have the teaching materials, I was probably the best speaker of Korean. So, I dealt a lot with opposition types too who didn't speak English. I dealt with them without an interpreter which was useful. I did a lot of traveling around.

Q: How about the opposition with Kim Dae Jung?

HURWITZ: Kim Dae Jung wasn't really a figure at that time. Kim Yong-Sam was the leader of the Democratic Party.

Q: What was our impression of the opposition?

HURWITZ: Not particularly favorable. We dealt with them and tried to give them a little support and encouragement, but they were really not top notch people at the time. Kim Yong-Sam was not very impressive at the time. But, he was long lasting and was there when I went back in 1974-75.

Q: What were you getting about Park Chung Hee as far as his effectiveness and how we felt about him as far as our policy was concerned?

HURWITZ: I was a pretty low man on the totem pole there. Park was a fact of life. You couldn't say, "Let's deal with somebody else," he was in there and in control. We didn't try to undermine him in anyway. Dan O'Donohue and Phil may have at some point felt this was dictatorial, but my feeling was that these guys were within the ball park for certainly that part of the world and the opposition was not stamped out. One newspaper DongA Ilbo was pretty darn independent, critical. So, while we tried to soften the rough edges of the Park regime, there was no effort to somehow depose it or go public with strong criticism.

Q: Were we monitoring the students at all?

HURWITZ: Oh, yes.

Q: Because they had proved to be a force.

HURWITZ: Well, they tried to be a force again with something that the United States was very much in favor with and that was the settlement with Japan in 1964. It led to a whole series of street demonstrations. The students then, as now, were very, very tough. These are not placard baring students, these are students that arm themselves, throw rocks and fire bombs, etc. I must say the Park regime handled those demonstrations extremely

effectively. Only one person was killed, if memory serves me. A number of students commandeered a truck and one of them fell off. But, the students were very destabilizing.

Q: Spring was always the time. As I say now, we both heard the same news reports that students are holed up in Yangtze University threatening to blow themselves up if there isn't unification with North Korea.

HURWITZ: Yes. And that sort of unification is nonsense. Even if the North would say, "All right, let's unify," you have real big problems. At one point for the North Koreans to come hat in hand and say, "Let's unify," that would have been a great propaganda plus for South Korea. They would have welcomed it. Now, they don't need that propaganda plus and don't need the expense like the Germans had. Unification is not something that you simply say, "Let's do it."

Q: How did you find social life in Korea in those days?

HURWITZ: Work social there was a lot of. You would take politicians to lunch where you would go to the tea house. Koreans didn't invite you home that often, although with a number of people I simply knew, like my landlady or my Korean teacher, they would. The normal thing the Korean politicians, both opposition and government, did was the gisieng party, the equivalent of the geisha party. There was lots of intra and inter embassy dinners. You had facilities in the 8th Army clubs and things like that. Life was very nice there. I did a lot of outdoor hiking, the mountains are right there.

Q: On the Japanese treaty, we were obviously for this. How did the political section operate to make it known?

HURWITZ: I can't remember. I do remember being told to monitor various demonstrations, but I can't recall how we made known our position.

Q: What was the feeling at that time about the threat from the North?

HURWITZ: Very serious, as it should be and always has been. The only time we miscalculated, I think, was when Carter came in much later and there were serious plans made for the withdrawal of American troops. But, that was later. It was a serious thing. There was constant infiltrating of Korean agents along the coast or across the DMZ. The regime, as could be expected, used this to try to justify very tight controls on the opposition, but indeed (I think this came clearer in my second tour in the 70's) they did make some headway with students. There was an appeal there that resonated among students. This was a time when you began to see things in print and even in newspapers and certainly in some of the intellectual journals that was quite directly anti-American, using terminology that sounded a bit North Korean in style. But, the threat is real, it is only 30 miles away.

Q: What about your impressions about the relations between the embassy and the American military?

HURWITZ: That was a big issue and depended on the ambassador. Sneider, who was there in the '70s spent a lot of his time at the American military types and very little time with the Koreans. I thought the relationship was basically good. There was no question on the part of the UN Command, which was basically American, that the embassy was in charge.

Q: Did you have the feeling that Berger and later Brown were able to get along with the military camp? There have been very strong commanders who...

HURWITZ: Yes, the relationship was good.

Q: You left there in 1966 and where did you go?

HURWITZ: Then I came back to INR to the East Asia division. My bag was the Chinese involvement in Vietnam. This was the period when Alan Whiting was there. Fred Green came in later from, I guess it was Yale.

Q: You were in INR from 1966 until when?

HURWITZ: Until 1968.

Q: Alan Whiting was there?

HURWITZ: Yes, and then Fred Green later took over the job. Nethercut was there. Jim Leonard, who later went on to become an ambassador of some kind with disarmament, was there. Bob Drexler was there.

Q: Alan Whiting apparently had written this book "China Crosses the Yalu," that said there had been miscalculations on our part in Korea, and the same thing could happen in Vietnam. And there were others who were saying this was different. Did you get any feel for that sort of tension on what China is going to do in Vietnam? What we can do and what we can't do?

HURWITZ: No, to my recollection the feeling was that China had no need to intervene with the kind of intervention that we had over the Yalu. That Chinese assistance plus Soviet assistance plus what the Viet Cong showed themselves able to do, would be enough. I don't think we ever worried about full scale Chinese intervention. In those days too, there was a realization that the Vietnamese would not really be happy to have the Chinese there.

Q: As you were looking at China regarding Vietnam, was the split with the Soviet Union pretty apparent?

HURWITZ: It was just becoming so. The split philosophically was clear and the Chinese had sent all these Soviet experts home, but, of course, it reached a crescendo a month later with the Damansky Island incident, the border incident with the Soviets. China, too, you must remember, at that time they were really obsessed with their own cultural revolution.

Q: What was your impression about what we knew about China from the INR perspective?

HURWITZ: There was a lot of speculation, especially during the cultural revolution. It depended on who you read. We all had opinions. I was by no means a China scholar, I was just following the FBIS and the reporting out of Hong Kong.

Q: Were the people you were working with in INR beginning to realize the enormity of what the cultural revolution was doing to the Chinese economy?

HURWITZ: Yes, I think so. Have you talked to people like Jack Friedman? After Nethercut left he was the division director.

Q: I will have to get to him. I like to pick up what other people were thinking at the time. What was your work essentially?

HURWITZ: My work was pretty much confined to Chinese intentions and Chinese involvement in Vietnam.

Q: As you did this were you looking at clues in the FBIS and running them up against the model of the Chinese crossing the Yalu and seeing if we were getting parallels and that sort of thing?

HURWITZ: Not so much crossing the Yalu, just what they were sending, what they were saying. Of course, crossing the Yalu type of approach was an eventuality if it came to that and was something that you really were concerned about. But we didn't think it a high likelihood.

Q: You did this for two years until 1968. Where did you go then?

HURWITZ: Then I went to do the Far East portfolio on the Soviet desk. I took Stape Roy's place.

Q: This was 1968 to 1970, about?

HURWITZ: Well, no, I stayed only one year and then went off to Moscow again.

Q: Well, during this one year, 1968-69, what were our prime concerns and developments looking at the Soviet Union and the Far East?

HURWITZ: I was really focusing at that time, because it was the hottest issue, on the Sino-Soviet split, the Damansky Island episode. I do recall wondering why the desk was set up in this way. In other words, is it better to follow China's relationship with the Soviet Union from the Chinese side or from the Soviet side. Obviously a bit of both has to be done. I really didn't have enough to do. I remember I made this joke with Sam Wise, who was in the office at that time, that when my phone did ring, I would blow on the phone to indicate blowing the dust off. It just wasn't an active job and I was glad to get out of there. John Hemenway was in the office then. He later became an outspoken critic of the Foreign Service. I guess he had been kicked out, which was an easy thing to do in those days. The Soviet desk was a lot larger on the multilateral side than perhaps it should have been at that point. But, as I say, I didn't stay and didn't get wrapped up in the issues.

Q: The fighting along the Ussuri River happened in your time?

HURWITZ: Right.

Q: From our analysis, what brought this about?

HURWITZ: It was just a high point in tensions between the two countries. China was then going on to pursue all these territorial claims going back to Tzarist days. It was a growing feeling, I suppose on Mao's part, that he wasn't going to follow Soviet leadership.

Q: From our perspective, how were the Soviets looking at this? Were they taking the China threat seriously?

HURWITZ: Oh, yes. Throughout my whole career when you could get people to talk about this, China was public enemy number one. China at one time was supposed to be one of our brotherly socialist countries, but the Soviets feared China much more than the United States. Of course, this eventually led to the Nixon opening of China.

The common wisdom was that world communism was monolithic, that it was under the leadership of the Soviet Union and that other brotherly countries were little brothers that would take big brother's orders. There were people who said this was not the case, things had developed differently in different countries, China will never submit. Nobody really much believed that until it began to happen. You had academics predicting it.

Q: You left Soviet affairs in 1969 and went where?

HURWITZ: I didn't leave Soviet affairs, I went then to Moscow as head of the internal political section.

Q: You were in Moscow this time from when to when?

HURWITZ: From 1969 to 1972.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

HURWITZ: The ambassador then was Jake Beam, he had just gotten there.

Q: How did he operate?

HURWITZ: He seemed to be pretty much low key. I don't think he spoke Russian at all, if any it was very, very minimal. He seemed to be not heavily involved. I don't know why. Maybe he was already getting beyond his most active period. He did go on to write a book, but I have not read that.

Q: Who was the DCM?

HURWITZ: The DCM was Boris Klosson.

Q: What was your job?

HURWITZ: The political section was divided into two parts. One was multilateral and one was internal. I was head of the internal section and had three people under me.

Q: Now this is middle Brezhnev wasn't it?

HURWITZ: Yes. It was 1969 and Brezhnev came in in 1964.

Q: Did you find any differences in the way you were operating then and the way you had operated earlier?

HURWITZ: Yes, there was a big difference. The regime closed in on itself with respect to contacts. When I was there in 1958-60, Politburo members would show up for the Fourth of July and there was a lot of contact. It was an atmosphere, I recall, for example, in 1958 at the Queen's Birthday Party at the British embassy, a lot of diplomats went in their cords suits and I remember standing with Kirichenko, who was a member of the Politburo, in a dark black suit and he looks at me and says, "Do you think I am dressed all right?" That came to a sudden stop and you were lucky if you got a few people from the America Section or a few of the technical ministries. No Politburo people or Party people would go around.

Q: Was there any sense that the embassy was being somewhat bypassed by the Kissinger/Dobrynin relationship?

HURWITZ: Yes, some things we only learned about later. Even Kissinger's memoirs talk about back channel. The most glaring example of this was made clear to us out there when Kissinger came to Moscow in 1971 or '72 and was there for at least a day without Beam, the ambassador, knowing about it. He had brought on his plane Dobrynin. So you have the situation where Dobrynin is chatting with Kissinger all the way across the Atlantic. Beam was left out of the picture entirely.

Q: In many ways one might say that Beam was particularly selected in order not to be a challenger.

HURWITZ: Yes, you could conceivably say that. Kissinger cut out not only the embassy, but the State Department too.

Q: How did this reflect itself on what you all were doing?

HURWITZ: It didn't affect my work. My work was very low level. We were seeking out information where we could get it. The newspapers became much less revealing, although they had never by any means told the full story under Khrushchev, they told less and less of the situation as time went on. So, I was doing again a lot one on one, man -in-the-street type of conversations. I would go to lectures, etc. An example during my first tour, although there were others later, right after Pasternak won the Nobel Prize, the press was full of denunciations of the Nobel committee and Pasternak was a turncoat, etc. I went to a lecture at the University of Moscow, a student lecture, and the lecturer is standing up there denouncing the book, denouncing Pasternak, saying the book says this and it is wrong. Then one student leaps up in the back of the hall and points his finger at the lecturer and says, "Have you read the book?" The lecturer had to admit that he hadn't read the book. That was the end of lecture, consternation.

This sort of thing didn't make the press and it was the kind of thing that we reported on. We reported on food shortages, salaries levels that were never published. It was the kind of thing that Kremlinologists were doing carefully with the analysis of the press and the journals. One of the great coups really along these lines was Marray Afeshbach who was analyzing data from seemingly innocuous Soviet statistics. But, if you put them together with other obscure statistics it showed terrible developments in infant mortality or in alcoholism or in population welfare in general. A lot of our effort was trying to determine what was really going on, where things really stand. It was not a question of talking about policy, you knew what they were going to say. And, certainly at my level, and even at Beam's level, it wasn't a question of making demarches frequently on what the Soviets ought to do. That was done by Kissinger, by Nixon.

Q: What were you getting about the Soviet attitude towards Vietnam?

HURWITZ: Well, the Soviets, and this became clear in so many ways, didn't know what to think about Vietnam. Yet, if you absorbed the line and you were inclined to spout it yourself, it was easy for a Soviet student or a man in the street to parrot that line. More

often than that though, you came across this sort of conflict. The Soviets through many, many years of experience almost automatically wrote off what the regime told them. If the regime said so, it can't really be true. I can't think of any specific instance, but there were many instances where I struck up a conversation with somebody and after you got through all the praise for what the Americans did for them in World War II, he would then go into, "We don't know what is going on in Vietnam. I don't know, it is a question. Maybe you should be there, maybe you shouldn't be there, but if our press is saying that you are doing wrong, I am not so sure." The Soviets faced that problem in later years. Almost everything they said was almost immediately discounted, and that was true about Vietnam.

Q: Were you picking up disquiet about what China was up to?

HURWITZ: Absolutely. That stems not only to the concern about this huge neighbor that is making claims about Russian areas, but it is also a prevalent Russian racism that extends to the Chinese, and their own "black" people, the Central Asians. They are terrible racists.

Q: There had been a great push in the late '60s, Lumumba University and all that. What were you getting both times about third world students and their indoctrination or lack thereof in the Soviet Union?

HURWITZ: There were many, many incidents between black African students and Soviet students. Both sides were very unhappy with the situation. The Russians were unhappy with these guys going out with Russian girls or flaunting money, which even the limited money third world students might have, seemed like luxuries to what the Soviets had. And the Africans were unhappy with the way they were being treated. One would have to question in retrospect was this much of a plus or just throwing away a lot of money at something that had a counterproductive effect. I seem to think it was counterproductive. It certainly worked with some. I think it worked with Afghans, but they were neighbors and that would be a special case. It worked with Cubans because the Soviets followed up with enormous influx of technology and bought the Cuban sugar. But, in other cases, I'm not too sure how that really paid off. I don't think it paid off at all.

Q: Did you find since you were in internal affairs for the second time that there was a certain change of focus yet about looking at the nationalities as nationalities?

HURWITZ: Yes, it was beginning and again more so with the Baltic states. My view at the time I think was pretty much borne out, was that Central Asia was not an area that was either a tender spot at the time nor would it really develop into one. Central Asia with some exceptions, Uzbekistan is probably an exception, really benefitted--Kyrgyzstan, no question.

Q: Oh, it was very obvious that it was on the receiving end rather than the giving end.

HURWITZ: That was the debate that took place sub rosa all the time. By the time Khrushchev came in with glasnost, people could talk about it publicly. The debate was whether Central Asia took more from Moscow or was forced to give more. In most cases they took more. And, they were Islamic to the extent in most cases they were circumcised and they married and died with Muslim rituals, but other than that there was no real interest in Islam. That has sort of almost artificially been stimulated now.

Q: What about the Orthodox Church during this time, the '70s?

HURWITZ: I used to go very frequently but there wasn't much movement. Khrushchev, liberal as he was in other areas, was not very friendly to the Church. For years you would go to church and there would be only old people there, basically old women. We always used to go to the Easter service, which is bigger than Christmas, and you would have the midnight service and then there would be a procession around the church (Christ has risen). At all these events, outside partially held back, restrained by the police, there would be a big crowd of Komsomol types who had been dragooned into this. Although this was one instance I think where the political line, atheist line, was pretty much in line with what most students did honestly think. That is, the Church is corrupt, was a narcotic to the masses. This, of course, was stimulated by the press.

Q: What about the Jewish community at this time?

HURWITZ: Well, even during my first tour, we began following very closely the Jewish question. I did it partially out of curiosity to see what it was like. The congress was beginning to get interested in seeing what the situation was--not immigration that was too far in the future. Remember in 1948 Stalin was gearing up for the Jewish doctors plot but he died fortuitously. So, part of every officer's itinerary when he went to a town was to see whether there was a synagogue. Now that led to some odd situations. I remember looking for the synagogue in Lvov, which was a big center of Jewish settlement years ago. There was no active synagogue and I couldn't find it. The Russians very, very rarely had a phone book, and even if they printed one they were always unavailable, but they did have these information kiosks where you went and asked for an address or phone number and paid your three kopecks. I used to have these little jokes. I would go to a kiosk, and my Russian for a brief sentence was accentless, and I would ask for the number of the American embassy and they would get very concerned, they didn't know it. In Lvov I went and asked for the address of the old synagogue. She was very disturbed and may have even called somebody. So, I walked around town and finally went into a small bakery shop. The guy looked Jewish to me and I asked him where it was. He knew and pointed down the street. I went down there and it was now an indoor basketball court which was ideal because under the old system the men sat downstairs and the woman sat in the gallery so you had a place to play basketball on the floor and the spectators would sit around the top. We followed that in every city we went to if there had been a Jewish population.

Q: Was there something that was identifiable as a Jewish community?

HURWITZ: In Moscow, yes. In my first tour we went frequently to the main synagogue and in those days everybody was old who was going in. Around the synagogue on Saturday morning were old Jewish beggars. There would always be one or two Jewish guides who were working for the government who seeing you were a foreigner would try to separate you from the people so you couldn't talk to them and offered to bring you inside and talk to you. You tried to avoid that. That happened wherever there was a synagogue. That was in the '50s and the beginning of tourism and the Soviets quickly learned that they had to control the Jews that might be coming to either see relatives or see what it was like. That changed drastically in my second tour for one reason, the Six Day War.

Q: We are talking about the Israeli tremendous victory over the Arabs.

HURWITZ: Yes. That energized the Jewish population, particularly the young who had nothing to do.

Q: It also meant they were no longer losers.

HURWITZ: Right. It gave them pride. So, when you went to the synagogue on Friday night, the street was filled with kids dancing and just talking. We had an embassy officer who was assigned to go down there every Friday and just stand around and talk to people because you found out lots of things because the Jewish population by this time was willing to talk. This was sort of a turning point from a group that had been very frightened to a group that was becoming self assertive. Now, the older ones were still sort of frightened because they remembered the worst. These younger kids didn't remember the late forties. The Soviets gradually, even under Brezhnev, began to open up. There were Yiddish traveling theater groups that played for a few days in various cities. And then, of course, you had the opening up, the immigration infusion which began in the early '70s.

Q: Was the political section involved in the immigration?

HURWITZ: At first there was real immigration, they allowed it. We got involved in the whole issue of Refuseniks when they were shutting it down. That happened when I was on the Soviet desk in 1979. Back to the 1969-72 period, immigration was just beginning to get underway.

Q: Was there any Israeli representation of any sort?

HURWITZ: During my first tour there was an Israeli embassy which was closed after the Six Day War, so by the time I went back in 1969 it was closed, there was no representation.

Q: What about Arab representation during this 1969-72 period? Were they very apparent?

HURWITZ: Oh, yes. The Egyptians were there in full force, the Egyptian military people were there. I remember I got friendly, and it was sort of touchy for him but he was interested, with an Egyptian air force major who lived in my complex. He had me to dinner once or twice and we talked. He was a very nice fellow. It started because somehow they were delivering my "Herald Tribune" to his mailbox. But they were there in pretty big force as well as the Syrians and the Iraqis.

Q: What was the impression of our embassy to the relations of the Soviets with the Arab group? Was this a marriage of convenience or was there more to it? This was the Kissinger period when there was sort of the feeling that everything that happened in the Middle East was somehow instigated by the Soviets.

HURWITZ: I didn't work directly on that but, yes, I think the view was that we were backing the Israelis and the Soviets were backing the Arabs and that was that.

Q: Because, when you talk with people dealing with the Middle East they were saying that this was a home grown thing and the Middle Easterners were taking advantage of both the United States and the Soviets.

HURWITZ: I don't think we viewed the Soviets as stimulating any of this, but that they were to some extent clients which was taken as a matter of course, I thought.

Q: What about the feeling towards the Soviet economy during the 1969-72 period? Looking at this Brezhnev period, how was the economy?

HURWITZ: They were going through some difficult periods then, although it was much worse in 1981 when I went back for a couple of months TDY in Moscow as political counselor. It was far worse even in 1986-88. But, already in the '70s you were getting shortages, hidden price rises, items disappearing and reappearing either at smaller quantities for the same price or higher prices for the same amount. We all saw big problems, although I don't think anyone in the embassy had a big enough picture or privy to enough information to make global estimates as to what the Soviet economy might do or was doing. Things just didn't trickle down. Cement production might have been the greatest in the world but didn't mean a thing. Later at lectures in Leningrad we would hear things like, "The USSR is the largest producer of shoes in the world. Leningrad was the center of shoe production yet what we do with our shoes, the lecturer was saying, "is to take them directly from the factory to the warehouse. We don't send them into the retail network because nobody wants to buy them. So, we just let them rot in the factories." We were all beginning to see what was essentially a basic flaw in the Soviet system, and that is that there was no connection between production and consumption. The factories produced to meet a plan, not to sell. We were reporting this kind of stuff, but I don't think anybody drew the conclusion at that point that if this continues they will be exhausting resources for no real gain. You could see the waste there. They were living high on the hog with oil exports, but not really doing anything with the proceeds.

