Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

EDWARD C. McBRIDE

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is February 9, 2001. This is an interview with Edward C. McBride. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. Ed and I served together back in Korea, back in the '70s. Let's start with can you tell me when and where you were born and a little about your family?

MCBRIDE: Certainly. I was born on July 15, 1935 in Savannah, Georgia. I grew up in the same place and lived there until I went away to college when I was about 18. My father was a post office employee. My mother was a housewife. I had one sister, the only sibling, and she is now married and lives in Cape Cod. We grew up in a very warm family environment in Savannah. I went to school there to the Benedictine monks, and then to the University. I went to Belmont-Abbey College in Belmont, North Carolina for two years, and I then went to the University of Georgia where I graduated in 1959.

Q: Okay, we will move back a bit. Your father, had he gone to college or had your mother gone to college?

MCBRIDE: Neither had. I am the first member of my family who did.

Q: I am, too. It was very much a generational thing. What was your father's background; where did his family come from?

MCBRIDE: My father grew up also in Savannah. He was the youngest of 13 children, and he spent all of his life there. In fact an interesting story, my father was the only member of his family among the 13 brothers and sisters who actually was married and produced offspring. My sister and I are the only offspring of that family out of 13, which is quite extraordinary, especially since they were staunch Irish Catholics.

Q: What about your mother?

MCBRIDE: My mother was from nearby, from a little town called Statesboro, Georgia which is about 50 miles north and west of Savannah. She grew up on a farm, and moved to Savannah where she met my father. They were married and she also lived all of her life in Savannah. She did not go to college as I said.

Q: Coming from an Irish family, one hears of Savannah, how does an Irish family fit into the scheme of things?

MCBRIDE: The Irish have an extraordinary history in Savannah. It is not so well known and I am happy to take a minute and digress to tell you. The Irish settlement in Savannah dates from a very early age. In fact there were Irish settlers who came among the earliest colonists in 1733. I think the heyday of the Irish in Savannah occurred probably when my family immigrated there about the 1840's or something like that as a result of the increasing problems with the potato crop in Ireland. Many immigrants including my ancestors came directly to Savannah, which was interesting because in those days it was a bustling and busy port. The trajectory was basically Liverpool directly to Savannah. So my family immigrated from county Mayo, Ireland and went from Ireland to Liverpool and then took the steamer across the Atlantic to Savannah. They arrived there and have been there ever since.

Q: Well what did your father's great grandfather and so forth, what sort of business...

MCBRIDE: I remember my grandfather, not well, but fairly vividly. I was I guess about 12 years old when he died. He was also born in Savannah, and he was born in the 1860s in the middle of the Civil War. I remember stories he told as a child about growing up in Savannah during the war. Well not during the war. He was born in 1862, so he was quite small, but he remembers it all in the way that child would. He then married another Irish immigrant. My Grandmother's name was Maher, also from Ireland. I am not sure whether she was County Mayo as well, but I believe she was. They produced all these children, and he in the meantime had done reasonably well. I don't think he ever made a fortune.

He had a small business; he was a painting contractor. He employed a handful of people. I don't think there was anything more than making a living to support the rather large and growing family. I remember him as a fairly stern and interesting old man. I also remember my grandmother who died some years after my grandfather. Of course as the first of the children to arrive, obviously I was rather spoiled and indulged, and knew and enjoyed that very much. I had a number of doting aunts and uncles who were just what you would think they might be.

Q: To move to sort of a broader world, what was family life like there? Did you sit around the table and discuss things? Did the world intrude on you?

MCBRIDE: Family life was fairly unremarkable. We always had an evening meal together. It was the only time we really saw one another, because I and my sister were off to school. We would usually have a dinner with our family and chat for a bit. I don't remember anything particularly exceptional about it. We were encouraged and rather in a normal sort of way to do homework and to do well and make good grades in school. We had a fairly warm and uneventful family life.

Q: How about your Catholicism? Was this a way of life?

MCBRIDE: It was a way of life. I mean in a sense there was one interesting, how do I say this? My mother was not a Catholic when she married my father. She ultimately became a Catholic when we were school age. So, yes, the Catholic religion has been a very prominent and fairly strong force in life. It seemed very normal and natural. I went to a parochial school, and as I said earlier, I went to the Benedictine monks to high school. The Benedictines had a high school in Savannah which I attended.

Q: Did sisters teach you in elementary school?

MCBRIDE: They did indeed.

Q: One always hears stories.