Q: The thing we were really concerned about was the military threat and all accounts were that the Soviets were building up a tremendous fleet, had very advanced aircraft, tanks, artillery, etc. I would hear tourists come back and say, "How can the Soviet army be that much of a threat when the elevators don't work?"

HURWITZ: We constantly reported on these anomalies that whatever the overall statistics say for production of A, B or C, it simply is not evident in the civilian economy at any rate. What is evident is exactly what you said, the elevators don't work, things break down, people 50 kilometers outside of Moscow were living Tolstoyan lives in terms of food transportation and facilities.

But, I think what became clear and was becoming clear at that time was that there is a real separate approach to the economy--the best in resources, the best in facilities, the best in minds were devoted to the military production. And, this is something that we in the embassy really couldn't see. At the time there were obviously overhead photos, but this was something that I didn't see. And, going back now, I worked in the historical office for a while, you would see some of the reports CIA was doing and you would be looking down on pictures of submarines in various places and see what they had access to which didn't exist in the embassy, at least at my level. So, you couldn't see the best. If you looked at what we saw and the perceptive tourist saw, not just the Kremlin and things like that, yes, the feeling was that these guys were going to hell, they were not going anyplace. What we didn't see was the elite military kind of devotion of resources.

Q: Looking back but also at the time, was there a mind set, do you think, within not just the embassy, but within the government, and maybe the United States in general, of the Soviets as being a threat and not looking at the other side, the major weaknesses that brought it down?

HURWITZ: Well, there were things that brought it down that were not evident at the time at all, in fact, didn't exist. No, we saw the threat. Washington through all these intelligence reports was aware of the military capabilities. We tended just prudently to accept a lot of what the Soviets said about "We are the wave of the future." We did see them active in all parts of the world. So, it was perfectly reasonable and prudent to consider the threat real. That we in the embassy and some other people who visited saw the weak parts of the Soviet Union, the economic weaknesses, the grumbling, public discontent, lack of initiative, yes, that was there but you still didn't say that despite all this other stuff it really was not going to work. I think we felt it would work.

What we didn't see at the time and neither did the Soviets see was that there was something else that would begin to work (and this is all retrospect, although we played a role in its beginnings), and that was that information could not be controlled. They tried, there was jamming, but in time technical advances just made it almost impossible to control. And the Soviets, I think were faced with a dilemma. If they were to bring the rest of the country along, to match the West economically, technically and militarily, they had

to have contact with scientists in the West. They had to know what was going on elsewhere. That is the kind of dilemma. How do you keep abreast of what is happening and get nuclear scientists believing we are the best when they know that everybody else is doing a lot better? We contributed to that from the very beginning with the radio. I remember I had a funny feeling...I was in Donetsk, which is way in the south of either the Ukraine or Russia. It is an old coal mining area and where Khrushchev is from. I remember standing in the square, I had gone there in 1971, of Donetsk and looking around and feeling...I had been listening that morning to see whether VOA...that was another thing we carried radios with us to test VOA or Radio Liberty reception. Well, Radio Liberty and VOA came in very well and I was just thinking that these people need this information from the outside the same way that they need bread that they were buying at the store. The Soviets couldn't have it both ways. They couldn't show the world through exchanges and things like that, that they were doing fine and keep out the rest of the world. And that was something that hastened or made the fall inevitable.

Q: Why don't we stop at this point and we will pick it up the next time in 1972 when you left the Soviet Union.

HURWITZ: Okay.

Q: Today is August 29, 1996. Ed, we are now in 1972. You left the Soviet Union and what?

HURWITZ: I came back to be the Czech/Bulgarian desk officer.

Q: How long were you doing that?

HURWITZ: From 1972 to 1974.

Q: Where did the Czech/Bulgarian desk rest within the Department?

HURWITZ: That was in the Office of Eastern European Affairs, which I believe until shortly before my arrival had been split into a northern tier and southern tier. Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Romania being in the south and Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary in the north. That was joined together and the officer director was John Baker, who had been a second secretary in Moscow in 1958. I was on my way to Moscow, in the Paris embassy cafeteria, when I read in the "Herald Tribune" that he had been PNGed, but that is another story.

Q: In the first place Bulgaria/ Czechoslovakia is sort of a....

HURWITZ: They have to combine two countries and one desk officer because of staffing problems and those were two countries--Bulgaria wasn't a very active portfolio, but Czechoslovakia at that time was much more so because it was the time we were

negotiating the endless gold/claims issue. So, it was simply a question of how you could double up and not over burden an officer.

Q: Geographically it didn't make much of a hell of a difference.

HURWITZ: No, it was a question of work load. But, I found being the desk officer for two countries, even two relatively inactive countries, was still pretty much of a burden because you always had double duty. You had to write national day things for two countries, two sets of dates to keep in mind, two sets of programs that were going on. So, even though they weren't front burner stuff from a Seventh Floor standpoint, it was still a considerable amount of work.

I should add, I almost forgot, I was at the same time the desk officer for the Baltic states, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia. This was largely a matter of ceremonial duties having to go to national day events and read and write the Secretary's greetings to each of these countries. Of course they were all variations on the same theme of keep up the good work and we will continue not to recognize the forcible incorporation of your country into the Soviet Union. It was an interesting portfolio.

Q: Let's take this in pieces. First let's talk about the Baltic states. What was the attitude of the Department about these states?

HURWITZ: The attitude of the Department was very clear, we did not recognize their incorporation into the USSR. They maintained and were fully accredited their diplomatic missions here. We did have, in retrospect, a strange stricture there and that is that at that point we would not recognize as a Baltic diplomat anybody who had not been in the Baltic diplomatic services at the time of the Soviet takeover in 1940, so we were dealing with some pretty old guys. Now, that later changed. The Lithuanian chargé, I remember, on one occasion, he was well into his '80s, he struggled up to my office and eased himself into the chair beside my desk and then said he had forgotten why he had come to my office. But, it was largely a public relations operation.

Q: You having been in the Soviet Union, what did you feel? Did you sort of think this wasn't really serious stuff, this was for domestic politics, or did you think there was a glimmer that something might happen soon?

HURWITZ: Oh, no, it was clearly for domestic politics. On the other hand having been in both Lithuania and Estonia, in my first tour in Moscow, and having seen Tallinn, Estonia, the atmosphere was as if in an occupied city, there was no question but that these three countries were not meant to be part of the Soviet Union. Whether they would have in the long run fit into the Russian empire without communism, that is another story. It was definitely a takeover. I never foresaw the breakup of the Soviet Union, but I did feel that there was a lot of rationale for not recognizing this.

Q: Did you in that position monitor anything we said about the Soviet Union to make sure we didn't say something which might absentmindedly acknowledge the occupation?

HURWITZ: Oh yes. I monitored, the EE desk monitored as well as the local communities. There were a lot of Baltic-Americans, so to speak and they were very careful about this sort of thing. Now, occasionally we had to justify things that we were doing in the Baltic states. I must say this is a rather interesting and a very sophisticated kind of a question. We claimed, the US government claimed, that we were running these USIA programs in the Baltic states. This was not because of any recognition of their domination by the Soviet Union, but simply as a means of keeping in touch. It is an old story. If you completely isolate or refuse to recognize something then the people who are in that particular entity, in this case the Baltics, don't have the opportunity to get in touch with Americans to make their case known on the ground. So, we monitored closely any contacts we had, but we were frequently put in the position of defending some of those contacts to the Baltic community here that wanted none whatsoever. Eventually they came around and saw that contacts, while the Soviets might want to trumpet these contacts as an indication that we recognized their sovereignty, nevertheless they performed a real service in keeping alive contacts and giving some hope to people that they weren't simply being just swept under the rug.

Q: Did you have any congress people who were after you on this?

HURWITZ: Yes. I can't recall any specific ones but there were and the reactions of congress were important to us. But, I must underline that as time went on the whole question of...indeed the one big issue which came up at the time was the Helsinki Final Act, which the Soviets....

Q: This is the CSCE?

HURWITZ: Yes. Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. I believe this was signed in 1975. Leading up to it the big dichotomy that I remember was on the one hand the Soviets were claiming that this was a recognition of post World War II borders, that they wouldn't be changed by force and that they would in a sense be recognized. And, of course, the Baltic community didn't like that here. On the other hand, it enshrined an agreement signed by the Soviets the concept of free exchange of ideas, press access, etc., the so-called basket three, the third item on the agenda. We went ahead and signed it and I think everybody came to realize, more so than anybody the Soviets, that this was really an important win for the West. All the dissidents in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union began to cite this as a reason for demanding their rights for their country. The Soviets had agreed that this would be the case--family exchanges, easy access, easy egress. And this did become sort of a legal hook that the dissident movement could really be pegged on.

Q: It is one of the contributing factors to the dissolution of the Soviet Union, when looking back on it. But, even our Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, was very dubious

about that. This was not his thing. He sort of came into it at the end but almost tried to undercut it, from what I have gathered.

HURWITZ: I am not really aware of that, although it would be in character.

Q: I have talked to people in interviews who were on the negotiating side and found that he was saying things to Dobrynin, the Soviet ambassador, which sort of undercut what our people in the field were doing because this was not Henry Kissinger's thing. Well, moving down to Bulgaria. In the 1972-74 period what was the situation as you saw it and what were our interests there?

HURWITZ: Well, you know Bulgaria was really just a blip on the screen. Bulgaria was rather an obedient servant of the Soviet Union. It was nothing close to what people used to say was, the 16th republic of the Soviet Union, but on the other hand Zhivkov played ball thoroughly with the Soviets. On the other hand when I left Moscow, knowing I was going to become a desk officer, I took a trip to both Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria, and I must say coming out of Moscow directly to Bulgaria was almost like going to the West. Here in the middle of Sofia there was a traffic sign with arrows pointing to Rome and to Athens. There was relatively a bustling, over flowing market of food, stuff you would never see in the Soviet Union. There was Coke on sale all over. There were discos and that sort of thing. There was a Jewish population of those who remained, and they were free to go. In the Soviet Union this didn't start until 1974-75, the ability for the Jews to get out if they wanted. In Bulgaria most of the Jews had left, they were allowed to go soon after the war. Those who remained, I talked to a number of them, had no problems. A lot of them, strangely enough, spoke a version of Spanish having arrived originally from Spain.

Q: My goodness.

HURWITZ: Yes. In fact I went to the synagogue there and there was an old guy on duty, so to speak, and I started to say something in Russian, feeling that everybody did speak Russian, and he said, "Hablo Espanol?" He told me the story that he spoke Spanish at home.

We really had no contentious issues because there wasn't a human rights problem. The maltreatment of the Turkish population had not really begun full swing, at least it didn't become a major issue at that time. Either we ignored it or the Turks ignored it at that time. We had just before I arrived signed a consular agreement with Bulgaria.

Q: How about Social Security checks?

HURWITZ: No problem with that.

Q: Was there any cooperation or problem with Bulgaria being a drug....?

HURWITZ: Yes, that was gearing up. The question was these Bulgarian TIR trucks which became an issue.

Q: This was hashish coming through from Turkey.

HURWITZ: They may have been using Bulgarian trucks or just transiting Bulgaria.

Q: But, as I recall, that was a concern.

HURWITZ: That was a concern and it was building up at the time.

Q: Were we trying to do anything with the Bulgarian on this?

HURWITZ: I don't really recall. I think there were some approaches and that they were being rather cooperative. It wasn't as if they were thumbing their noses at us.

Q: I think we were training drug-sniffing dogs. I was in Athens during part of this, 1970-74, and all of us in that area were concerned about the flow of narcotics, mainly hashish at that time.

Who was the ambassador when you were there?

HURWITZ: Telly Torbert. He was there for my full tour. In fact, during my tenure on the desk, the relationship with Bulgaria was on a more even keel than it had ever been. We had the first sort of high level visit by a deputy premier, a new ambassador had come who spoke good English. So things with Bulgaria were either looking up slightly or were not an issue.

Q: Did you find yourself trying to explain that Bulgaria was not really an absolute satellite of the Soviet Union?

HURWITZ: Yes, that and the fact that we had no outstanding contentious issues between us. Bulgaria in the UN or any international forum, of course, touted the Soviet line, but on other issues that were contentious between us and the Soviets at the time, arms shipments, treatment of their dissidents or their minorities or their Jews, Bulgaria was rather clean and we had no complaints.

Q: Turning to Czechoslovakia during the 1972-74 period, four years after the Soviet crack down in 1968, what was the situation as you viewed it from the desk and what were our issues?

HURWITZ: The Czech government was pretty much a mess. They threw out all of their professionals in 1968 so you had pretty much a group of hard liners. Our major issue at the time was this gold/claims. During the war the allies, had come into possession of a stash of Czech gold, which was hidden someplace or in a bank some where, and we took

control of that. That was the Czech side. We had all these outstanding claims on the part of US citizens who had had their property nationalized in 1948. So, these were long standing negotiations on how to resolve this issue. It came to fruition after my tenure. But, the question was how much they would settle these claims for before we gave them the gold back.

Q: Who handled the negotiations? Did we have a claims person?

HURWITZ: There was a commission, but I forget the details.

Q: What was the day-to-day work of our embassy? Was it a difficult place?

HURWITZ: Czechoslovakia was a fairly difficult place. You know the Czechs historically it seems after World War II have been real nasty guys. They have done the Soviets' bidding and done it in a rather nasty way in terms of supplying arms to the IRA or developing syntax, an explosive, and sending it all around. There was one incident, for example, when I was on the desk of an American/Jewish leader who was visiting Czechoslovakia and disappeared. He was later found floating in the Vltava River. At any rate, he may have been done in by the Czechs, he may have been done in by some Palestinians roaming around Czechoslovakia then. Czechoslovakia was kind of a training ground for terrorists.

Q: They and the East Germans, at least at the official level, seemed to jump into the whole nasty business with both feet.

HURWITZ: Yes. The guy who despatched Trotsky in Mexico City in 1940 was a Czech. They just seemed to be prepared to do the Soviets' dirty work in many cases. So, our relationship was very cool. Their ambassador here, Spa_ek, was a very urbane fellow and he tried to sort of turn things around. He was a music lover and had a lot of people to their beautiful embassy residence for either concerts or just plain receptions. He may have been fighting this image but the image was there nevertheless and reasonably so. We were also in the process of trying to negotiate a consular agreement with them. I recall there were a number of contentious issues. One of them was the circumstances under which a person born in Czechoslovakia, but who was a nationalized American citizen, could go back to Czechoslovakia and be assured of not being arrested for something he did before.

Q: What was the general view at that time of the Czech contribution to the Warsaw Pact? I would have thought if you were a Soviet Warsaw Pact commander you would be a little dubious about the Polish army and really want to keep it away from your supply lines, more than anything else. But the East German army would probably do his bidding and how about the Czech army?

HURWITZ: The Czech upper echelons was cleaned out after 1968. I think that they would be pretty much willing to rely on the Czechs. They were traditionally very industrially advanced and made good weapons. I think they relied on them.

Q: From the desk point of view was there any feeling that maybe Czechoslovakia would break up into parts?

HURWITZ: No, no. All that was very much sublimated, not only for Czechoslovakia but for the Soviet Union. Slightly off the subject, there was a certain amount of cohesion which I think resulted not simply from force, but, certainly in the Soviet case and I think in the Czech case as well, the pride that comes from being a member of a nice country club where they are somebody. The question of breakup never entered anybody's mind.

Q: You left the desk in 1974 and what was next?

HURWITZ: For the first month, Art Hartman asked me to be a staff aide or special assistant up in EUR, so I did that. Then I went to CU where I worked as a deputy to Yale Richmond, who was a long time exchange type for the Soviet Union. When cultural exchanges were shifted over to USIA, he went to USIA. I stayed in that job for about three months. Then I was assigned to Korea, as political counselor. Phil Habib broke my assignment to CU to send me out to Seoul.

Q: We will move to Korea in a minute, but what was your impression of how Art Hartman ran EUR?

HURWITZ: He was very competent, very good. I was just sort of looking over cables, not sitting in on the meetings. The big issue at the time was the Turkish invasion of Cyprus.

Q: Yes, that was in July, 1974. That always struck me that EUR all of a sudden got stuck with Turkey and Greece, which wasn't up to its sophisticated standards having just been transferred over to EUR from NEA. All of a sudden people used to dealing with France, England and Germany, had these two squabbling NATO members on their hands.

What were you doing in CU?

HURWITZ: Exchanges. This was becoming pretty much of a growth industry. It had been coming along all the time since my first tour in Moscow with Sal Hurok and all those exchanges beginning. Then there was a kind of freeze period after Khrushchev kicked out, but then it started to blossom again. It had been shut down for a while because of the 1968 Czechoslovakia event, but came back. It had been given a great shot in the arm by the 1972 visit to Moscow of Nixon. All kinds of agreements were signed covering health, energy, environment, transportation and exchanges. So they were really bustling in that era. I can't remember any specific problems or issues, but it was a major portion of our relationship with the Soviet Union.

Q: Then you went to Korea from when to when?

HURWITZ: December, 1974 to late 1975. I had personal problems at home and cut my tour short staying not quite a year.

Q: You are back in Korea. What was the political situation at that time?

HURWITZ: There was a great deal of stability. The Park Chung Hee regime had somewhat settled down. They were in the early stages of their economic upswing. They had cleaned up Seoul to a great extent. Seoul was bustling, buildings were going up even at that time, a subway had been put in, there was traffic all over the place. When I was there the first time the only vehicles, a part from trucks on the street, were jeeps. Beggars, who were prevalent in the early '60s, were all gone. Korea was in the process of being transformed. What had been in 1961, from our standpoint, a basket case economically, was now bustling. Certain things they did were positively mind boggling to me. They had transformed those bare, scraggly, granite slopes of the mountains into lush forests. They planted fast growing pines turning the brown/gray mountains into lush green forests.

Q: They would have tree days, wouldn't they, where everybody would go out and plant trees?

HURWITZ: Yes. A lot of this was good old regimentation.

Q: Sure.

HURWITZ: That was just one example that sums up how the place was bustling. They had problems though because a lot of this economic growth took place at the expense of the workers being exploited, if you look at it from an American viewpoint--low wages, long hours, lousy working conditions. So, you did have a burgeoning labor problem and that was a source of discontent. Some of the laborers were being organized. Union members were being thrown into jail. You had cases of political dissidents. The harassment of American missionaries who were trying to work with the labor unions or these political groups. So, that was one of the major issues at the time.

You also had a new constitution propagated by the president which was very stringent, the Yushin constitution. That was a sticking point in our relationship. I think a lot of the problems never really have gone away. In Korea, as you know, you always had a very active, sometimes explosive, student movement. Some of their leaders were very left wing and we began to get examples in the press there of complaints of American domination, toadying to the West, and that sort of stuff. It smacked of communist propaganda. Some of these kids were simply naive, but some of them, the regime felt and I think with some justification, were being manipulated to a certain extent by North Korea.

Q: It is going on today.

HURWITZ: Yes. I must say I was amazed to see some of those pictures of Yonsei University recently on TV where students with iron bars were beating the hell out of a policeman on the ground. They are very easily incited and explosive and get very, very violent. It is something that the regime was always afraid of. I remember in 1964 when they were concluding this treaty with Japan students were out in the streets every day and the government handled it well, they didn't kill anybody...the only person killed was a kid who fell off a truck that they had commandeered...but it required a great deal of self control. Now, what happened in Kwangju in 1980, I don't know. That is another story, another regime. But, basically there is a problem. We may have said one thing but I think all along with the DMZ 30 some miles away from Seoul we felt there was something to worry about. The regime wasn't simply sending up a smoke screen when it talked about communist threats...Mr. X is a communist so we will put him in jail. That sort of argumentation may have been abused, and obviously it was, but it did have some grain of truth to it.

Q: How did you find relations with the US military during this time you were there?

HURWITZ: Oh, they were good. Part of the reason they were so good was that Dick Sneider, the ambassador, was on very good terms with the UN commander, Richard Stilwell. I think Sneider had a long political/military background and was very comfortable dealing with the military.

Q: He was a key person in the Okinawa reversion with Japan. He was a Japanese hand, I think. Were you having any problems dealing with the dissidents like Kim Dae Jung?

HURWITZ: Well, Kim Dae Jung by the time I got there was under house arrest, I think. He was arrested in 1974. We saw him on occasion. He once came to lunch at the DCM's house. We kept in touch with him. But, I must say, Sneider, for what ever reason, had very little truck with the opposition, the missionaries, the labor leaders. He was very cool to them, unlike Habib who was all over the place and saw everybody. His door was open to anybody and he didn't care about offending the government in any way. Sneider was different. Personally, he simply didn't get along with these people, he had no time for them.

Q: I was his consul general for three years.

HURWITZ: Where was that?

Q: In Seoul from 1976-79.

HURWITZ: Oh, he was still there.

Q: He left in 1978.

HURWITZ: Oh, well, then you know.

Q: No, the missionaries were not his bag at all. I always felt he was uncomfortable with the so- called human rights which granted...

HURWITZ: Yes, he was.

Q: But, that wasn't big during this time, it came a little later.

At the same time they had good connections with the US military which was extremely important and really with the Park government, I think.

HURWITZ: Yes, they did, that is true. If we had done what a person like Congressman Fraser wanted us to do, I think we would have been in big trouble.

Q: It is very difficult. Did you have any connection with the missionaries?

HURWITZ: Not so much the missionaries, but with the opposition. My Korean at that time was very good and I liked to use it. I saw a lot of the opposition types. The missionaries I didn't know so well my second tour.

Q: What was the view towards the new Yushin constitution? That was just getting started when you were there, wasn't it?

HURWITZ: There was a definite feel that Park Chung Hee had turned the screws on tightening the situation and with the kind of growth and prosperity it lead to more people being inclined to question this. In the old days Koreans, apart from the students, were much more willing to take things as they came. As time went on and the country became more stable and more prosperous you had more people speaking out, and I guess that is what tipped his hand towards a constitution with tighter control.

Q: How about relations between Korea and Japan? We have always gotten in between on this, too. The Koreans don't like the Japanese but can't get away from them.

HURWITZ: Well, in a sense they really don't want to get away from them. There is a sort of love/hate relationship with the love bit being very surreptitious. You would find down back alleys back issues of Japanese magazines being sold. Most people at that time spoke Japanese. I guess that is diminishing rapidly. But, I think any serious Korean knows that Japan is a real factor in the area and they simply can't have a Greece/Turkey kind of relationship.

Q: Were there any issues during this time?

HURWITZ: No, I can't think of any.

Q: You left there in 1975 and then what?

HURWITZ: I came back and went as deputy to Bob Fearey, who was then head of MCT, which was part of M as a combating terrorism outfit. It was very small, three people, Fearey, myself, and another fellow.

Q: How long were you there?

HURWITZ: I was there until August, 1976.

Q: About a year.

HURWITZ: Yes. This was the low point of my Foreign Service career, bouncing around.

Q: Well, this happens, I did the same at one point. I think it is interesting to get a glimpse at this counter terrorism because later this is turned into a real growth industry.

HURWITZ: Yes, well, it was starting then, this was the heyday of the hijackers.

Q: Could you explain what the situation was as the State Department saw it and what your office was doing with it?

HURWITZ: This had been set up very recently before my arrival. Fearey was an old Japan hand, I don't know where he is today. He didn't seem to be a very energetic director at the time. I think we were gearing up as a government to handle this issue in a coordinated way. Once a month, or perhaps it was once every two weeks, there was a meeting that State chaired of all the various agencies that were involved in terrorism--CIA, FBI, Defense--and we would exchange information, have briefings. I remember at one briefing a guy was showing us various weapons that terrorists use. The whole thrust of the thing at the time was really protecting our missions. We had had our ambassador to Lebanon killed in 1975, Frank Meloy. I believe we also had the assault on the embassy in Sudan where the ambassador and the DCM were killed.

Q: Cleo Noel and...

HURWITZ: Right. Three American soldiers had been kidnaped in Eritrea, and that was a big issue. They were finally freed. Another big thing that we followed very closely was hijacking of the El Al plane that was taken to Entebbe. There was a lot going on and we really didn't have the staff to handle it. This whole thing was in its early stages of development from the standpoint of the government.

Q: Was the feeling the State Department had to do something but didn't know quite what to do?

HURWITZ: Well, the thing was getting off the ground. We were not staffed by high ranking people. Fearey I believe was an O-1 at the time. It was part of M, Management,

rather than being attached to the Secretary. I don't think there was enough coordination at that point between the various agencies. I am sure technically also it was rather primitive compared to the various approaches taken today. The whole question of infiltration of groups, we weren't really sure of the groups, and, of course, they change over time. The big enemy was the PLO and the various Palestinian organizations. I would say it was fairly pedestrian. It would take time before it began to develop into something.

Q: Then in 1976 you left the counter terrorism office.

HURWITZ: Yes, because Phil Habib wanted me as Korean country director, so I was desk officer for Korea.

Q: Phil Habib at that time was?

HURWITZ: He was assistant secretary for EA, East Asian Affairs. He didn't stay very long. He almost immediately went up and became Under Secretary for Political Affairs. Art Hummel then became assistant secretary.

Q: You were there from 1976 to when?

HURWITZ: Until I had my difficulties with Dick Holbrooke. I lasted there until May, 1977.

Q: Well, let's talk about the 1976-77 period. How did you find the view of Korea first with the end of the Ford administration and then moving into the Carter administration?

HURWITZ: The big issue when I came on the desk, one I think would have strengthened Kissinger's view of the world, was the attack on and killing of the two soldiers in the DMZ. Do you remember that?

Q: I had just arrived in Korea as consul general as had Tom Stern. We had all arrived in July. Dick Sneider laughed and said, "It is nice and quiet here. There won't be any trouble, just keep your head down." Could you talk about the tree chopping thing?

HURWITZ: I technically wasn't on the desk at the time, but they brought me up from MCT to be part of a task force. That was a rather hairy situation. Kissinger was really very ticked off. We were moving troops, naval forces and were pretty close to a very, very strong reaction to that.

Q: I would like to capture this time because I think it was an important event. Could you explain for someone who wouldn't know, what happened up in the DMZ?

HURWITZ: As I remember it, the American side wanted to remove a tree that was obstructing the vision, line of sight, of the North Korean installation and post. It was important that we have visual access to that thing. So, they were in the act of chopping

the tree down when they were set upon by a North Korean patrol. This is all inside the DMZ. One of the North Koreans actually got a hold of the ax and used it on two Americans soldiers who were killed. Then there were some kind of skirmishes and the North Koreans withdrew. I don't think any shots were fired. This happened when you were there?

Q: Yes.

HURWITZ: The reaction here was really very, very tough. I remember at one point, one Saturday morning, Hummel had gone in and was going up to see Kissinger and said why don't you come along. This was the only time I got to see Kissinger. The door to Kissinger's office opens and he is ushered in and he beckons for me to follow him so I follow him. He says, "Oh, Mr. Secretary, this is Ed Hurwitz, the desk officer. Is it all right if he comes in?" Kissinger said, "What do you mean is it all right, he is already in." Then Kissinger was immediately on the phone to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

At any rate, that was the first and only time I was brought into the Secretary's office, so I don't know the details of what was being discussed. But, it was a question of moving aircraft carriers, which we did move. And, it was a question of being very, very tough. I think this was just prior to the opening of the Republican National Convention. Kissinger, himself, was under attack by those in the Republican Party who didn't like him. So, for whatever reason, he was very disturbed by this incident and determined to do something. In the last analysis we didn't do anything.

Q: Well, we went in and chopped down the tree.

HURWITZ: Yes, we did chop down the tree.

Q: There were B-52s flying around and we were telling the Koreans we were there. There was a lot of toing and froing. We didn't know what the North Koreans were about. Did we get any feel for why they did this?

HURWITZ: No. I think we chalked that up to what we chalk most things up to, the inscrutable ways of the Koreans. Like six months ago moving troops into the DMZ. That may have colored, at least for the remainder of the Ford administration, our approach to Korea. If it hadn't been for the election and Jimmy Carter and for Patt Derian in Human Rights Affairs and to a certain extent, Richard Holbrooke, I suppose as forgiving as ever of any Korean tightening up in the name of stability. What happened, of course, was a complete switch.

Q: Carter made the promise during the election campaign, before he was in power, that he would essentially take our main military ground division, the 2nd infantry division, out of Korea. I know when we were in Korea at that time we thought this was a stupid move because it would uncork things, but what was the view from the desk?

HURWITZ: If the desk was me the view was pretty much, “I will do anything I am told to do.” This was not a high point with my career in a sense I was very skeptical and really didn’t think it was a good idea and sort of dragged my feet. People from other agencies were brought in to write up how we were going to do all this. How we were going to move out. They brought in Armacost, I don’t know what he was doing at the time. A big role in this was played by Mort Abramowitz, who was at that time the DAS of ISA in the Pentagon. And, of course, Holbrooke was new. And, they were gearing up to do this paper on why it should be done and how it was going to be done.

In the meantime, we began getting through the embassies in the area (New Zealand, Australia, Philippines), expressions of deep concern on the part of the host governments. Why were we doing this? It had worked in the past. It would be a very destabilizing move.

Q: Of course, in the context we had just pulled out of South Vietnam...

HURWITZ: I have a strong feeling that the whole Vietnam experience was to a great extent responsible for this, a part from Carter’s own views about human rights, etc.

Q: I think both the action and reaction were predicated on Vietnam. Carter was saying we were not going to get involved in a land conflict.

HURWITZ: Holbrooke had had a long Vietnam experience and I think this played a role there.

Q: But, also the other countries were looking upon the fact, “Is the United States a reliable ally?” So, it was Vietnam being played in Korea.

HURWITZ: Well, “Is the United States a reliable ally?” is part of it, but I think a lot of it was just very specific to this instance. Nobody knows what North Korea is going to do. This has been a cheap insurance policy. Why must they be pulled out now? We don’t know what North Korea is going to do, but we have a feeling that the only thing that has prevented North Korea from moving south had been the presence of American forces. To change this now could be disastrous.

I don’t know, I moved off the desk in somewhat less than a year, so I don’t know how this was dropped. It was clearly dropped. I believe the reaction of the allies had a lot to do with it.

Q: Certainly the embassy was not supportive.

HURWITZ: That probably helped. I certainly deserve no medal for heroism on this score, although my lack of enthusiasm may have been evident enough to further muddy the situation with Holbrooke. But, that was simply a clash of personalities. A clash in the sense that I wasn’t his type of guy and I could see that.

Q: Well, could you tell me about Richard Holbrooke, the new assistant secretary. Now he is being touted as maybe being a candidate for Secretary of State. But, he was controversial and I know he was not viewed with any great enthusiasm.

HURWITZ: No, he sees everything that the press has called him since he has gone to Bosnia, that he is extremely intelligent, extremely creative, extremely self-confident. But, at the same time, as Tom Friedman, yesterday in his foreign affairs column in the “New York Times” said, he is a manically self-promoter, which is true. In fact, during his tenure in EA there was an article in the Washington Monthly about how his main concern was playing tennis with Teddy Kennedy. So, this is not only my opinion by any means. But he is a very, very talented guy. He was young, brash, extremely self-confident, 35 at the time I believe, and he made a big splash.

Q: I can recall when he arrived in Seoul for the first time all the dignitaries were out there and all and he appeared with a tennis racket under his arm.

HURWITZ: Koreans don’t go for that. They like their leaders to be very austere.

Q: Yes. This did not signify that he took the whole situation very seriously in the Korean eyes. Well, tell me what was the clash?

HURWITZ: I simply did not react fast enough for him. I was not a bellow by any means. I can’t remember the exact details, but at one point I hadn’t done something or sent something over to the White House in time, and it turned out that that was a good thing because it was a bad recommendation from the Department and was later junked. But, he had me up there and was pounding the desk. So, finally what he did was to have Bill Gleysteen, who was the principal DAS call me into his office one day and explain that Dick really wanted to have somebody else in that job. I had been there when he arrived and he would have moved me out but at that point he was being sort of kind, but now he wants to make the move. He was shifting me over to be director for Australian/New Zealand affairs. So, I spent my second year in EA in that job.

Q: This would be 1977-78?

HURWITZ: Right. By the way one should mention the very increased attention to human rights in Korea during the tenure of Patt Derian, who very frequently came to EA meetings.

Q: Could you talk a bit about Patt Derian? How was she viewed?

HURWITZ: Well, she was viewed as sort of an outsider who was coming in with these off -the-wall ideas which were good ideas but inapplicable.

Q: Was there any attempt to explain, for example, Korea and the military situation?

HURWITZ: Oh, I'm sure there was.

Q: Was Korea a particular focus?

HURWITZ: It was. We did have the problems of labor leaders, missionaries and students. You also have the problem just prior to this, and this was before the new administration came in, you had the scandals here with the KCIA and the little envelopes full of cash.

Q: Yes, and it was called Koreagate too.

HURWITZ: Right. The defection of a KCIA officer here in Washington. So, that further soured people on Korea. A lot of people, particularly in the new administration, were prepared to think the worse. I think this may have played a role in the decision to try to take the troops out.

Q: Did you get involved in the Koreagate business?

HURWITZ: Oh, yes.

Q: What type of things were you involved in?

HURWITZ: I was present during the interrogation of this guy who had defected. Slapping the Koreans on the wrists when the whole thing hit the press. Of course, no slap could be greater than that given in the American press. We certainly didn't pooh-pooh it and say, "Carry on, don't worry about this." We made a big deal out of it. Now, maybe a greater deal would have been made if Carter had been in at that point.

Q: Did you find Patt Derian or her office sort of monitoring what we were doing in Korea?

HURWITZ: Oh, yes. As I say she came to the meetings.

Q: What did coming to the meetings mean?

HURWITZ: Well, that there was a new emphasis now on human rights and that we would be a strong advocate of human rights and would call the Koreans' attention to it when we felt they had done something wrong. I think the Koreans, for their part, took it very seriously. They, as well, may have concluded that the troop withdrawal rumblings were in part motivated by their internal moves.

Q: Did you see from your perspective any movement on their part?

HURWITZ: They never shut their door to this, never kept Congressman Fraser out, for example. We did make representations and they listened to us. I think the Koreans we

dealt with knew what the problem was. At no point did they do what the Soviets would do when you bring this up--it is an internal affair don't bother us. They certainly knew they had to keep on the right side of us.

Q: When you are dealing with Korea from the desk, was there any concern or reflections of the fact that there were some congressmen who were practically on the Korean payroll, either through rice matters or?

HURWITZ: Yes, but that wasn't an issue that we followed. I wasn't about to say let's investigate Congressman X. No, that wasn't an issue in my time.

Q: So, you moved on to the Australian /New Zealand desk. In a way this must have seemed like cold potatoes or something like that after your previous jobs.

HURWITZ: Well, it was, but it was a new area entirely and sort of interesting. There were a lot of things going on. Our relations with the South Pacific were developing. It was hardly front page news, of course, but it did get me a trip out there to Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Samoa. The issues involved with Australia and New Zealand was New Zealand not letting US naval ships pay a port of call unless we specified that they didn't have nuclear devices or anything aboard. That finally evolved into New Zealand leaving ANZUS, I understand. Is that right?

Q: I'm not sure.

HURWITZ: At the time they had not. There was an ANZUS meeting here in my tenure in Washington. It was an interesting tour but not a gripping one.

Q: Was the Carter administration trying to be more flexible with New Zealand on this nuclear issue?

HURWITZ: Yes, I think so. That was the bedrock of policy, you know, you don't negotiate for hostages, which we probably do, and you don't acknowledge the presence of nuclear weapons. We didn't deal in a cavalier way with New Zealand.

Q: Other administrations sometimes like to have a good confrontation thing, but this wouldn't have been done.

HURWITZ: No, no.

Q: How about Australia? There is always the problem of our involvement with various classified intelligence gatherings.

HURWITZ: The biggest thing, perhaps, was our ban on the importation of kangaroo skins.

Q: Why, because kangaroos are cute?

HURWITZ: Well, we considered them endangered, but of course the Australians didn't because they were running all over the place. What else was a big issue? One issue was Australian concerns about Americans pulling out of Asia. I think they regarded Carter and this whole Korean pull out plan as a serious step on the part of the United States to withdraw from Asia, and they were very unhappy about that. We had to reassure them constantly. I remember, Robert Oakley, who was the other DAS at the time in charge of Southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand, was supposed to go out and give a speech to some Australian foreign affairs organization. He couldn't or didn't want to do it so he sent me. The text that I developed was very big on the idea that we were not pulling out of Asia, it was very important to us.

Q: Did you feel that Carter was trying to get disengaged from Asia?

HURWITZ: I think so. I think the Vietnam thing was still very warm and there was always this fear that we would become embroiled in another war overseas. I think this was still a strong impression. People have a lot of complaints about Carter. Later when I got to the Soviet desk we saw them again in their reaction to the invasion of Afghanistan.

Q: Was there anything else we should talk about on Australia and New Zealand?

HURWITZ: I can't think of anything.

Q: So, 1978, where did you go?

HURWITZ: I got a very severe back problem and had to go to the hospital and was out of commission for really the bulk of 1978.

Q: Let's move to 1979.

HURWITZ: I went on the Soviet desk.

Q: So you were back from a bit of floating around.

HURWITZ: Right. The Soviet desk was a part from Carter's reaction to the Afghan incident, less effected by the new administration.

Q: You were on the Soviet desk from 1979 to when?

HURWITZ: Until 1982.

Q: Before we move to the Afghan business, which is a major turning point for Carter and all, could you talk about our relations with the Soviet Union in 1979? This is a little

further into the Carter administration which was trying to have a new look towards the Soviet Union.

HURWITZ: I don't recall any major change. I was deputy director for exchanges, back on exchanges which were then going full blast. The first thing I did while on the desk was to go to the Soviet Union with a big delegation under Congressman Brademas, who at the time was Democratic Whip. There were all kinds of exchanges going on at that point, just prior to Afghanistan. There were parliamentary exchanges. We had the Soviet chairman of their supreme court. The atmosphere was very congenial on all sides. Some of these exchanges were of real practical value in health, space exploration, energy. Of course, Afghanistan changed that.

Q: Were you finding the Soviet internal affairs section a little more tolerant with exchanges prior to the Afghan business? Was there a loosening up?

HURWITZ: Not tremendously. They operated with many of the same problems. Let me give you an example. We were in the throes of negotiating a renewal of the overall umbrella agreement, under which all these separate agreements fit, and were trying to get things, for example, for exchange graduate students. We were trying to have the Soviets open up the fields, the specialties, in which we could send graduate students to. They almost never agreed and we hadn't reached any agreement on this renewal either. In other words they wanted to keep people either in pre-revolutionary fields or in technical fields. Someone could go over and study botany, but he couldn't study mass media in the Soviet Union. You couldn't study anything in the humanities after 1917. By the same token we wanted their people to send people over who weren't just milking our technology by studying very technical subjects. We wanted them to study subjects in the humanities. They never agreed to that.

Another point of concern to them and this sort of reflects traditional Soviet approach, was to have a clause in the exchanges agreement which in effect would require us to turn back to them anybody who had defected under the exchanges program. There had been a number of ballerinas, etc. who had defected. So, we wouldn't agree to that. Indeed I was in Moscow as head of the negotiating team to try to renew the agreement in December 1979. We couldn't reach agreement on a number of these issues and decided to adjourn around December 15 and then resume after the New Year. Well, I left December 18, or so, and the Soviets invaded Afghanistan on December 27th, so the whole deal was off.

It turned out that much of my tenure on the Soviet desk as head of exchanges was involved in dismantling the exchanges. We had the requisite task force after the invasion and we were getting instructions from the White House as we would react. Of course, you had the famous Carter reaction. He was very much surprised. How could the Soviets do this? Some specific instructions from the White House were also a little strange and were not in the last analysis to our benefit. For example, the closing of our consulate, which hadn't gotten open yet, but there was an advance team, in the Ukraine in Kiev. We did have a consulate in Leningrad, but we felt it was important to have a consulate in Kiev.

We were told that this would be one of the steps and that we were to get together on the desk and cook up other reactions. Well, these are all piddling reactions and in the last analysis didn't help us very much, like shutting off a lot of these exchanges. Maybe when there isn't much alternative that is what you do.

Q: One of our first reactions to almost anything is an embargo and 1) it doesn't work and 2) it gets us into more trouble in other places.

HURWITZ: Well, we didn't have any third countries to worry about, but it did shut off a lot of very useful exchanges. I always think we got a lot more out of these exchanges than the Soviets did. Perhaps not on the technical side, but without the agreement we couldn't get in, while the Soviets have access to our press and our people and we have only the agreement to pry open a lot of these institutions. So, it didn't do us any good. But, you are right, what else are we going to do?

Q: Don't stand there do something, you know. You mentioned before the defection of some people, ballerinas, that you were involved with. Can you explain how you were?

HURWITZ: Well, there was the defection of this ballerina from the Bolshoi. I think her name was Lasova. Her husband's name was Gudanov. They were both ballet stars. It was a very interesting case. She was the one who defected in New York and got into the hands of American authorities in New York. However, later she said she wanted to go back. The Soviets agreed to have a meeting between her and our side because she was physically in their custody again. So, I was sent from the Soviet desk along with a guy from L (Legal Office) up to New York for an interview in the presence of the Soviets of this woman. We landed at La Guardia and called our UN mission which was handling this for the State Department. They said they didn't know where she was. The Soviets hadn't yet set the meeting up. I ran to one of the airline desks in La Guardia and asked them what Aeroflot's schedule was departing from New York. They said that it was going to leave at 4:00 pm and it was then about 1:00 pm. So, we jumped into a cab and raced out to La Guardia and it turned out indeed the woman had just been taken off to the plane by the Soviets. She was sitting on the plane. At that point somebody else was aware of this, I think it was the FBI, and they had stopped the plane from leaving. So, there she was sitting on the plane and the Department wanted somebody with a little more status than Hurwitz and called in David McHenry, our UN ambassador. He negotiated with the Soviet UN ambassador in New York. It went on for two or three days and the passengers stayed overnight on the plane at least once. Finally it was arranged that on neutral territory, and the closest we could come to neutral territory was one of these mobile lounges, we would meet and have a psychiatrist from the Public Health Service, me, McHenry and an interpreter from the Department. My Russian is good but I felt we really needed a professional interpreter for this for nuances, etc. And, indeed the woman wanted to go back and there was nothing in her demeanor or in anything that she said to indicate otherwise. Meanwhile a couple of times I had gone out to the parking lot where her husband was with none other than Joseph Brodsky, who was then involved in this thing giving moral support to the husband. But, she left. I don't know what ever happened to

her. Gudanov went off to Hollywood and appeared in a film. I don't know what has happened to him, he may have gone back.

That was one of the cases. There was another case in Los Angeles of a couple who defected from the Bolshoi. It was happening a lot.

Q: What was our policy?

HURWITZ: Our policy was open and shut, the policy we have now. We are not returning anybody against their will, but neither would we hold anybody against their will and that was the issue here with that woman. I detected nothing to indicate that she wanted to stay, nor did the psychiatrist see anything that would indicate drugging or anything like that. But these were the issues that we followed in those days. I remember in Los Angeles telling a Soviet consular guy who had come down to San Francisco, "What sort of nonsense is this? Why are we here? Why don't you just let them go?" I said that Bulgaria let their people out, and they did. Bulgaria had a lot of circus performers, operatic singers. They let them go and let them come back. But the Soviets made it a life and death issue. Well, now they know that.

Q: Were you picking up any reflections of this Soviet build up to do something in Afghanistan?

HURWITZ: I certainly wasn't. One of the things we were watching at the time were sort of mutinies on the part of Afghans against the regime. The regime then was Amin who had taken over from the guy he had killed, Taraki. Amin had been an exchange student in the States, but what we didn't know, we always classified Amin as being installed by the Soviets. What we miscalculated, I think, was the Soviets viewed Amin as somewhat a threat. I think they even saw him, because of his studying in the US, as perhaps an American plant. But, no, I don't think anybody foresaw this at all. I don't know about the intelligence, I wasn't privy to special intelligence reports.

Q: Even today it is a little bit murky why they did it.

HURWITZ: We always thought it was a stupid move on their part and indeed it was something that hastened the demise of the Soviet Union. It was something that was totally unnecessary. That is another thing. We always regarded Afghanistan, if not completely neutral as slightly tilting towards the Soviet Union. I went back, in fact, and looked at FBIS and you can see speech after speech that Daud, who was overthrown by Taraki, made tilting towards the Soviet Union. The Soviets supplied all their military. The Soviets were in bed with their military. So, I don't know what got into Brezhnev's mind. The way they handled it too was a disaster.

Q: After they went in in Christmas time of 1979, all of a sudden within the United States like whenever anything like this happens, big red arrows were drawn on maps by

political commentaries pointing toward the Persian Gulf and all. By those who were dealing with the Soviets and trying to figure out what the hell they were up to, ...

At that time what was the thinking of why the Soviets did what they did in Afghanistan?

HURWITZ: Well, to my recollection it was not necessarily a drive to warm water ports, or something like that. It was more an extension of the Brezhnev doctrine. That in retrospect they had some real concerns about Amin and where Afghanistan was heading. This might have been a move to head off a move by Amin to bring Afghanistan closer to the West, which would have meant that they had on their borders a problem. Certainly from Brezhnev's standpoint they would have seen it that way. Brezhnev had given us the Brezhnev doctrine in respect to Czechoslovakia. Of course, they weren't about to do anything with China, although they were in constant friction with them along the border. Their European borders, with the exception of Finland, were totally secured. And their arrangement with Finland was very secure. Now, Afghanistan could have in their terms represented a problem, one they were fully confident they could solve. They thought they could pull this off in a matter of days.

Q: I have talked to Jim Bishop who was there as political counselor, and he said they were trying to figure out and the Afghans were trying to figure out why the Soviets were in there. They felt they might be supporting the Amin government at first.

HURWITZ: Well, it was terrible intelligence on their part, terrible misjudgment and terrible lack of real knowledge of what their interests should be.

Q: During this time did you find that there was a conflict with the NSC, whose head at that time was Brzezinski, who was always seeing perfidious plots on the part of the Soviets, because of his anti-Russian, pro-Polish bias? Did you feel the NSC was trying to push us as far as we could go?.

HURWITZ: No, I don't think so. We chalked a lot of the reaction up to Carter's sense of, perhaps, disillusionment. He had been disillusioned before, under false allusions before, tending to trust people. He said something to the effect that he was surprised.

Q: Did the seizure of our hostages in Iran by fundamentalist revolutionaries have any effect on how we viewed things in Afghanistan?

HURWITZ: I don't think so.

Q: Was there the feeling that that whole shoulder of our policy was falling a part or something?

HURWITZ: No, I think we viewed Afghanistan as something quite a part, strictly Soviets. Nobody was attributing what was happening in Iran to the Soviets at any point as far as I recall. I think Afghanistan was viewed as something very special for the Soviets.

Q: You were saying that people were thinking about ways to shut down things. Were people sitting around saying, "Okay, Ed, you figure out ways we can be nasty to the Soviets?"

HURWITZ: Absolutely. We drew up charts. Mark Parris drew up a very neat chart showing what we could do and how we could do it with a time table. Yes, we definitely were ordered to sit around and brain storm in a group to figure out what we could do that would hurt them and most desirably not hurt us. But, in a lot of cases we couldn't come up with something that wouldn't hurt us as well. The closing of Kiev is a good case in point.

Q: How about the wheat deal? We were selling wheat to the Soviets at very good terms.

HURWITZ: Well, those were private terms. We definitely didn't want to interfere with the commercial ventures. This was part of the game to figure out something that would hurt them a lot but not hurt us, and this was hard to do. One thing we didn't want to do was to interfere with the commercial side.

Q: How about the Olympics?

HURWITZ: Well, we boycotted the Olympics.

Q: Was there any feeling that this wasn't....?

HURWITZ: Not on the desk, I think we all went along with boycotting the Olympics. I don't remember any of us being any great sports fan or in any way enamored with the Olympic principle. I think it probably was a good thing. I don't like the Olympics much myself.

One thing, by the way, in 1980, on the Olympics, the Soviets came to the winter Olympics in 1980. Did they or did they not, I can't recall. At any rate, we were concerned that there would be defections from any number of Eastern bloc countries.

Q: Where were they held?

HURWITZ: Up in Lake Placid. So, they wanted somebody up there who had some experience in handling defections so they sent me up, which was very nice. I stayed in lovely quarters. They had a regular FBI team up there and myself and we didn't get any defections. But, that was the name of the game in that era, defections. But, of course, they boycotted Los Angeles.

Q: You stayed there until 1982. When the Reagan administration came in was there a change as far as exchanges were concerned and attitude towards the Soviet Union at all?

HURWITZ: No. The FBI was playing its usual game of trying to keep Soviets out, but the reaction to the Soviet Union, bilateral relations, really was not very different during the time I was on the desk. I know that Reagan came in and talked about the evil empire, but even he did as much with Russians in a sense as Nixon did with China. I can't recall what kind of opposition there was to Star Wars, for example. I don't think there much at the time.

Q: Well a lot of this came later.

HURWITZ: I am saying that if you want to take an issue where Reagan had a different point of view, his view really wasn't much different than the general view of the Soviet Union, which was part and parcel of our policy.

Q: I take it you were carrying on until 1982?

HURWITZ: That's right.

Q: Was it mainly shutting down meaning there wasn't much movement?

HURWITZ: A lot was shut down, but we did let a lot go through in the last analysis. We picked and chose. Those exchanges which we felt we liked and were as apolitical as you could get-- health, environmental protection--they went forward pretty much. The larger, big ticket issues like the Bolshoi Ballet, no, that was stopped. But, some exchanges kept going.

Q: I thought we might stop at this point and pick up next time when you left the Soviet desk in 1982. Where did you go?

HURWITZ: I went to Afghan language training.

Q: So we will pick it up at that point.

HURWITZ: Fine.

Q: Today is September 6, 1996. Let's talk a bit...do they call it Afghan or Farsi language training?

HURWITZ: They called it Dari. I got to Afghanistan and found that absolutely nobody used the word Dari, they all called it Farsi. This was an attempt to create a language which really was not different at all from Persian Farsi. The accent yes, and certain words, but it was basically South Carolina versus Boston.

Q: When I took what was called Serbo-Croatian, it was pure Serbian. I picked up an awful lot about the Serb mentality and the Serb outlook from my teachers at the Foreign

Service Institute. When you were taking Dari did you get much of a feeling about Afghans and their outlook from your teachers?

HURWITZ: Well, I had only one teacher and I was the only student. He was very nice and is still here. He was a very good teacher and treated me very kindly having me at his house a couple of times, arranged to go out around the town with me just to keep me talking, and introduced me to a lot of his friends. I later found out, though, that he was not typical of all Afghans. If you really wanted to learn something about the Mujahideen, you couldn't get it through his sort of ethnic background. He was Afghan, yes, but he was I believe of Uzbek nationality, a pure Persian speaker, not a Pashtun speaker at all. When I got to Afghanistan it was quite clear that the differences in mentality, in outlook, and the differences in martial characteristics were very distinct, very noticeable. The Pashtuns, who were bearing the brunt of the struggle against the Soviets, were very different, very much warlike, different basically from the city dwelling Uzbeks or Tajiks who made up the population of Kabul. I am not saying it was irrelevant by any means, but it was less relevant to what we were really tracking which was the course of the resistance, the prospects of the resistance. So, to answer your question, yes, I got a good insight into this particular segment of Afghan culture, but none into the other, and I don't know how you could overcome that.

Q: You were in Afghanistan from when to when?

HURWITZ: I arrived in June, 1983 and left in February, 1986.

Q: What was the situation in Afghanistan in June, 1983 when you arrived and what had you been prepared to see and picking up from the desk before you went out?

HURWITZ: Well, the war was going on. Brezhnev had died and Andropov was very ill, so the Soviets had not yet shifted gears on Afghanistan, they were going full blast. I think the situation differed in my view than what the desk was talking in the sense I saw and reported this in very negative style in a cable, a much more gloomy outlook for Afghanistan than the story that was coming out of Washington. Now, the story that was coming out of Washington to a great extent was propelled by saying what we wanted to hear on the one hand and saying something that was really useful at the same time, and that is that the resistance is very strong. It is disunified, but perhaps there will be attempts to unify it and then succeed. In any event they are giving the Soviets a very hard time.

My view, when I got there, was that the Soviets were really dug in. That the opposition, resistance, and this was a view that was only strengthened and confirmed to me as time went on, was incredibly disunified, squabbling among themselves, and that there was on cause for optimism. In fact, I did a calendar year end telegram, titled something to like, "The Soviets Were Settling Down or Digging In." Of course, later, two major changes occurred. Gorbachev came in in March 1985 and in a speech described Afghanistan as a bleeding wound. And the second major change was the supplying of the Mujahideen with the stinger rockets, which really curtailed the usefulness of the main Soviet weapon in

Afghanistan, the helicopter. It turns out that my assessment, not knowing what was coming down the pike on these two elements, was wrong. As events turned out, the Soviets pulled out.

However, one crucial part of my assessment turned out to be very correct and that is that the opposition would not unify. They were very seriously divided, having other things on their mind a part from just winning a war. This was clear because things were happening in Kabul and elsewhere that made it very clear this was no way to fight a war, the way they were doing it. Supplies were coming into Kabul, there was all kinds of commerce. The opposition, the Mujahideen and various groups, were letting this happen because they would be taking bribes. In other words you would have a Mujahideen group in control of one particular section of a road and you would have supplies coming in which the Soviets needed and which had they been cut off would have strangled Kabul, the only administrative unit that meant anything at that time. Yet, the goods and fuel came through and commerce continued. The market in Kabul was awash with all kinds of consumer goods. You could buy Japanese radios, German refrigerators, automobiles. My point is that the Mujahideen didn't cut this off. Each group was more interested in building up its own strength and reserves. They didn't think of the war in national terms, but in terms of their individual group.

There is one very interesting point on this score. I had a small Sony shortwave radio and I used to twirl the dial trying to pick up VOA and BBC in Farsi. I would pick it up and report it. I found out that every now and then, as I zeroed in on frequencies, you could hear local shortwave radio/telephone. They didn't have regular telephone lines and there was no such thing as mail, and you could hear these individual outfits talking to each other...“the truck is coming through and everything is fine, we took care of the payment.” I reported on this as well as an indication that this is not a real war. I always used to raise the analogy of Vietnam back in Washington arguing with people who were drumming up this optimistic viewpoint, which was fine from a public relations standpoint, but not if we were deluding ourselves. I would say, “You know, these people aren't fighting like the North Vietnamese fought. They could have won the war two years ago if they had decided to do that, or could have done that.”

What it comes down to is that we see in the aftermath of Afghanistan that you don't have a unified resistance and it is no longer a resistance, they won. But, they are still at each other's throat. So, that part of my assessment was correct. The basic part about having reason to think that the Soviets would pull out, I was wrong, but for reasons that I don't think anybody foresaw at the time.

Q: When you arrived in 1983, what was the situation as far as where you lived and where you worked? What was your job?

HURWITZ: The main function at the embassy, I should point out, really was to keep in touch, however we could, with the Mujahideen. I won't say that we really had direct contact with them, we didn't. And, I can't recall a single instance where there was such

contact. Our major product was to keep tabs on the war. We did this by going around town. Lee Coldren was at the embassy at that time, an old Afghan hand, who was an inveterate antique and rug buyer. He had a lot of contacts from a previous tour. I would go one way and he would go another way around town, and we would talk to people. A lot of people were very interested in getting out stories of a battle in Herat or a skirmish just north of Kabul. We collated this stuff and did a weekly cable, a sitrep, it was called. This was a long cable which basically catalogued everything we picked up during the week. Now, here again the purpose was to report on this war, which was pretty well isolated from the world. We did have an occasional Western correspondent going in or listening from Peshawar, something like that. But, largely the war wasn't getting all that much attention. Our function was just to get this news out.

Q: Your job was what?

HURWITZ: I was Chargé. And there is a whole story connected with that.

Q: All right, let's hear it.

HURWITZ: The story is that as you know after this April revolution of 1978 you had a pro-Soviet government that wanted to come in and introduce all kinds of horrendous, from the Muslim standpoint, reforms--land reforms, putting women into schools, etc. This really was pretty good, but the Afghans weren't having much part of it. There were all kinds of strange groups at that time. I don't think it has ever been satisfactorily answered, but one of them kidnaped and killed Spike Dubs, who was the ambassador. After that we, of course, drew down the embassy. Up to that time the embassy was an enormous thing. The AID mission was enormous. There were perhaps a 1000 AID people, families and employees in the Helmand Valley where we had a big irrigation project. We had enormous property. We had cars all over the place, schools, commissaries. USIS had its own compound. And, of course, there was a complete drawdown by the time I got there. The embassy was only 18 people, including six marine guards. Most of the big embassy was build in 1963 or 1967. It had big grounds with an athletic field. That was simply occupied by a very few officers. The USIS operation was closed including an enormous, beautiful USIS library. I don't know where the books are now. So we were a small, besieged band, you might say. No families, of course. The only way in and out was Air India from New Delhi. There definitely was a feeling of being besieged. There were nightly rocket attacks. However, none of the Americans really felt threatened, we were not the bad guys, and the law of averages was certainly on your side. So, it wasn't particularly dangerous.

Q: Well, what was the Afghan government at that time and what sort of dealings did we have with it?

HURWITZ: The Afghan government was communist, the first secretary of the Party and also the president was Babrak Karmal. He was an early revolutionary even under Daud before the so-called April Revolution of 1978 had been brought in by the Soviets right

after their invasion. In fact, the plan was to have him sort of right on the tail of it. They had hoped to be able to either kill or capture the guy who was then in charge, Hafizullah Amin, but that job the Soviet police, the ministry of interior people, botched to the extent that the guy who was in charge of the operation, the first deputy minister of the interior, while being taken back to the Soviet Union, committed suicide on an Aeroflot plane on the way. The botched bit was killing Amin too soon so he couldn't hand over the reigns of power to Babrak Karmal. It was all faked, of course. Anyway Babrak Karmal was a creature of the Soviets.

So, he was in power. We, of course, never dealt with the government outside of the protocol section of the foreign ministry. The protocol chief was a very cultured guy, he didn't speak Russian. He had spent many years in the US and was always embarrassed about what was going on about him, but, of course, couldn't do anything. So, that was the only point of contact that we had.

Q: Was it ever contemplated at that point, either by the Afghans, as far as you know, or by us, to close down our mission?

HURWITZ: No, that issue never really came up. Our justification for staying there was adequate. Basically it was that our staying did not involve recognition of the Afghan government, only recognizes our continuing relationship with the Afghan people. I never presented credentials. As a matter of fact my going to Afghanistan is a long story and I will only give you part of it. We always felt that the Afghans, themselves, would turn down visa applications, so when I was sent there we never told them that I would be chargé, for one thing. We just asked for a visa for me. So, I went in and we never sent a note to the Afghans saying I had arrived in any capacity. We sort of tried to have it both ways and I think we basically succeeded having a presence there which we felt it was necessary to do, and also to show the Afghan people that the West cared. So, it worked out. They let me in.

Q: I am so used to the conventional things like when you have somebody arrested or you have to get something cleared, or there is a vote in the UN, etc.

HURWITZ: We never dealt with them on any issues except our survival. I can't recall any complaints we made to them. We really didn't treat them as a government. I mean our survival as an embassy. For example, at one point a Soviet soldier had defected, managing to get into the front door of the embassy and was there for a couple of days. Immediately the Soviets surrounded the place with Afghan troops while Soviet troops were in the background. I went to the protocol guy in the foreign ministry and complained to him. That was the sort of thing we did. When a Soviet helicopter was hovering over the embassy, we think to try to take pictures of our communications stuff on the roof, I again went to the foreign ministry and complained. At one point Soviet aircraft, the airport was quite close to the embassy, landing or taking off would drop flares to divert heat seeking missiles as they landed and took off. A lot of these flares would hit the embassy grounds, a number setting some dry grass on fire. So, I fired off notes to the Soviets and went to

the foreign ministry. So, it wasn't a normal embassy in the sense that you make a demarche about an issue.

Q: You raised the subject of a Soviet soldier defecting. How did that work out?

HURWITZ: Well, he stayed a number of days. A nice young kid. And, then we did what we always do. I knew Russian very well at the time and I talked to him. He decided on his own that he wanted to go back. I said, "All right, we will have to do this. We will have the Soviet ambassador come and have a meeting." I gave the young man a couple of days to think it over. The Soviet ambassador came and sat down with his aide and myself, the embassy Agency guy and this kid. He said he would like to go back, plain and simple like that. We gave him his AK47 which he had brought in and he was on his way. I don't know what happened to him. He was probably sent off to prison but undoubtedly released soon after Gorbachev came in. In fact this may have been in 1985 when Gorbachev was already in.

Q: If you didn't have meaningful contact with the Afghan government, what about with the Soviets. They were sort of the pro-consul and you spoke Russian.

HURWITZ: I spoke frequently with the Soviets. I can't recall that I talked about why they were there, etc., although I may have. I did call on the Soviet ambassador and that sort of thing. He was an immovable real apparatchnik. He had been a very high official, the first secretary of the Tartar autonomous republic. He wasn't the type that you would talk to about maybe you were doing the wrong thing, nor would he give a bit of information. He was a pleasant enough guy, but nobody who you could talk seriously to.

Q: What was your impression of the Soviet military forces there?

HURWITZ: I did a lot of walking around town and they were all over. My impression was that they were bad. Everything that we see now in Chechnya, you saw a bit of then. We had a Soviet military hospital directly across the street so you could see these guys going in and out. I didn't talk to many of those. There was graffiti written on the walls. I remember one that had to do with _____. The guy said, "I would rather be home digging ditches in _____." And then you saw them in the marketplace very shabbily dressed. There was a lot of drinking. Their main purpose in Afghanistan apart from avoiding action, was to go if possible to the market and buy these things that I just talked about--the Sony Walkmen, the tape recorders and tapes. Little shops were filled with pirated Russian language tapes of Russian dissident singers who were very popular because you couldn't buy them in the Soviet Union. Of course, to buy anything they needed money and, of course, they were very badly paid. So, they sold whatever they could get. Gasoline from their jeeps. We had to get rid of one Marine who was involved in giving a couple bottles of Scotch to some soldier in exchange for the guy's AK47. The food shops were filled with caviar. We would buy caviar, 4 ozs, for a dollar. In fact, one of the communicators, had sent home two or three footlockers full of caviar.

Again, on this issue of Soviets selling things to get money, and this was before the days of the crumbling Berlin Wall when this became common, just before I had gotten there there had been a little flood in the embassy basement. Stored in the basement at the time was the unaccompanied baggage of the previous security officer. As a favor to the guy they took these footlockers out of the water and opened them up so that anything inside would dry out. They found them full of Soviet uniforms. We wondered what was going on. Then, a little later, the successor to this security officer, received a letter from “Soldier of Fortune” magazine. They had received his last shipment and were waiting for more. There was a big market for the uniforms. Well, the guy got into a lot of trouble. This was going on. This is what the Soviets were doing. They were really disheveled, slovenly, no military bearing.

Q: Were you getting any reports about how they were conducting themselves on the battlefield?

HURWITZ: No, we were not. I can’t recall anything specific along those lines. But, I have no reason to believe they distinguished themselves in organization or valor.

Q: It is interesting because it is still a time when in the United States, despite the fact that people on the ground were seeing this, they were still being described as ten feet tall.

HURWITZ: I can’t ever remember pointing this out in a cable. I probably didn’t. But, that was not the feeling from those who had seen it. Here again, the embassy was located on the main street going to the airport and part of our portfolio, so to speak, was to watch these convoys as they went by. They were just a bad looking group. A tank or an armored personnel carrier would pass by and guys would be lying on it with shirts off, etc. You don’t expect them to be spruced up in a battle area, but on the other hand there was no evidence of discipline. They were in many ways a lot like the troops that were in Chechnya. They were conscripts, morale was low, and they seemed to be poorly trained.

Q: Were there any factions in Afghanistan of Afghans with whom you had contact? If so, what were you getting from them?

HURWITZ: Well, we didn’t have any contact with fighters, so to speak. We had contact with merchants, travelers, businessmen, who had been in the area. So, we never directly discussed what different factions wanted. We kept reporting on it because it was a matter of record and almost a matter of course that there were these groups...Massoud, just north of Kabul, a Tajik, Persian talking group and the groups around Qandahar which were Pushtuns and never the twain would meet. That was all obvious then. Our line was that they would sort this out among them and we kept pushing and pushing, but without success. But the fault lines were very clear and noticeable. You could have troops, and this happened once I recall around Qandahar in the east near Pakistan, being assaulted by a major Soviet push to eliminate a group, and if the large and very, very effective force under the direction of Massoud just north of Kabul had just gone behind the Soviets and attacked them from the rear it would have had an effect. But Massoud wouldn’t move to

help the Pushtuns. And I have talked to a Pushtun in Pakistan and mentioned this to him but he said it wouldn't have mattered because the Tajiks couldn't fight. Even if they had come up behind the Soviets nothing would have happened, they would have run away. So, there was this constant bickering, which has turned into deadly combat.

Q: Were you there when we started introducing stingers into Afghanistan?

HURWITZ: Yes.

Q: Were you aware that this was going to happen?

HURWITZ: From the press.

Q: Were the Soviets making noises about this?

HURWITZ: I can't recall whether they did or not. Certainly not to me directly. Of course, the Soviet line when you did discuss the situation was "Why are you helping these criminals, these gangster?" They pointed to Babrak Karmal and said, "Look, you have a man here who is interested in the welfare of the people. Schools are operating, little boys are taught how to read, girls are going to school. Health care is being made more available." I must say in Kabul, as I look back on this later, there was a lot in what was happening that we would have had as a country no objection to. More equality for women, more education, a reduced role for religion in public life, a little bit more fairness in distribution of the goodies that society produces. I put these things in writing to the Department. I wrote about how the people of Kabul, which were basically the people I had daily and direct contact with, have very little problem with the kind of society that was developing and that they were as much afraid, if not more afraid, of what would happen if you had these groups coming in and taking charge. I recall in one cable sent towards the end of my tour having been in Kabul almost three years, I said that I had not seen one "Russki Go Home" sign. I had not seen one work stoppage. I had not seen one act of animosity towards a Soviet soldier. The merchants were eager to sell to the soldiers. Now you did have acts of violence but they were set up by Mujahideen who infiltrated from time to time. There were a couple of bombs that went off in restaurants.

Q: What about newspapers, media, Americans and others?

HURWITZ: There was nothing available, although VOA came through fairly well.

Q: How about representatives of American media?

HURWITZ: None whatsoever. The only American, who was not media but a serious observer, was Sig Harrison, who has written on Korea and Afghanistan. I think at that time he was associated with Brookings or something like that. But, he was the only visitor I remember coming in. Oh, the Baltimore "Sun" got someone in once. He happened to be Finnish but a Baltimore "Sun" correspondent.

Q: The Soviet rule was in place where you could see it and the Soviet role was not particularly oppressive. Our policy was to build essentially a backfire against this. How did you feel about that?

HURWITZ: I think the over all goal of having the Soviets leave was absolutely correct. Let me just step back a little. If the Afghans were not Afghans but let's say Polish or some other little bit more excitable group, I'm speaking basically about the Tajik, the Persian speakers, who were by far the majority in Kabul, then I think you would have seen more resistance. It gives the wrong impression to say this was really benign. They simply accommodated very well. I am not sure any other group would have accommodated.

Getting back to our overall policy. I thought our over all policy of somehow opposing it was right. As I say in the beginning I was pessimistic that we could really pull it off because the opposition was so terribly disunified and at each other's throats.

Q: One time when the Soviets went in in December, 1979, in the States you were looking at maps showing arrows pointing down towards the Persian Gulf and all that. Had we figured out what they were doing there?

HURWITZ: My best guess is that it was really a result of some sclerotic thinking on an aging Kremlin. It was the stupidest move they could have made. I, in fact, went back to old FBISs from about the time they went in or just before and in statement after statement everything the king of Afghanistan, Daud, who later became prime minister, said was completely neutral vis-a-vis the Soviets or the Americans. Or, it was indeed tilting towards the Soviets. Their military was almost totally supplied by the Soviets. The Soviets were infiltrating all over the place over the years. They had had a long, long relationship with Afghanistan going back to pre-revolutionary days. So, what was developing at the time was even more acceptable to the Soviets than their relationship with Finland in a sense. What did trouble them was that after Taraki was killed, Hafizullah Amin came in and they were very suspicious of him because he had been an exchange student in the States. They may have felt that he was getting out of hand. But, there would have been ways of handling that without invading the country and getting so mired down in this thing. It was simply a mistake. I don't think the question of moving beyond Afghanistan came into their minds.

Now, another element of miscalculation may have been that they thought we were moving in, which was the furthest thing from our minds. The real solution to the Afghan problem was to leave it. Who was that senator from Vermont, Aiken, the one who said about Vietnam, "Declare victory and leave."

Q: Benign neglect.

HURWITZ: Yes, and let this place slide into the oblivion which it so richly deserves. But, nowhere could that be said more aptly than about Afghanistan. So, I think it was just a gross miscalculation on its part. I think Gorbachev realized that. Gorbachev could have turned up the heat a great deal. They really hadn't put that much into it.

Q: They really hadn't. It was just enough to get them in trouble but not enough to get them out of trouble.

HURWITZ: Yes, that's right. It was a lot like Vietnam in a sense. Well, we did put a lot more into Vietnam than they did there. We had 500,000 men there.

Q: And, they had 100,000.

HURWITZ: Yes, something like that. And our casualties were greater. The bases that we set up and the logistics that were evolved. Well, it was a terrible mistake on their part.

Q: When did you leave Afghanistan?

HURWITZ: I left in February, 1986.

Q: Were you seeing a change in the Soviet Union at that time?

HURWITZ: Yes, they were beginning to feel out the UN which was beginning to be involved in negotiations.

Q: Did you see the Soviets being able to pull out?

HURWITZ: Yes, to declare a victory and leave, that sort of thing. Here again nobody could identify what was at stake for them. Nobody really thought about it. They had nothing really to lose except face.

Q: As the negotiations were going on what were you getting from the people in Kabul?

HURWITZ: Nothing. On the ground it just continued. There was no sign while I was there that things were letting up.

Q: Did you have any feel about your reporting to the desk? Was the desk wanting you to say things that you didn't want to say? Taking stands that you didn't feel was justified?

HURWITZ: I never got much feedback. I know the Agency was not happy. And, I know INR was not happy either. I came back on consultation and got some complaints from INR that I was taking too gloomy a view. But, nobody ever put anything on paper and it didn't particularly hurt my career in any way.

Q: Were we able to monitor what was happening to our AID projects or were they just sort of write-offs?

HURWITZ: Outside of Kabul they were write-offs, you couldn't leave. I don't know what happened to all of this obvious infrastructure that we had in Helmand Valley. Before I went there we had negotiated the sale of a school that we owned. But, everything else was at a complete standstill and we couldn't monitor it. We had about 18 people at the embassy which included 2 guys from NSA, 2 guys from the Agency, 6 marines, a security/admin officer, a GSO, a female secretary, two reporting officers, a political officer/DCM and myself, the Chargé. So, we couldn't get around very much.

What I did see in terms of US infrastructure or projects was, for example, about 20 cars rusting away, trucks, this whole USIS complex, food from the commissary that we had to bury so that people couldn't get their hands on it, tons of whiskey and beer.

Indeed I recall once when I was in Kyrgyzstan, Dick Moose came out in August, 1993. This was the time when we were just getting geared up in Kyrgyzstan having opened in February, 1992 but didn't get fully started until I got there in March, 1992. By that time people were thinking of building a big embassy and I said to Moose, "Look, I feel very much influenced by my Afghan experience. You really have to wait and see what a country is going to develop into what our relations really should be, what our interests are, before we start putting a lot of stuff on the ground." For some reason we poured billions into Afghanistan over the years all for nought. That was one lesson I think we have since learned well.

Q: You were there for three years and must have gone out or something, or you would have gone nuts.

HURWITZ: Well, it is very interesting, I think the marines loved it. There was always a bit of excitement not knowing what was going to happen next. I went around town being interested in what was going on. One of my real sources of enjoyment, I would go about three times a week, was to go to the local used book market. I would find the most interesting things from the Soviet standpoint and send them in or buy books for the Library of Congress. I got a commendation from the Library of Congress. In fact I got a \$1000 award for what I did. Finding things like Soviet classified military manuals on sale. The guy selling them couldn't read Russian nor Farsi, he was basically illiterate. You would buy them by the pound. I found one military manual in a junkyard. I sent it in and later got feedback from the Agency. It was a manual on how they updated certain aspects of the MI-8 helicopter. Now the Agency had gotten the MIA manual but this showed what they had done with the civilian version to make it military. They were very pleased with that. But, I found a certain degree of excitement in this. And, there was always the rug buying. Afghan had been considered one of the world traveler's objectives in the '70s. A lot of people overdosed on drugs.

Q: It was part of that drug route.

HURWITZ: Right. A lot of tourists went there because this was excitement, the silk route. There were shops where rugs were continued to be made because they had nothing else to do, the war wasn't affecting them. They all came into Kabul but there were no tourists to buy, so we would go shopping for rugs.

There was one restaurant which was located in a big Intercontinental Hotel which had at most two guests a day in it. We would take the pouch out to New Delhi which was sort of scary. First of all there was no radar in Kabul and very steep mountains ringed the city so you could get into trouble if you don't have visual contact. And then there were shooting of rockets every now and then which brought down a couple of planes.

It was a post that had enough excitement so it never got boring. There was a fairly active diplomatic community. The NATO countries were there as well as Pakistan, Egypt, Japan. We had friendly relations with quite a few embassies and there was a lot of socializing. There was a very strict 10:00 pm curfew.

Q: Which was not a bad idea. It gets you home on time.

HURWITZ: Right. The dinners began at 6:30 pm and were over at 9:15 pm and your were gone.

Q: We had a curfew when I was in Korea and loved it. It brought our teenage kids home and we didn't have to stay out late.

HURWITZ: Yes. I did a lot of reading.

Q: When you left did somebody replace you in more or less the same manner?

HURWITZ: Yes. However, the guy who replaced me didn't last very long and he then was replaced by the guy who closed it.

Q: Well, you left in 1986?

HURWITZ: Yes. The last Soviet troops left in February, 1987 and we closed it because with the departure of the Soviet troops all hell broke loose, as anybody could have predicted.

Q: It sounds like a terrible mess today.

HURWITZ: It is a mess. What happened in the embassy is very interesting. The front door was welted shut, we kept paying all the local employees. Indeed, about three months ago, the FSN of the Year was an FSN from Afghanistan. He managed to come out. I met him in his hotel room here and we had a long talk about what is going on. He somehow goes to Peshawar and manages to find his way with help through the mountains, picks up

money (dollars I assume) and brings it back in and pays the staff. For doing this he got the award. He says the embassy is still all right. Nobody has bothered with it.

Q: So, in 1986 where did you go?

HURWITZ: I came back here and was in the so-called Capstone course run by the military out at Bowling Air Field. It is a course that the Pentagon runs for newly promoted flag officers. In other words for guys promoted from colonel or Navy captains to admiral. State had just become involved in this the previous year. One State guy participates. It is a three month course and I found it very useful.

Q: Were you there more to add the foreign affairs element?

HURWITZ: Yes. It was extremely useful for them. They were very interested in my experiences throughout the course.

Then I took a Russian refresher course having been assigned as consul general to Leningrad. I went out to Leningrad in September, 1986.

Q: You were in Leningrad from 1986 until when?

HURWITZ: September to end of August, 1988.

Q: When you got to the Soviet Union this 1986-88 period, what changes did you find from your previous tour?

HURWITZ: Well, I had been there in 1981 for two months as acting political counselor, and then I went back in 1982 for a month as acting political counselor, so it wasn't as if I hadn't been there since 1972 when I last left. I had also made a number of trips with congressional delegations while I was on the Soviet desk. In 1986 if you read the press carefully you could see it was much more open, but on the ground there was very little difference, if any. It did begin in Leningrad, in fact, Leningrad was the spawning ground of a movement that later became very important. What began in Leningrad was a kind of real grass roots, organizational kinds of public activity in opposition to the government in one way or another. I remember I was walking along the street one Saturday and I saw down one side street a lot of young people, a big group. There was a guy on a truck with a camera and I thought they were filming a picture, which they often do in Leningrad because it is an old city. It turned out from the press that this was a group of young people, environmentalists, architectural historians, who were demonstrating to preserve one of the old buildings that was going to be torn down. I later wrote in a cable describing this because it was so unusual in the Soviet Union. I said that this had to be organized with complete sanctions from the government, but let the group try to demonstrate on other issues. Well, it wasn't officially sanctioned. It turned out to be something that caught fire in Leningrad, the preservation of the old buildings, and spread to such issues as factories that were spewing out pollution. You found groups demonstrating around

factories. There were rather large Jewish demonstrations in Leningrad. The Moscow press covered the first demonstration I had seen. In time these groups took on a life of their own. They began to be called informally, “not formal,” and you began to get interviews in the press. This really did mark a change and is something that never stopped. Indeed, it went into areas that no government would be pleased about. There were anti-Semitic groups which had their own demonstrations. There was a bubbling up.

Q: Did you feel there was a lack of will on the part of the authorities for sitting on these people?

HURWITZ: No, no. It was clear that the Soviets had made a conscious decision to let this go forward. And as Gorbachev sort of defined what he was doing, it became clear that this was very conscious, and I think on his part quite calculated. He wanted to instill life into the system and he realized you can't do this by fear from above. You have to bubble up from the bottom. I believe he realized you are not going to get to where you want to go without having people be creative. Without having people bring to the public's attention issues that have to be solved. Basically the Party is not interested in solving a lot of issues, they want to let things go as they are. People are watching their own goodies, their own perks, and don't want to rock the boat. This means you are just going to fall further and further backward. He realized you have to let these problems come to the fore before you can deal with them. This process continued.

Q: Were you beginning to see an either disquiet or concern among the Soviet intellectuals by the growth of easier communications within the West, with word processing, faxes, etc.? It was rapidly changing how people do things in the Western world.

HURWITZ: It wasn't specifically put on those terms, but there was a growing realization that they were falling further and further behind. Just before I went out I read a report done by a group of academics from the Academy of Sciences, social scientists, and they were very much aware of how much the Soviets were falling behind in terms of ideas. And this, of course, is one of the things that helped bring everything down. The Soviets realized that to go forward you had to plug into the West, you couldn't keep computers out. People would get them one way or another. The trend was not to keep things tamped down like they had for decades, but if they wanted to move forward they would just have to open up. They had no choice. The late-'80s were the beginning of this.

Q: During this time, 1986-88, which was towards the end of the Reagan administration, had you sensed a change in the administration's attitude towards the Soviet Union at all?

HURWITZ: I think Reagan sort of moved from evil empire to a fairly businesslike approach to the Soviets. I think he started, and certainly Bush carried out, a policy which I thought was very sound. That is not to jump on the Soviets at every turn, let Gorbachev develop in the way he wants to, because basically that is in our interest. As you recall, Bush took a lot of heat later that Gorbachev hadn't supported the break up of the Soviet Union fast enough. Leaping into something like that and saying, “Hurrah, go to it!” would

have been dangerous I think. It could have created some concerns within the Soviet Union that what was happening was only playing into the hands of the West.

Q: How did you find our contact with the local authorities, the mayor, local parties, etc.?

HURWITZ: Oh, that was easy, with the exception of the first secretary, Solovyov, who was a candidate member of the Politburo, very high ranking. I only sat down with him when Matlock, our ambassador in Moscow, came up and called on him. But other than that it was not difficult at all. We saw the whole range of people.

Q: Were you continuing your practice of going out and going to these lectures?

HURWITZ: Yes. Sometimes I went three times a day.

Q: I have been interviewing Gary Matthews who said he picked up the idea from you. Did you see a change in the environment of these lectures?

HURWITZ: Yes. Some of them were completely public, some were not. I went into the Army Club, for example, on a number of them and finally I was asked not to come. They were quite frank, and as time went on became much more frank. For example, I went to this army lecture in the officers' club and the lecture was on discipline, the whole atmosphere in the army. What was said would never have been said unless it was really tightly controlled. They were complaining about their terrible raising system, the way the non-coms treat...

Q: It really did not help the discipline of the Soviet army to continue that....

HURWITZ: They were talking about religious activities in the army which they didn't like. There was a frankness there. At one lecture, really an open lecture, you bought tickets to it, the lecturer was complaining that attendance in church in Lenin Oblast, which is the city and the area around it, out numbers all sporting events, all plays and theater events over the course of a year. The most eye opening lecture was by the economics editor of *Literaturnaya Gazetta* from Moscow, who came up from Leningrad and spoke at the Writers Club. It was the most incredible indictment of the Soviet system that I ever heard from a Soviet in a Soviet setting. It went from A-Z about everything they had done was wrong. Marxism is a hoax. Marxism economics is a hoax. Stalin was a criminal. The reason our army stood strong at Stalingrad was because Soviet soldiers would be shot in the back if they tried to retreat. Just A-Z. I wrote a long cable on this and got a commendation on it. People were just amazed in the Agency. But, this told you where they were going. This was December, 1986 as I recall. He talked about Sakharov. He talked about a riot that had just taken place in Kazakhstan in which two Russians were killed. And stuff that was not yet getting into the press, but within another period of time it would. So, there was a distinct change in the way they approached problems.

Q: Were you able to talk to the intellectual?

HURWITZ: Oh, yes.

Q: Were they talking about a new age or was their disquiet?

HURWITZ: There was both. I think it was very unsettling for Russians. I have been amazed that the changes happened in the Soviet Union without more turmoil than we have seen. There has been almost no turmoil, except in the Caucasus, and that sort of thing. But, when you realize that not only economically was everything pulled out from under them, but also intellectually. Jettisoning the whole ideology was beginning in 1986 and had gone pretty far by 1988. So, yes, people would talk about it. Some people would be disturbed. Most people were happy.

Q: Were you able to see much happening in the universities, where often ideas bubble up from the students?

HURWITZ: Well, you know Soviet students traditionally have not been in the forefront of the dissident movement or new ideas the way they are in most other countries.

Q: Why not?

HURWITZ: I don't know. Maybe it is a stage in their lives they have not been able to break out of. Unlike American students who break out very early, they were unable to break out of the strict discipline that they had. They always seemed to be very interested in getting ahead, like we portray now our students in the '50s. That may have changed, I don't know, but I never found in my early years in Moscow and then in Leningrad, that the students were in any way in the fore front. Students with special interests might be Jewish students for example, or those people who were very interested in architecture, who had their own interests.

Q: Did you have any contact with the Jewish intellectual group? How were they pointed? Were they pointed just to get the hell out and go to the States?

HURWITZ: There were two major concerns. The first one was that the Soviets had sort of clamped down on the Jewish people getting out. Brezhnev let an awful lot go out in the '70s, but that came pretty much to an end with the Afghan war. So, when I went there the major issue was Refuseniks. Secondly, as time went on, and I mentioned to you the sort of freeing up of the atmosphere did lead to a rise of sort of home ground anti-Semitism, a movement called Pamyat, and there was a growing fear on the part of Jews in Leningrad that anti-Semitism was bubbling up. The economy at that time was in terrible shape and they felt, as in the past in other countries, they would be the scape goat. I know when I was there we had not only Pamyat meetings, but a number of incidents in Jewish cemeteries where stones were overturned. So, we were all concerned that this might develop into something serious. It really hasn't. This is an amazing thing, a very encouraging thing. But, despite all the economic turmoil throughout the Soviet Union, we

have seen only a flourishing now of Jewish life. You pick up the “New York Times” and synagogues are opening, Yiddish is being taught. If that had developed the other way it would have presented us with a major human rights problems and would have been bad for the Jewish community in Leningrad.

Q: Did you have a particular brief in Leningrad?

HURWITZ: Oh, yes. That was part and parcel of US policy since the ‘60s that we would follow this issue and so we did. The main thing was Refuseniks.

Q: Could you explain what a Refusenik was?

HURWITZ: A Refusenik, an English word with nik tacked on, is someone who has been refused visas to leave. In my time a number of them left. One must bare in mind that Leningrad traditionally was a hard place, very backward in political terms place. A good example was this lecture I mentioned which was a complete eye opener. That guy had to come from Moscow. In fact, I wrote something shortly thereafter because it was another example of what we noticed that whenever Gorbachev wanted to push the reform line in Leningrad he had to send somebody up from Moscow to do it because the Leningrad party line organization was very conservative. Over the years our consulate had more trouble in Leningrad with officers being PNGed or officers being roughed up, than Moscow had. When I got there the atmosphere was quite good and I can’t remember any incidents like that at all. But, just before I got there somebody got roughed up. Oh, somebody was PNGed while I was there. A guy who was aggressively Jewish, he has since left the Foreign Service and is very active in Jewish affairs in the States, was PNGed. He had great contacts and great Russian. But, that was an exception.

Q: What about on just the normal consular things? This was a time when more Americans were coming in. Did you have troubles with American tourists?

HURWITZ: Lots of problems. We had a small consular section, really just one officer who did consular work. There were a lot of tourists and many the kind that just got into difficulties. I don’t mean sailors and people like that, but elderly people. A number of them got sick and one or two died. The other type were student groups. Their problem was usually drinking. We had one 16 year old kid who literally drank himself to death by drinking a bottle of vodka and he died. He was the only child of a divorced woman. A real tragedy. The other one was a 18 year old girl who committed suicide by slitting her wrists and then jumping out of a fifth floor window. We had a consular officer who handled that very well.

My view on consular work is that we really should bend over backwards because this is where the rubber hits the road, probably the only contact an American citizen has with an American embassy and State Department. We had some good people who did a good job. For example, on one woman who was in the hospital, Larry, who was a political officer who spoke good Russian and the duty officer, went to the hospital to see her. This woman

sent us back an article that appeared in the St. Petersburg, Florida newspaper praising the State Department and how solicitous the people were. This is the sort of thing that really counts. Tourism was big business. Boat loads of people would come in from Scandinavia. Big tours. I would talk to groups once a week.

Q: Gary Matthews was telling me that one of the problems about Leningrad was that after there would be big meetings in Moscow of American delegations they would send them off to Leningrad to see the Hermitage and all which meant on weekends he would end up escorting them around. Did you get into that?

HURWITZ: Congressional delegations required that but not too many came through. However, the tourist groups didn't require that at all.

Q: What about dealing with the Baltic republics during this time? Any changes?

HURWITZ: Yes, something had changed and I must say that I wasn't quick enough to see it. We got a note from the Estonian foreign ministry that from now on they would like to have their visas issued by the consulate in Leningrad by simply sending a note from the Estonian foreign ministry to us asking to have a visa put into a Soviet passport. Previously the visa request had come from Moscow on a Soviet ministry of foreign affairs note. I said that I didn't like this idea because I think they were just trying to have us recognize somehow the Estonian foreign ministry when our position has always been that we don't recognize forcible cooperation. Moreover, we were never suppose to deal with anything other than the cities. We were only accredited to the cities, not to the republic. In retrospect, what was probably on the way was actually an attempt on the Estonian ministry to exercise some independence from Moscow, but you could see it both ways. I took it the conservative, negative way. A positive way would have been to bring those guys in. Of course as things developed with the Baltic states during 1989-90 with students fighting and Soviet troops marching into Lithuania, this could have been a feeler along those lines. My reaction was not to have anything to do with it and we didn't.

Q: Then you left Leningrad in August 1988. Why don't we pick it up the next time after that.

HURWITZ: Great.

Q: Today is September 25, 1996. Ed, so you left in August, 1988 to go where?

HURWITZ: I came back to the Department to INR.

Q: What was your position there?

HURWITZ: I was director of the office of research and analysis for Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union that office is divided up. Basically

we covered the entire European bloc so to speak including the Baltic states. On the EUR side, the Baltic states were in EE rather than SOV.

Q: You were in INR from 1988-91. If anybody was going to be in research and analysis I can't think of a more exciting time except maybe in 1917 or something like that.

HURWITZ: Yes, that is very true. In retrospect it was an incredible time.

Q: At the time you arrived at your assignment what was the prognosis whither the Soviet Union?

HURWITZ: Well, you know perestroika, glasnost, the whole Gorbachev dismantling of the Party as they knew it at the time was in full swing. Rather early on, at least in my tenure in INR, there was a feeling that this would definitely lead to some very big changes, although nothing close to what actually happened. For example, I don't remember the exact date, although it couldn't be later than early 1990, there was a conference under the auspicious of the CIA held on the so-called farm down in Virginia which was attended by intelligence reps from US, UK, Canada, Australia and possibly New Zealand. The upshot of that was one conclusion that in five years we would see a Soviet Union that was quite different from what we were seeing then and speculation along those lines centered on somehow the break away from the Union of such states as the Baltic states and Georgia was thrown in at that time because there had been demonstrations involving loss of live by that time. So there was an awareness quite early and although we didn't see the collapse of the Soviet Union, we saw bits of it breaking off. That was a fairly wide spread consensus. I don't think anybody demurred from that, including our allies.

We also saw vast changes were underway in Eastern Europe. There again while I don't think we foresaw in 1988-89 that it would move as fast as it did it certainly took no special skills or foresight to detect a trend there. Where it would end was the only question. A lot of these trends, at least in Eastern Europe, had been underway for quite a while. The crack down of the Czechs in the spring of 1968. The Hungarians gradually pulling away. So, I think our analysis was good as far as it went.

Q: Did you find that there were skeptics who were saying this was all very good but the Soviet Union is going to be the Soviet Union?

HURWITZ: Yes. I thought you were going to talk about people who might be saying, as indeed some did, that this is really not very important at all for the Soviet Union. That what was taking place was a kind of arranging the deck chairs on the Titanic, not that people saw it going down but something being relatively minor reform at the fringes and we still had a very powerful, very aggressive Soviet Union, nothing had changed. This was the position of a lot of people slightly to the right. It was a fairly common theme you found in the press.

I think those of us who were closer to what was going on really saw what Gorbachev was up to. I think we really thought there was more to it than that. Gorbachev wasn't interested in having the Soviet Union fall a part but he was basically intent on changing the purpose, the functions, the power of the Party. He understood that the Party in its primary role it had in every field, whether science, culture, politics, military, and the way dissent of any kind had been suppressed also meant that there couldn't be any creativity, any bubbling up from below. There couldn't be any necessary seeking out of real solutions and the Soviets had real problems at the time. He was really aware of that and wanted to unseat the Party from its position of primacy, which was a very basic feature of the Soviet Union. We saw that. I think we called that and put this in stuff that went forward. I believe that the people in military, DIA, I don't think CIA had an ax to grind, but certainly DIA did and a lot of the administration. There were conflicting views, I think in the case of DIA, based on turf and based on the realization that a lot of what they were doing depended on the existence of a Soviet threat.

Q: With the 1989 events in Berlin, Czechoslovakia and Poland, you must have been called upon to look hard at the intentions of the Soviet Union on this. What were you seeing as the whole Eastern Bloc came a part? It was 1989 wasn't it?

HURWITZ: Yes. The first step in the fall of the wall was the Hungarians clipping their barbed wire fence between Hungary and Austria, which really was the first breach in the physical iron curtain. And, of course, East German tourists that had been in Hungary just funneled across the border into Austria.

I think rather early Gorbachev made a decision that Soviet troops would not be used to help stem this tide of refugees flowing into Austria and Germany and the tide of liberalization that was sweeping Czechoslovakia and Poland. In Poland it was quite clear that they did not move. They didn't move in 1981 when martial law was declared. Gorbachev had made it clear and I don't know if we had any prior knowledge of this, but later it appeared in the press that he told Honecker that the Soviets would not intervene to help the East Germans either. So, there had been a major shift from the old Brezhnev doctrine of 1968. Gorbachev said to the East Europeans that they were on their own. The Soviets were not going to help defend them. And, of course, that was crucial. What kept Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, was the commitment of the Soviet Union to keep it communist. Once that commitment was lifted, Eastern Europe was bound to go.

Q: Did you find during this time there were extraordinary demands on INR to figure out what was happening?

HURWITZ: There were extraordinary demands. We used to sit around the table twice a day in INR with all the offices in the morning with the assistant secretary and in the afternoon we would prepare or inform the front office what items we suggested be in our daily intelligence summary. There were also summaries produced by others in intelligence communities. Unfailingly our office was producing twice as much of these things. It was the top issue of the day. I should say one thing though, this was in the era

when there was really growing, frank conversations, meetings, messages, between the Secretary and Shevardnadze.

Q: Shevardnadze being the Soviet foreign minister and James Baker being our secretary of state.

HURWITZ: There was really an extraordinary degree of exchange and frank discussions. I think the administration handled the whole situation rather well. I think from the beginning they did handle it in a very balanced way and fended off people who were totally dismissing the changes taking place as cosmetic touch up of communism. I think Baker and Bush really understood that big things were underway and they tried to encourage it, but not in a gloating way and not in a provocative way. I think it was handled just right.

Q: In many ways we were probably fortunate because the Reagan administration, although it had been making changes, still had its number of ideologues and all that where as the Bush administration really was a much more internationalist, not as ideologically committed.

HURWITZ: That's true, but I dare say, I can't imagine Kissinger taking a very different approach. After all Kissinger went through his period of detente with Brezhnev when there was less reason for expecting the Soviets to be interested in real dialogue and real change. And, Brzezinski as well, although Brzezinski has this pretty harsh outlook toward the communists.

You asked about the demands. There were great demands, particularly when you had these meetings. One of INR's main job was to prepare what was called the red team paper. In other words, we prepared a paper for all of these meetings at all levels from deputy secretary up to the president. As I say meetings were taking place rather frequently at the UN, there were summits, international meetings. The red team paper was suppose to set out what the Soviets might say. This was what they were thinking and the talking points that they might raise. So, there was a lot of work.

Q: There must have been quite a sense of exhilaration. The Foreign Service officer thrives when things are bustling around and happening. Did you find this at that time?

HURWITZ: Yes. We were lucky to have at INR a good mix at the time of Foreign Service officers and really expert civil servants on both sides. It is true that with some exceptions civil servants tend to be a little bit slower in their approach to things and more deliberate, not as keyed to the rapid response.

I don't know if you want to go into it here, but INR has always had a problem that if you have Foreign Service officers in there, which I think is a good idea, you take for granted their energy, their zeal, their quickness, their awareness of what policy might want, but on the other hand you question sometimes whether they have the substance expertise. I found

out in my own case I lacked quite a bit when it came to Eastern Europe and that incredibly arcane subject of Yugoslavia. I can say something on that if you like.

Q: Oh, please do.

HURWITZ: I recall that I was very bearish on Yugoslavia's collapse. I tried to down play to some extent, not to see a really momentous outcome from the problems that the Yugoslavs were having either with at the very early stages in 1988-89 between the Serbs and the Kosovars and later between the Serbs and the Croats which developed into warfare, to say nothing of what was coming down the pike from Bosnia. I tended to see it all as more or less what was happening in the Soviet Union, the tendency to loosen the communist ties that bound. But, the Yugoslav types, one was a Foreign Service officer and one was not, were taking a much more drastic approach. I remember one of them saying what was going on now between the Serbs and the Croats in 1990-91 was serious, but if this should spread to Bosnia then we will really see a blood bath and a momentous flow of refugees. This was all said in a paper. I remember distinctly saying, "Look, I am going to let this go forward, but I don't buy it really. I think you are just being alarmist. Yes, it is a worse case scenario and get it in there somewhere as a worse case scenario, but don't predict it." Well, he predicted it and he was right. So, it is very hard for one person to be an expert in everything. But, INR does need this mix of real experts and more activist types. I think they are working on it.

Q: I worked in INR on the Horn of Africa at one time and I had the Foreign Service approach which is a little quick and dirty, I would say, and maybe a little simplistic, but, often responsive for what the job calls for. However, there isn't the depth.

What was the role of INR? You say you produced these red team papers stating what the Soviets were thinking for all these conferences, etc. But, what was your interaction say with the desks, etc.? How did INR fit into that?

HURWITZ: Well, you know, that is another problem with INR. Very often you would have the feeling that the point of contact is not laterally at the lower level but at a higher level, what you feed your assistant secretary either orally or written. Or what you feed as an INR analyst in the form of a memo directly to our assistant secretary who forwarded them to the EUR assistant secretary. But in a lot of cases, unless you had personal working relationship with the desk officer, you really didn't deal with the desk officer very much. Having been a desk officer, I know why this is the case, and having seen desk officers at work on Yugoslavia. The desk officer is pretty much an action officer. On the Soviet desk they are over loaded with questions about day to day operation of the embassy, personnel matters, visitors, CODELs and that sort of thing and very often they don't have time or don't want to make time for INR. A lot of the desk officers, except when an issue comes up as something they have to make a decision or a proposal on, are not really interested, or at least they don't evince much interest in the longer view of policy or course of action. I think that is probably true. I don't know to what extent the Mexico desk officer sits down and thinks "Whither Mexico?" as much as he thinks, "Oh,

my god, the DEA Administrator is going to Mexico next week and I have to prepare.” I can’t say that INR is as aware of a culture in the Department as I am about INR being a backwater, not too good for your career. What does INR say? “It is a culture that doesn’t seem to be replicated at the higher level, particularly if somebody has come in from the outside like secretaries and deputy secretaries. They are more interested in longer term analysis.”

So, we did not deal with...now the analysts might have more so than I did with their real counterparts on the desk. But, that is about as far as it went.

Q: Who was the assistant secretary for INR at that time?

HURWITZ: First it was Morton Abramowitz, who was an extremely good and bright guy.

Q: I imagine what was happening in the Soviet Union was the major focus at that time? Was Abramowitz very much involved in that?

HURWITZ: Yes. Morton wasn’t there that long. He left four or five months after I arrived. He was very good on a worldwide basis. He had a deputy assistant secretary who technically oversaw our office as well as some other geographical offices. He wasn’t too good, didn’t have much of a background.

Q: Who took Abramowitz’s place?

HURWITZ: A guy called Doug Mulholland, who was a CIA officer at one time and then had gone into retirement and was called back. Mulholland had no particular expertise in my area. He was a very fine gentleman, very low keyed guy. He didn’t get involved in the nitty gritty leaving that to his deputy assistant secretaries.

Q: So often it is not whether the person in charge knows the subject, but whether they are well connected above that is important.

HURWITZ: Well, Morton Abramowitz certainly was. And Mort was good because he asked good questions, he had good insight and instincts. I can’t say that about his successor.

Q: One of the things about the Bush administration in foreign affairs was, it was said, that James Baker had a small coterie around him, many of whom had come from the Treasury and it was a rather closed circle and many decisions were made within that group. Did you have the feeling that there was good entre for your product?

HURWITZ: Yes, there was. There again I talked about things going straight to the top and not going straight down. I think Baker paid a lot of attention to our stuff. There was also the policy planning staff, those people came down and saw quite a bit of us and asked us to do things. I am quite aware of this closed circle angle with Baker, but it

wasn't anything that shut out INR. I think INR's access and their regard for INR was as high as any I had seen in the Department, and I had been in INR before. If anything, INR got its foot in the door, at least in written stuff, as much as anybody.

Q: I can't think of any time in our history, other than during war, where there would be as much of a challenge on intelligence organizations to try to keep up with what is happening as those few years you were in INR. What was your impression of the input of the CIA at that time?

HURWITZ: I can't say that I saw everything. There were things at all levels of classification. I would get to see things on occasion when I would be called to the INR front office and shown a piece of paper. In terms of analysis, I think the CIA was pretty accurate. They got bad press for making the Soviet Union seem ten times taller than it actually was, but I think that oversight, if it was an oversight, was justified. If you are a scholar you can go out there and say in ten years the Soviet Union is going to be no more and you walk away. If it goes wrong, so what, you were wrong. But, if you are an intelligence agency that is giving advice to government that is in place now and has to react now, you don't say this and that to everything because the Cold War is over. I think very rarely there were disputes on how things seemed to be working out between them and us. I think they did a fairly decent job. I cited that meeting we had down there in Virginia. There basically was quite a bit of consensus. Now, that does not include DIA which constantly took the line that nothing much was happening, the Soviet Union was as big and aggressive as ever and would continue to be that way. But, we didn't pay much attention to DIA stuff. I think the CIA got a bad rap on not having predicted the down falling and making the Soviet Union appear much stronger than it actually was. Until the time that it actually fell a part, everything was basically in place that you could see...they had the weapons, the tanks, the deployments, the armaments.

Q: Were you seeing a change at all in the Soviet economy? I am wondering if it was almost a problem that anybody who served in the Soviet Union as long as you have, would begin to say, "Well, this is kind of the way it is." and not see that there are some things where the Soviets were really beginning to slip?

HURWITZ: That was all obvious. I thought you were going to say those of us who served in the Soviet Union [used their] economic prowess and their ability to carry on. That was often a problem, but it turned out more skepticism rather than less was the right way to approach it. But, invariably you would get somebody to go to Moscow and he would come back and here people were saying that the Soviets are strong and the second greatest power in the world. You even had some experts like Galbraith back in the '70s, predicting that the Soviets might even be the wave of the future. He would come back from Moscow and say, "Wait a minute, go fifty kilometers outside of Moscow and you are 150 years in the past." So, being close to the Soviet Union would have made you predict disaster sooner than other people. Certainly by my tenure in INR the problems the Soviets were facing were very clear, although you can't be a futurist in dealing with short middle term issues like readiness, like prospects for leadership changes, so you have to

take a relatively cautious approach. But, the real, basic problems in the Soviet economy were very clear by 1988. There were falling oil prices, oil being about the only thing they exported. Transportation breakdowns. Shortages all over. Crumbling infrastructure. Lack of information and contact with the outside world, which is the key to progress now and one reason they fell. All those things were pretty clear. There again, I can't say the CIA, or the Department for that matter, was remiss in not saying "hey, wait a minute. Hang on for a couple more years and they won't be so...."

Q: When you were on the red team, how would you figure out what the Soviets were thinking? What was the thought process?

HURWITZ: Well, let's say you assume the question of the Middle East is going to come up, either because both sides have agreed beforehand that is going to be on the agenda or because it just looks like a good possibility. You had at the time a guy who specialized in Soviet policy towards the Middle East and a few other areas. So we sit down and discuss what they have been saying recently, what they really want, what things on the ground look like, that is to say economic steps, troop movements, visits they have had. Let's go back over the last time we discussed this with them and see what changes their might be or what they are likely to bring up, what's on their mind. Then we include that Middle East question in the paper we would send forward. It typically took the form of a talking points paper, but not suggesting replies. That was something that INR didn't do. We just explained what the Soviets might say and the desk at the same time was preparing a paper, including the same stuff but without the depth or explanation.

Q: Did you see a change in the way the Soviet Union was approaching the world? Did you feel they were becoming so self absorbed that they weren't going to try to fish in troubled waters as they had?

HURWITZ: Yes. They, too, were very self absorbed. The internal stuff was taking a lot of their time and effort. I think perhaps one of the most fundamental moves that Gorbachev made in the very early days when he came in in March, 1985, was pulling out of Afghanistan, which was a key move in a key area for them. And, I think it signaled that times were changing.

Q: Were you there during the time of the Gulf War, January, 1991?

HURWITZ: Yes.

Q: Did that raise any particular issues with you? I keep thinking the name Premakov comes up quite often.

HURWITZ: Yes, Premakov's big role in that at the time we were rolling back Saddam's forces out of Kuwait and it looked like the Iraqis were about to give up. Premakov went off to Baghdad and tried to get involved bringing the Soviets into the final settlement. That was considered a nasty thing to do. I know the press really took off against the

Soviets for that and we were very annoyed by it. But, basically, the Soviets surprisingly kept their hands off. I don't know how that was signaled to us that they wouldn't get involved at all. Of course, Iraq had been a very substantial ally in the area. The Soviets always propped up Saddam with military equipment and support against Israel. The fact that they let this go on without much squawking really indicated the extent to which they were opting out of real active diplomacy.

Q: Did you find the unification of Germany, which came about late 1989, started a whole new train of thought about a possible new equation in the world and cause any changes in your thinking or the people around you?

HURWITZ: No, not really. The Wall fell in November, 1989 and I think the unification came about officially October, 1990. There was a lot of talk about how Eastern Europeans would be very nervous with a united Germany. How France might be nervous. How a divided Germany over the years had seemed to work to everybody's advantage. Even that the Germans, themselves, were a bit concerned about how they, as a country now would react finally being united for the first time since Hitler was in power. So, there was this nervousness on everybody's part. But, it certainly did not enter into US policy. I can't recall being asked at any time to do a paper analyzing what a united Germany might mean in the sense of an alarm bell going off. I did do things on Eastern Europe's approach and concerns about a united Germany, but nothing that I can recall would impinge on or in any way effect our really firm insistence that Germany be united and be part of NATO.

Allowing Germany to enter NATO as a united country was a big sticking point for the Soviets for a long time and one that Gorbachev stuck his neck out over. Now, the issue of whether the Soviets would stand for this was on our plate. Whether this would upset the Soviet union. That is to say, Gorbachev let their former ally, their most advanced partner in the Warsaw Pact, switch camps and join NATO. That was a big issue and we were discussing that pretty actively. Would this not be some kind of straw that would break Gorbachev's back. I think it added to Gorbachev's problems but we were not going to back track. I credit Bush pushing very hard for that, and Baker too. I am sure they spoke to Gorbachev about it. They supported him by saying this was going to be a good step and it shouldn't cause Gorbachev to collapse and neither were we going to crow that this is a great anti-Soviet step, a defeat to the Soviets. So that worked out rather well.

Q: The problem of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Did they start to break away while you were in INR?

HURWITZ: Everything really collapsed just before the Gorbachev coup. They had this meeting outside of Moscow at one of the official dachas where all the representatives signed on to what was essentially the breakup of the Soviet Union. The Baltic states had left before August, 1991.

Q: Were we concerned that there was going to be a coup against Gorbachev at that time or that something was going to happen?

HURWITZ: I personally, and INR and the State Department, too, was basically taking the position that we do not want to be seen as either gloating over what was happening or pushing Gorbachev out or pushing for the break up of the Soviet union at that point. You may recall that instance where Bush went to Kiev and said something to the effect that you don't want to break things up too fast. He was roundly criticized by the press and roundly criticized by the same people today for relying too much on Gorbachev as a leader and somebody who could oversee this breakup in an orderly fashion, which would not destabilize the situation. By the same token today, the government has been taking flak for relying too much on Yeltsin, who at that time was the darling of the more conservative American analysts and politicians. But that has switched. Indeed this is something that I know we had to contend with throughout at that time, that is Bush and Baker being too much in bed with Gorbachev and Shevardnadze. As I say, I think they handled it extremely well and did exactly what had to be done. It didn't help Gorbachev and it wasn't necessarily meant to help Gorbachev individually, but I think he was, at the top level of our government, correctly seen as a steady hand on the tiller. And, with all those weapons out there, the last thing we wanted was the Soviet Union to collapse in chaos. I don't know that it would have done so even if we had tried to push it over the precipice, but those are risks you don't take at the time.

It has not worked out badly when you consider the breakup itself was virtually bloodless. You did have these riots that were put down in Tbilisi in 1989 and in Lithuania in 1990 by Soviet violence, but the actual breakup occurred without bloodshed and indeed in the August coup you had only three people killed nation wide, which is an amazing thing. So, to that extent it worked out. We have now been able to, despite the well known efforts to prop Gorbachev up a bit, get along very well with Yeltsin and with the other republics. You have no chaos except for Chechnya, which is a special case. So, I think it was handled well by both administrations.

Q: During this time were we focusing on the nationalities?

HURWITZ: Yes, very much so. Of course, the nationalities issue had always been a kind of subset issue of the Soviet Union. We had for many, many years, before I got there, a guy in INR who followed Soviet nationalities. The object then was to sort of ferret out indications of dissatisfaction with the Soviet regime. That dissatisfaction took the form of cultural dissidents, the Jewish Refuseniks and national groups that felt their culture and whole nationality was being down trodden by the Soviets. So that was something we always followed and as time went on we followed it more closely. The issue now is almost dead except for the nationality entities that still exist in the Russian Federation, like the Chechnyans or Tartars.

Q: When was the attempted coup against Gorbachev?

HURWITZ: August, 1991. That was during my watch in INR. It was successful for a couple of days.

Q: How did that news hit you all and what was within INR the response to it?

HURWITZ: I was on vacation and was on Prince Edward Island. I got up one morning and was listening on a small transistor to VOA news and heard about the coup. I watched a bit on television and then through some fancy footwork got myself on a plane back to the Department. They were going full blast trying to find out what was going on and trying to monitor the success or lack of success of this coup.

Q: What was the opinion about the people who were pulling the coup?

HURWITZ: Oh, well, it was quite clear that these were really comedians in a sense. They were people we had been following all along and were obviously identified as right wing elements. I should say leading up to the coup, one of the things we were really watching closely and which feed this mini dispute over whether Gorbachev, was the extent to which Gorbachev veered from left to right. For a considerable period up to the coup, he had veered right and had put in positions people who were very right wing like Yanayev, like minister of defense Yazov, and the new head of the KGB, who later killed himself. We were watching all these right wingers being appointed to positions and really were somewhat concerned about what this did mean. I think Gorbachev in April 1989 had decimated the right wing leadership of the various oblasts. It was really a clever step getting rid of all these ensconced hard line communists from their local _____. He seemed to be on a very liberalization kick, but then he played both sides back and forth. We were in one of these back swings when the coup happened. Now, he may have brought these people up with the understanding that they were so bumbling and a lot less than clever, that he could handle them. It was better to have them around where he could keep an eye on them than to have them off plotting somewhere else. Well, it turned out they plotted when he was on vacation. It also turns out that they did a lousy job. I think one nice thing about the coup is it showed the support for liberalization had gone very far down at least in the apparatus of the government. You had the military basically siding with Gorbachev in the sense they took no action. So, as I say, the coup could have been a lot worse than it was. Only three people were killed.

Q: Was there a progression in our estimation and evaluation of Yeltsin during the time you were there? I'm thinking of times when there was a real attempt to denigrate Yeltsin and call him a drunken buffoon and this type of thing, particularly from the White House.

HURWITZ: I think early on Yeltsin began to display this bizarre behavior intermittently and that really concerned people. There were all these reports of his drinking when he came here. At one point up at Johns Hopkins he was really out of it, liquor-wise. Reports we got of visits he had made to France having the same things. His strange disappearances, his strange actions. All of these things added up. But, he always managed when the chips were down to come forward and sound very rational and be rational and to get along with Bush and Clinton. But, I think the bleat that you hear from the same people who were saying we were too much involved with Gorbachev and are now saying it about

Yeltsin is sort of a built in response. They simply just want us to be more circumspect and suspicious when it comes to dealing with Soviets period. But, I think throughout one thing we were always looking for was evidence that Yeltsin was okay or not okay physically and mentally.

Q: During this time were we watching Yeltsin closely?

HURWITZ: Yes. Certainly starting from the coup. He had won the presidential election of the RSFR in 1990. He was being watched throughout.

Q: Did the Soviet Union break up while you were in INR?

HURWITZ: Yes, it did.

Q: What sort of demands were laid on you and what sort of output was coming out of that?

HURWITZ: This was pretty much when I was getting ready to leave INR. Our big concern was the viability of the control system, the Soviet military. What were the prospects of this kind of instability or riots, things like that. How would the system work? What would happen to the economy? How would they divvy all of this up? Those were the issues we were watching.

Q: Was the state of the Soviet military left up to the Defense Intelligence Agency?

One of the big things was who gets what, what is the morale, what role will the military forces play?

HURWITZ: I don't remember any specific demands on us for papers on military issues.

Q: When you left there in 1991 where did you go?

HURWITZ: Then I went to the Board of Examiners.

Q: You were there from when to when?

HURWITZ: September, 1991 until February, 1992 when I was nominated as ambassador. I basically eased out of the Board of Examiners and began this whole process of the papers you have to submit. I actually went to Kyrgyzstan at the end of March, 1992 as chargé, sort of an unusual situation. The embassy had opened in February and they had a temporary chargé, Ed McWilliams, who had served in Afghanistan after me at one point. He opened the embassy with an advanced team in February, 1992, and I took his place in March, 1992. I stayed there until July, came home and went through the ambassadorial seminar, etc. and was confirmed on August 6, 1992 and went back in September as ambassador.

Q: You were ambassador from when to when?

HURWITZ: September, 1992 to October, 1994.

Q: Could you describe Kyrgyzstan the first time you went out there? How it was put together and what you were trying to do.

HURWITZ: Kyrgyzstan governmentwise, like all these countries, was in a state of transition, as was our policy. We had considerable hopes for Kyrgyzstan because it was one of, perhaps the only, newly created ex-Soviet state that did not have the old ex-Party official as the number one guy. The president was Askar Akayev, a scientist, a physicist, who before assuming the presidency was president of the Kyrgyz Academy of Sciences. We had some hopes that this would be a real new leaf and that you could have an actual democratic country arising from the ashes of the Soviet Union. It was clear from the beginning that they would have immense economic problems. That was one thing we could not deal with immediately. What we were hoping to get and what really evolved anyway was a situation in which you didn't have a lot of turmoil. A situation in which even at the time we were concerned about was the Iranians moving in. We weren't concerned about Turkish influence, but we were curious to how the Turks would react to this. A big issue was how would the Russians react. Now that this thing officially exists will the Russians try to work out a situation in which the independence is more of a question of what is on paper? Then you had the issue of China. There is a 400 kilometer border with China, which is something else that concerned us. But the main issue was to try to get the Kyrgyz government, society, moving on a basically democratic, stable track.

Q: Here we are the American chargé and then ambassador way off in Central Asia with an embryo government. What was your role, how did you operate there?

HURWITZ: You do the basic things. You present your credentials. You get to know as many people as you can. You go around to the ministries. You talk to people. You hold their hands in a certain manner of speaking. It was an incredible situation where you had all these people who only understood the trappings. They had a foreign ministry but the Kyrgyz foreign ministry had done absolutely nothing except to arrange visits of Cuban Trade Unionists and stuff like that. Kyrgyzstan had always been a distant outpost of the Soviet Union. It was perhaps the most obedient of all Soviet republics. And, it was one that had prospered because of the Soviet Union. I recall in all my tours in the Soviet Union the question used to be asked by Russians, at first in a non-public way because you couldn't raise questions like this, was "Do we get more out of Central Asia or do we give it more?" Well, by the time I went to Leningrad and glasnost was in full bloom, you would hear this question raised at public meetings. Why are we spending money to give to these little black people to support them? Well, you could argue the issue both ways, I suppose, when it came to Kazakhstan or Uzbekistan with oil, gold and cotton, but in the case of Kyrgyzstan there was no question but that everything you saw, every institute, every library, every theater, every factory was there at the largess of the Soviet Union.

And they did incredible things to prop up this distant republic to make it look prosperous and give jobs to everybody. For example, they built in Kyrgyzstan one of the largest sugar refineries in the Soviet Union. A refinery that could only refine sugar cane, which came from Cuba. So, it was shipped from Cuba all the way across the Soviet Union. The refinery, by the way, was not equipped to refine sugar beets which can be grown around Kyrgyzstan. But it was done for jobs, you had to give them something to do.

The Soviets liked it in one respect and found it very convenient because it was like Colorado with so many sunny days, it was a great place for flying instructions. It was a place where budding pilots being trained could train around 300 days a year. So, they had an air school there which trained not only a lot of Soviets but Afghans, Cubans, Ethiopians, etc. You occasionally would see little black kids running around, the offspring of an Ethiopian or Congolese, Patrice Lumumba style, air man and a Russian lady. They also used the Issyk Kul. Did you ever go to the lake?

Q: Yes.

HURWITZ: It is an enormous lake high up in the mountains. They used that to test torpedoes in submarines because this was a body of water totally landlocked, totally within Kyrgyzstan, a body of water into which they could be certain American submarines couldn't come and monitor the tests. So, they tested the missiles and also had a torpedo factory. And, of course, it was a crucial place because of the Chinese. Once you are in the Far East you had to protect it.

But other than that it had very little in the way of industry. It had some animal husbandry, but very primitive by world standards. It had gold, but in areas very difficult to extract it from. And that is about it. So, when the Soviet umbilical cord was cut, Kyrgyzstan was and still is in big trouble. How do you deal with this? They didn't have a clue.

Q: Today is October 9, 1996. Ed, let's get the dates again of your tour in Kyrgyzstan.

HURWITZ: I arrived in the capacity of chargé, although I had been announced as the future ambassador but had not been confirmed or appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I had been preceded by Ed McWilliams, also in that capacity. He had literally opened the embassy, finding a temporary location for it while living in a hotel room. I understand the embassy is still there. I arrived a month and a half after McWilliams.

I arrived March, 1992, went home in July and went through the ambassadorial seminar, appeared in front of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was confirmed on August 6, I believe it was, and returned to Kyrgyzstan in September as ambassador. So, I was ambassador from September, 1992 until October, 1994.

Q: Let's talk first about the household arrangements. Could you describe the embassy and staff's working conditions?

HURWITZ: The working conditions were incredibly bad. We had as a building a structure that from every standpoint was inadequate whether talking about security or the ability to function. It was a small, one story, old structure that had been at one time the Bishkek Komsomol headquarters, and at one time the city tax office, and I would occasionally get telephone calls concerning city taxes and had by my phone the number of the current tax office so I could direct people. Security was zilch. It was a fire trap. In my tenure there we did have an electrical fire. Anybody who wanted to toss a note, a rock or a bomb through the front window could have done so. It was a small structure. We had a very small staff, of course. People came and went, but we had about seven Americans when I was there. There were 10 or 12 locals including drivers.

Q: I visited you there and the place was just incredibly crowded. To my mind it looked about the size of what we could call a 1930, two-bedroom, single story house, the kind you hoped you would work out of as a family man in time.

HURWITZ: Right. That, of course, was the idea. We did expect to move fairly soon. Unfortunately, the team that went in to choose the embassy building in January, 1992, were shown a number of buildings which they turned down largely on security grounds. They were justified in doing so, but what they ended up with was far worse. We simply didn't estimate properly the difficulty finding a better building as a follow on. And, we didn't estimate how difficult it would be dealing with the Kyrgyz. I understand the negotiations are still in progress to have a plot of land outside the main center of the city, but quite close, on which we would build our own building. I think you may know that the State Department at that time had just begun that project of bringing in already made embassies. They would just ship them in and put them together. The first successful attempt at doing that was some place in Africa. They already have one in Ashgabat. Now, the transportation difficulties getting to Kyrgyzstan really compounded that problem. But, it was considered the only way to go because all the standing structures, as you saw, in Bishkek, were either solid but very old and totally inadequate and probably full of asbestos and every other hazard you can think of, or they were not adequately defensible, or both. So, FBO figured in the long run to renovate anything you might find would cost as much as bringing in something that we would know from scratch was secure, adequate and clean. And that is the way they are going to go, but I don't know when this will happen.

Q: When you say clean do you mean free of bugs?

HURWITZ: Free of structural hazards including rats and asbestos, particularly. The physical circumstances were extremely difficult. The housing was also very difficult. Bishkek was surprisingly well off when it came to housing compared to the Soviet norm. On the other hand, by our standards, the housing was woefully inadequate. I must have

seen 15 or 20 buildings as possible residences and I settled on none of them. I lived for four months in a hotel room, me and about ten thousand cockroaches, and then moved into an apartment that I had looked at and said, "Take it" but for use by a staff member. Well, the staff member, who moved in immediately, was my first DCM, who later left because his child developed medical problems there. When he vacated it I moved in. I think the current ambassador is still living in that place, although they have added what was a separate additional apartment, putting the two together.

Q: How about staff morale during your time there?

HURWITZ: It is curious, but I would say staff morale was high. You are working check by jowl here, it is not that you are not aware of problems, although very often the ambassador is less aware of problems that people might have. But, I was working side by side and talked to everybody every day. You had that sort of hyper-activity. Your know, morale was good and you had a lot to do, a lot of challenges, and it is all new and interesting. I think that was the case. In fact, when talking about this to personnel people in the Department, they made the point, and I think it is probably a valid one, they were less worried about the first wave of embassy officers and staff in all these new embassies that were undergoing more or less the same problems--some had it worse than others and we had it as bad as anybody--but they were more concerned about the second wave when things were settled and when everyday didn't present a new, possibly frustrating, but exciting adventure. And, I think for that first wave which I was in and all our staff was in that there was this feeling of excitement. And, the people they sent out, which in some respects was bad, were young, a couple of first tour officers. This hurt in terms of experience, but added something in terms of morale.

Let me just make one further point that added to the difficulties that we faced. To get people out in a hurry they had to go to a system of TDYs. So, for the first year and a half I had seven admin officers. They were all experienced guys but they came and they left. The question of establishing a real presence, having some institutional memory and some follow through, was a real problem.

Q: Before you went out there did you carry in your mental attaché case a series of things that you wanted to get done, either from consultation with the Department, instructions from the Department and your own? What did you want to accomplish when you went out there?

HURWITZ: From the very beginning Kyrgyzstan had a good reputation. I didn't know anything about Kyrgyzstan and I had spent a lot of time in the Soviet Union as the record shows. I hadn't given much thought to Central Asia and hadn't been particularly interested in it, even though I had had a tour in Afghanistan. But, Kyrgyzstan was already getting a good reputation in the Department for its seemingly greater interest in having a real democratic country. It was the only former Soviet republic whose president was not the last first secretary of the Party. He was an academic who was certainly talk up a great democracy line. Our position, the government's position and mine, was to try to see what

we could do to foster this, to keep it going on a democratic track and also so find out what they could do to overcome their economic problems, the fact that they had so little to work with. They were indeed running on empty and cut off from the Soviets they would be facing grave economic problems. So, the major task as I saw it was twofold. One, making sure they keep going politically on a democratic track and two, economically trying to see what they could do and to use their reputation for democracy to drum up support for them among the world business community. And, I think we succeeded to a great extent and they succeeded too. We have made them focus on the political atmosphere as a means of pulling themselves up by their boot straps economically, or at least getting help so that they could begin to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. The point I would make constantly and which became rather a touchy thing prior to my departure was “Look, right now you don’t have much to work with other than your reputation. Keep it going and we will do our best to get you US aid and to encourage others to help out.” So, that was more or less my function and the US in general. And, we succeeded in terms of US aid. At one time Kyrgyzstan was getting more aid per capita from the US than any other former Soviet republic.

Q: Could you talk a bit about our role and what type of aid was coming?

HURWITZ: You may remember there was a lot of money being thrown at the Soviet Union. The question for the embassy was to convince the administration and the administration to convince congress that Kyrgyzstan deserved a really good share of this aid. So, we kept close track of what they were doing right and informed the Department as events progressed. There was another problem of seeing that this aid was properly used. I would have maybe 15 people a week come through who had either already gotten AID grants or were seeking AID grants. Some of the schemes were dreams, simply off base, unrealistic, displayed a lot of ignorance about the situation on the ground in Kyrgyzstan and about what they really need and how they operated. My role was to tell them this wouldn’t work or, if it was already on paper and beginning to take effect, to tell the Department this was a mistake.

Q: Were these usually people from the United States coming in?

HURWITZ: Yes. They were what I used to call grantologists, people who had studied the whole subject of getting grants, never mind how useful these projects would actually be. For these people it was a living. Some of them were completely off base.

Let me give you one example of something that had taken off and was operating. This was the farmer-to-farmer program, which to some extent was very useful, but had many aspects that were silly. Basically the idea is that this farmer-to-farmer organization would send out--and it is operated as I say quite usefully in a lot of areas in that part of the world--delegations of American farmers or other specialists, not government officials, people who had or were working in the field, and they would go around and visit their counterparts in the dairy industry, whatever, and advise them what they were doing wrong and what they could do better. However, in a lot of instances they come unprepared for

what they were seeing. I recall a dairy delegation, actually had to do with cheese making, and they wrote a report after their visit. I had seen them once and then had nothing to do with them, they were out in the countryside. Some months later I got a copy of their report which was filled with suggestions and observations that were either totally silly or self-evident. For instance, one suggestion was that the Kyrgyz need more modern equipment. They should have milking machines here and there. Or their barns should be air-conditioned. These were things that the Kyrgyz knew but were totally unrealistic, far beyond their means. I had sent this report back to Washington and a lot of people had a good chuckle over it. The report among other things listed ways that cheese could be used in the Kyrgyz diet and had a recipe for cheese fondue which said to take half a pound of Swiss cheese and a glass of white wine, all things that the Kyrgyz peasant never even heard of. While that was a little far out and a little silly, it did typify the approach a lot of these people coming to Kyrgyzstan and looking around and dropping off their advice and leaving.

Q: Basically they were bringing what they did back at home and saying do it our way.

HURWITZ: Right. At first the Kyrgyz were very flattered with all of this attention and they saw dollar signs floating in the air whenever one of these delegations came through. But, when the delegations didn't leave behind a pile of money and when they left behind a lot of totally irrelevant advice, the Kyrgyz began to get a little annoyed. I talked to many Kyrgyz officials who said, "Look, we really appreciate the attention but we don't have time to talk to all of these delegations." And you know how Americans are, you get a chairman of a small company in Ohio and he has been put on an official delegation and he comes to me and says, "Well, I would like to see the president and the prime minister and the minister of agriculture." For a while we managed to get them rather high level meetings but the Kyrgyz soon learned what the score was.

But, a part from that there was a lot of useful aid, of course. There was surplus grain that was donated. We gave very crucial advice to a very crucial segment of Kyrgyzstan's budding industry, water power.

Q: I was also thinking not only water power, but water, itself.

HURWITZ: Well, you are right. That is one thing I talked to the Kyrgyz endlessly about. The whole concept of water as an exploitable resource which was one of Kyrgyzstan's riches. They had gotten used to this Soviet approach that we are all one big happy family, so whatever Uzbekistan gets from Kyrgyzstan that doesn't matter because we are all Soviet brothers. But, after the Soviet Union fell apart, Uzbekistan had its gold within its borders, which it could extract and export at will. Kazakhstan had its oil and gas, to say nothing about enormous territory to grow wheat on. The Kyrgyz had basically only the water. It is very rich in water resources. Perhaps second only to Russia in all of the Soviet Union. But, they looked on their water, which was flowing right into Uzbekistan, which was irrigating all of those vast cotton fields, not as a resource but something that came

from God and just flowed down. We tried to tell them that their water was a resource and they should get some quid pro quo for it.

When I say hydroelectric, one of the most useful ideas was brought forth by an AID sponsored hydroelectric group that pointed out to me, and I from then on used it with every Kyrgyz that had anything to do with the economy, that Kyrgyzstan not only let the flow into Uzbekistan but it regulated that flow in such a way as to lose not only the water but what the water could do for Kyrgyzstan. In other words, the water was dammed up in the winter so that it didn't flow when it wasn't of use for the Uzbek cotton. Of course, when the water is dammed up and not flowing you can't produce hydroelectric power from it, the way their system was set up. So, at the very time that they need the electric power in the winter to run the heaters to heat the country, the water couldn't flow. In the spring, when they lifted the sluices and let the water go through, that was when they didn't need the electric power in such big quantities. So, what they really needed was a dam further up stream so they could let the water flow down to the second dam and have the electric power produced up stream. I don't know where that stands now but it would be a major addition to their economy. It was costing them tens of millions of dollars to irrigate Uzbekistan at no profit to Kyrgyzstan.

Q: How did you personally deal with the government? How would you get around?

HURWITZ: All I had to do was to pick up the phone. I could see anybody I wanted. Before my first year was over the president and I had a very good relationship. I spoke very good Russian at that time. I would see him maybe once a month for lunch. He had me out to his hunting lodge three times. He would call me up and say, "Come to lunch.." We would go to either his office or his home. I don't know if it did any good though because towards the end that changed. We can get to that later.

Q: If I recall correctly, our embassy was on Dzerzhinsky Street.

HURWITZ: They have renamed it.

Q: You were really just down the street from the old KGB. What was your relationship with the security forces there? What were they like at that time?

HURWITZ: The relationship was very good. There was a very close relationship between the station chief and the old KGB. We were giving them a lot of advise. We put together and trained their presidential security staff. We gave them equipment and were working closely with them on drugs. We had a lot of drug delegations from DEA through. Security relationship was very good. There was absolutely no harassment from their side and no bugs or anything like that.

Q: What was the role of the Russians while you were there?

HURWITZ: The whole subject of Russian-Kyrgyz relationship is interesting. When I got to Kyrgyzstan I had expected to see what you think of when you think of a colonial situation--the mother country sort of dominating a colony. You would expect to see Kyrgyz street sweepers, Kyrgyz truck drivers and Kyrgyz plumbers and maids and dishwashers, and Russians walking around in suits and briefcases. It was exactly the opposite. The whole Kyrgyz-Russian relationship was historically developed in an unusual way from the standpoint of a colony. When the Russians got there sort of mid-19th century, there was virtually nothing. The Kyrgyz were largely pastoral, sheep herders, etc. The Russians brought in all the labor force, the technicians, so you always had a Russian, blue collar working class there often doing menial work in the cities. Then the general scheme was carried on by Stalin. The Russians were obviously calling all the shots and had the power in the area, but there was this union of brotherly republics and they needed to have them focus on Kyrgyzstan's sovereignty, if not independence. So, in all the ministries, in all of the government organizations, the top dog was usually a Kyrgyz who did what his Russian masters told him, obviously, but it was the Kyrgyz who walked around carrying the briefcases with the fedora hats and pens in the pocket. That has continued. So, the teachers, most of the bureaucracy, except for the very top behind the scenes, was Kyrgyz. The Kyrgyz always walked around well dress and it was the Russian street cleaners and Russian gardeners, etc.

Q: But, also you had the feeling it was the Russians who kept the engines going, ran the little shops and all that sort of stuff.

HURWITZ: Oh, yes. So, that first of all defined a lot of the life in urban Kyrgyzstan. The Russians were essential to making the place go. When your telephone wouldn't work, when your plumbing went bad, it was always a Russian who did it. I think the Kyrgyz realized that and although you had the young firebrands saying, "Russians get out," most of them realized that the Russians were very necessary plus which the Kyrgyz are just basically just extremely tolerant, quiet people. They are very reasonable people. The feeling between the Russians and Kyrgyz was basically quite good. Plus which the Kyrgyz never had much of a developed culture of their own. They will argue with that, of course. But, as a basically nomadic nation they didn't have much time to build up a culture or great religious or artistic tradition. There was no great center of culture, which was different than the case in Uzbekistan, by the way, which for centuries was the center of Central Asia. A lot of the Persian-language writers like Babur were really not Persian but Uzbek. This was not the case in Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyz always looked to Russia for its cultural roots, its language--most city dwellers in Kyrgyzstan do much better in Russian than in Kyrgyz. So, this naturally tolerant attitude plus all they knew they owed to Russia in terms of culture, economy and infrastructure, meant the relationship was good.

Q: What was the Russian ambassador doing?

HURWITZ: Well, the Russian ambassador and the whole embassy was largely busy with handling the exodus. I just said the relations were good, but I think the Russians saw the handwriting on the wall, that the opportunities for Russians would no longer be the same.

They felt they were living in a foreign country and a lot of them wanted to return. They could be the plumbers and carpenters, but they couldn't be much else and that meant a lot of the intellectuals wanted to leave. So, the Russian embassy was tied up with that. The initial outflow subsided and I don't know what it is now.

After the Union fell apart, I think the Russian attitude towards this has gone through some ups and downs. I think there was a time when they felt they would make the best of this and try to forge something out of the break up. It won't be the Soviet Union but it will be something that we at least can control. But, as the economic problems mounted in the Soviet Union they realized they couldn't do this. They didn't have the resources or couldn't pay enough attention to keeping these far flung parts of the former Union more or less under their control. Certain things, however, in Kyrgyzstan they were very concerned about and that was China. While I was there, and I think it is still the case, it was Soviet troops on the long border with China. The Soviets, more or less, ran that whole border and security operation from the standpoint of China. Now, that is in their interests and they won't give that up.

Q: When I talked to the ministry of foreign affairs, people expressed concern over two groups. One was the Chinese, because there are just so many of them that they really didn't want to let them get in because the Kyrgyz are only four and a half million and the Chinese could just out populate them in a very short time. The other one was Iranian fundamentalists coming in there.

HURWITZ: We were concerned about both. I think the Chinese were not that interested. I think the Chinese were sort of a bugaboo and you always had stories about the Chinese coming in and buying up property and houses. I think that was exaggerated. The Chinese are concerned with the area only in a sense it is next to their Sinkiang province, next to the Uighurs in China talking about Eastern Turkestan. In fact, there was a large Uighur population in Kyrgyzstan which has been there for generations and some of them were linking up with the Chinese Uighurs. So, this was a concern from the Chinese standpoint.

Another problem the Kyrgyz had with the Chinese, a more realistic one, was Chinese nuclear tests nearby. But, I think basically the Chinese provided a lot of cheap consumer goods that flooded Kyrgyzstan at the time which they wouldn't be able to get from Russia any more. How they bought these things, I don't know. There was a lot of trade in metals and things like that were smuggled out of Russia through Kyrgyzstan or the Kyrgyz just had sitting there from the Russian time--copper and that sort of stuff.

Q: What about concern about religion from Iran? When I was there from what I could observe there wasn't much religion there.

HURWITZ: No, no, they are very irreligious, as I say. They never paid much attention to religion. There was a little more attention to it. Certainly, they made some of the Muslim holidays national holidays. The Iranians set up an embassy and at one point had opened an information office that sold magazines and books which nobody bought. I looked

through the window a number of times and there was nobody in it. And, there was a visit by the foreign minister and by Rafsanjani. But, I don't think they are really taking off. The Iranians have their own problems. I think the Iranians are more interested in countries closer to them like Azerbaijan.

Q: What about Turkey?

HURWITZ: Oh, the Turks initially were enormously interested in bringing back their long lost little brothers from Central Asia. The Turks were very active. They had a big embassy there and a lot of educational programs. But, I think, they too, initially had grandiose ideas which didn't come to pass. First of all because Turkey economically couldn't do as much for the area as it wanted and secondly because the Kyrgyz, at least, were not that interested. The Kyrgyz, first of all, had enough little brotherism in their relationship with Russia in the past and secondly, the Kyrgyz were really looking beyond Turkey. Turkey was trying to present itself as the West to them, but they weren't interested in that as time went on. They realized that things were happening much further west than Turkey. I recall in May, 1992, a big Turkish trade delegation came over and started handing out their cards. It turned out that virtually every one of them was really an affiliate of an American firm and that all the cards were in English. Everybody spoke English even though the Turks had told the Kyrgyz that they had to learn Turkish as their key to the Western world. Well, they weren't interested in learning Turkish.

Q: Were the Japanese interested there?

HURWITZ: No. They were very good in terms of aid. The Japanese like the Swiss, who didn't have a lot to offer but paid a lot of attention to Kyrgyzstan, as did the Danes and the Dutch, were good on aid and I think there is potential there. But, the Japanese are very crafty, in the business sense, and they are not interested in something that doesn't have much potential. I think they made that decision. They didn't open an embassy there. They saw that this place was no market for anything they produced and didn't produce anything they needed.

Q: If nothing else they could have some great resorts there.

HURWITZ: Well, the whole question of tourism is one that we talked about and listened to foreigners talk about. It is very difficult. What we told them to focus on is the sort of eco tourism--bird watchers, people who like to go to the outer limits like mountain climbers--but there is a dreadful lack of facilities there. The Kyrgyz used to say Issyk Kul was a marvelous place and Europeans should come there in droves. However, the accommodations were so disastrously bad, even by Soviet standards. It is so hard to get to and even if you begin to have reasonably good transportation, international flights, why would people want to go there, the average blue-haired lady, tourist type with tied shoes. It just takes a long time to develop that sort of stuff and you have to have side interests or sights to see. You just can't come and stay in a hotel and have a lake. People come and you have to have restaurants around and other facilities. And, that would just take too long.

But, as I kept telling them, “Look, your mountains aren’t going away, you have time to play with this. In the meantime, put ads in the “Audubon Magazine”, put ads in other speciality magazines. They were beginning to get hunters, people who were going for various kinds of game that you don’t find except in those areas. They were getting a few bird watchers and advertising for these horse tours through the mountains. Here again, it is not big scale, but can be a beginning.

Q: What about relations with Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan?

HURWITZ: The relations with Kazakhstan were good, they are similar in many ways. Language is extremely close. The border is right there.

Q: You really don’t know it is there, at least in our time.

HURWITZ: I think that is still the same. It is like going to New York from New Jersey.

The relationship with the Uzbeks has always been strained. There is a sort of traditional animosity there which exploded in 1990 in that Osh incident in which 200 or so people were killed.

Q: What was that?

HURWITZ: That was over land rights and water rights in the Fergana Valley. Osh is the second city in Kyrgyzstan which is off in the western part of the lowlands. Its population is about 50 percent ethnic Uzbek. I don’t recall the exact details, but poor Kyrgyz squatters came in and just took over some land which belonged to some ethnic Uzbek farmers and you had an explosion. That settled down, although it is an issue and there is some tension there. Then, also during my tenure, Uzbekistan shut off the supply of natural gas. They supply part of Kyrgyzstan’s natural gas and shut off deliveries because they had not been paid. There was some harassment and they set up a real border control setup at that point. But, that passed over all right.

Tajikistan, of course, was a problem. The same thing holds there with the border being very porous having been really non-existent during Soviet times. You have a lot of ethnic Tajiks living in Kyrgyzstan and vice-a-versa. So, if things get upset in Tajikistan then there is the question of the problem spilling over.

Q: While you were there there was a guerrilla war going on.

HURWITZ: There was fighting in Tajikistan.

Q: What was that over?

HURWITZ: That was over factions. That never extended into Kyrgyzstan. The Russians had sent in peacekeepers and Kyrgyzstan had sent a brigade to help out. I think the Kazakhs were also involved.

Afghanistan was also a problem because you get arms and drugs coming into Kyrgyzstan and that is part of the problem now. The only stories you read about Kyrgyzstan in the American press have to do with drugs and drug traffic. That whole area now is becoming a transit point. It has never been a big consumption area, but it is a transit point. The drugs come up from Afghanistan into Tajikistan. From there they go up the road to Osh, on the western border of Kyrgyzstan, and then into Russia and across to Uzbekistan. I am sure some of it gets diverted, but very little of it. Kyrgyzstan, itself, could be, has been a primary for growing poppies. The meadows just before you get into the highest portion of the mountains are just covered with poppies. Not the opium poppies but the climate and terrain is find for opium poppies. The Chu Valley, which is the valley between...the Chu River is the border between Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan...that whole valley is the world's biggest producer of wild cannabis. In the Soviet times they had the facilities to keep track of this...helicopters, train a large force...but now they are having trouble keeping track of that. That is one of the areas that we cooperate with them very closely.

Q: Was this much of a concern of yours?

HURWITZ: Yes, yes. It was beginning to build up. It has gotten worse now.

Q: What was the attitude of the government?

HURWITZ: They were serious about it, but they were strapped for resources, trained people, etc. We did a lot of training in the United States and in Kyrgyzstan we had all kinds of seminars--the USG, not the embassy. Every time somebody from the Department, DEA or CIA came through on this issue we ran them through the ministry of interior, the minister, himself, the vice president. I think they are serious about it. In 1992 it was proposed legalizing the growing of poppies for medicinal reasons, but the president said no, they didn't want to have anything to do with it. We gave them a good pat on the back, and I am sure it still holds.

Q: Did you find yourself in a position as an unofficial adviser on things when they were setting up their government?

HURWITZ: Well, we advised through the means of sending out teams. AID put together all kinds of programs, State did too, for individual ministries, for banking people, for planning organizations. There was a great deal of that. I did a great deal of talking from the president on down about general approaches such as a free press. We talked to them very much on my level and AID groups who brought out specialists, contractors, on the question of constitution. They were working out a constitution. The whole question of human rights, on police abuses, etc. We were talking to them constantly.

Q: You mentioned while you were there that things got more difficult. What happened?

HURWITZ: Yes, towards the end. This all started up in perhaps late August, September, 1994 and I left in October. The president simply lost patience with various segments of the press that were being very critical. There were a number of scandals about issues that had taken place pretty soon after independence. The disappearance of some gold from their reserves. The letting of contracts for gold mining, particularly. So, you had the press being critical and you had the national assembly being extremely critical. The president decided that he liked being president and there would be an election, I believe, in February, 1995, as well as a national assembly election in November, 1994, so the president shut down a newspaper and threatened to shut down another one and to put editors in jail. Then he came out with a referendum as to whether there should be a totally different parliament system. Instead of a one house system that there should be a bicameral legislature and that the election procedure would be such that in effect he would be in control. We tried to talk him out of it. I went to see him constantly during the last couple of weeks. He invited me for a hunting session with him with the head of the KGB or security services and the foreign minister, and I couldn't budge him on it. And, indeed, things have developed that way now. He has lost a little of the sheen of being the only island of democracy, as they like to call themselves. I told them, "Look, you have very little going for you except your reputation. This was the one thing that distinguished Kyrgyzstan from being just another one of these backward little third world countries." I pointed things out to him which he should have understood. For example, he paid a private visit to the United States in May, 1993, in connection with the Andre Sakharov fund. Being himself a physicist he was a close friend of Sakharov's widow; who has been living in the States and he came over to make a speech at the National Academy of Sciences do in connection with Sakharov. He wanted desperately during this visit to see the President. Well, we turned handsprings in the embassy and in the Department... Strobe Talbott was very much in favor of this, too...to try to get him in to see the President. This was during a period of time when Clinton had not much to do with foreign policy, didn't seem to be very interested in foreign policy. So, it worked out that Akayev was received in his office by Vice President Gore and during that visit Clinton came in and they had about 15 or 20 minutes, with lots of photos, of course, so he could say he had been received by the President. Well, he was in seventh heaven. I kept saying to him, "You see, when the president of Uzbekistan came here he only got as high as Under Secretary of State. You have gotten in to see the President. You know why? That is because you are a democratic country. You are bucking the whole trend. You are proving that something can rise out of the ashes of the Soviet Union." And they ran on that and they ran with it. And, as I said before, it meant a lot in terms of getting aid....

Q: The ambassador is Rosa...?

HURWITZ: Well, it was Rosa Otunbayeva, but she is now foreign minister. She was a strong ally of mine in trying to prevent this trend that we later saw. But, she was more or less out of it. She was foreign minister and knew a lot about the United States and lot

about how the world reacts to things, but she was not getting much in the way of attention from her president.

I have not gone recently to the desk. I know the Department was disappointed with what transpired at this point and I don't know where it stands now.

Q: Had the president already made his decision when you left?

HURWITZ: Oh, yes. After my departure at some time they had their referendum and you could certify it as being rather fairly carried out, but on the other hand, votes in that part of the world for various reasons are not the same as in the West. I was terribly disappointed. It was a complete reversal. It happened rather suddenly. We tried very hard. There were messages that flew back and forth. Even Clinton sent messages that were very harsh. But, it didn't turn him around. One element that is relevant here was brought to our attention by the most knowledgeable economic planner in Kyrgyzstan, a guy who really had some experience with the West. He point blank said to us, "Look, you guys aren't going to be around for a long time. Your aid, despite your best intentions, is going to drop off. So, no matter how much you think we are nice guys, you are not going to do a heck of a lot for us. Besides we have the World Bank, the IMF, the Japanese, who pay a lot less attention to these political factors. So, we thank you for your help and advice but it really is not crucial." And he is undoubtedly right. I don't know what our aid level is now but willy nilly it is going to come down or has come down.

The sad part of it is, the Kyrgyz being as tolerant and easy going and basically fair minded, I think, as they are, they could have pulled this off. In other words they could have had a democratic society that would not have...as the Soviets always say and as the Kyrgyz and other people who are about to impose harsh restrictions always claim, you know, we have to do it in the name of stability, we can't have this dissent. You in the West can afford the luxury of dissent, but we can't here. We are new at democracy. Well, they were new at democracy, that's true, but they could have made it work because of their general attitude towards each other and towards working together.

Q: What about the nationalist wing within the body politic or only doing business in the Kyrgyz language and that sort of thing?

HURWITZ: Initially you had a bit of that but they realized it was a non-starter. They were having trouble expressing themselves on many, many subjects in Kyrgyz. This may change over a generation, and maybe it will. As a matter of fact, as of now the ruling class is much more comfortable in Russian and dealing with the issues they have to deal with in Russian.

Q: I notice as I walked down the street I would see Kyrgyz talking to each other and almost invariably it obviously was in Russian.

HURWITZ: Yes. Their initial access to the outside world, and this will continue for a while, has to be in Russian. When the opportunity seemed to make it appropriate and useful I did say, "Hey, look, don't bad mouth Russian as a language or as a culture. You will notice when we bring an interpreter over on any subject here, we don't bring in a Kyrgyz interpreter, there is no such thing. We bring a Russian interpreter. By the same token you have to recognize that." And I think they do.

Initially the nationalist thing happened and probably always does when you have the first blush of independence, but that has fairly well died out, as has any animosity towards the Russians. As I used to tell them, "Look, you are now number one, there is no reason to push anybody's nose in it. Nobody is challenging you. There is no reason to get rid of Russians. You are in control. Use the Russians." And, I think that is what they are doing.

Q: You left there in 1994 and then had about a year back in Washington?

HURWITZ: I had home leave and then started this job in the historian's office on November 1, 1994.

Q: What were you doing in the historian's office?

HURWITZ: Well, I think the idea was that somebody along the line probably felt the professional civil service historians, a lot of them had been working there for years and years, needed a little more of an influence from people who had been out in the field and had actually done a lot of this negotiating or operating in an embassy that the documents they were dealing with covered. So, I was brought in. Mike Joyce was there and Marsh was there, and Jerry Monroe, Harmon Kirby, and a couple of other people.

Q: So, you were working on the Foreign Relations Series?

HURWITZ: Yes. All of us had differing assignments depending on our specialities. My first assignment was looking at the US-Afghanistan Relations volume, which was already in gallery form and to make any comments that I might have thought necessary. My second assignment there was to go through raw files of documents relating to our relations with the Soviet Union from 1964-68 and to choose documents that should be included in the volume of US Foreign Relations. It was very interesting work because I knew all the names signing the cables. Actually it was a period when I had absolutely nothing to do with Soviet affairs, so I didn't find my own name, but everybody else I knew was there.

Q: Well, then you retired when?

HURWITZ: In March, 1996, having reached the exalted age of 65.

Q: Okay, why don't we stop at this point?

HURWITZ: All right.

Q: Great.

End of interview