MCBRIDE: Oh, no, it was perfectly fine. Some were nicer than others, but they were all perfectly dedicated. In fact quite remarkable when you look back on it dealing with, I guess in our class there were about 20-25 kids. But they did a very good job. They instilled a lot of basic love of learning, and I think they deserve high marks for what they did. In fact, thinking back, most of the progression was quite normal. We went from the parochial school, then they, the boys went on to the Benedictine school, and the girls went on to another convent school run by the Sisters of Mercy where my sister went. So it was all quite a well established pattern. My father had done the same thing. So it seemed very normal and reasonable.

Q: What about while you were in school. any particular subjects or things or sports or something that particularly...

MCBRIDE: I was fascinated by history and geography. I think it probably came more in high school than in grammar school. I read a lot; I do remember that, so I guess somewhere along the line sister somebody or other made reading quite appealing. So I did read a great deal. I played sports in a way that everybody in that age does. It was a neither here nor there kind of thing. I mean you did it because that is what everybody did. I am the most unsportive person in the world right now, and never was really interested after high school. I just sort of wasn't interested and still don't have much interest in that basically.

Q: What about did sort of the history of Savannah and the war and all of that? Was that part of the web and whoof of your existence?

MCBRIDE: Absolutely because I was a war baby. I was born in 1935 so I was six years old by the time the war came along, and it was a memory that I have, and it was quite vivid. I mean I remember also following it by glancing at newspapers. My aunts and uncles and father and mother were all swept up in the war effort. My father was not drafted into the army because he had an eye problem. He was a reservist in the Navy reserve I think it was. I remember seeing him in a uniform, but he never went away. My mother, during the war, felt that it was appropriate to support the war effort in the sense that she decided that she no longer needed to stay at home with us because we were in school. She did go off and worked in some factory somewhere. I am trying to remember what it was, but she did it more as a patriotic gesture than anything else. I don't think it was because we needed money particularly. I mean we didn't have a lot of money, but we had enough to get along.

Q Many people went to work because it was a patriotic thing. Was Savannah a navy town?

MCBRIDE: No. Charleston was, which was about 90 miles north of Savannah, and Jacksonville to the south, were big navy towns, but Savannah was not. Savannah did have a military base. It is the nearest city to a huge military base called Fort Stewart. Fort Stewart was a big infantry training place. The military presence was quite vivid and a very big part of my recollection from those times.

Q: What about Savannah when you were going to school and college, Savannah society? One thinks of these stories about the squares and the beautifully proportioned place and all that?

MCBRIDE: Yes, that is also part of my baggage I suppose. We were not a social family. I think more in these days the white Anglo Saxon Protestants were the big movers and shakers. Although there was an Irish kind of society because the Irish had been there for so long and had established themselves. There were some fairly well heeled and well connected Irish families. I do remember that. We were not involved in any of that particularly. I remember as I grew older and I went to high school, I did go to some parties. They were always looking for extra men, so I was lucky enough to be invited to a few of those. I know that because Savannah was a small town in those days, you knew most of the people. You did know all the people who were going off to the deb balls and

things like that, but I mean that's not a part of my background.

Q: What about the race situation?

MCBRIDE: Blissfully unaware of it until much later in life. I mean there were lots of black people around. In fact we did have a woman who came to clean, and my grandparents did as well. This is a presence in my life. I never thought much about it because it was just that one accepted what one encountered. But I remember the people that were associated with us were very much like members of the family. I mean they were well looked after. They were paid, obviously. They were fed when they were there. They got nice presents on birthdays and Christmases. They got a lot of hand-me-downs, a lot of clothing and so on. I think it was probably a fairly benevolent relationship. I am sure it was based on, I don't want to say the superiority, but I mean my parents, and I am sure other people around were very much aware of their place. I remember very well going downtown and seeing things like a separate entrance for black people or fountains which were marked white only or those kind of trappings which are very much a part of my upbringing because that is just the way life was.

Q: What about in high school, you were taught by brothers?

MCBRIDE: Benedictine monks.

Q: Was that a more rigorous education?

MCBRIDE: It was pretty rigorous. I mean it was good, looking back on it. It was also a military school, which was kind of interesting. There was a lot of Mickey Mouse stuff about being little soldiers, but first and foremost you were there because of the small classes and the education, and that was very much a part of the whole ritual. I look back on it with fondness, in fact. We had, I guess by the time I got to high school, the enrollment was about 200. We were all divided into four classes, and assigned to military companies. It is a very pleasant memory. Nothing jumps out at me particularly. I remember the school stuff much more than the military bit. Well I played in the band. I was a member of the band. We did a lot of marching and drilling and stuff like that. We were always the big item, there was always a big parade on St. Patrick's Day, you alluded to the Irish earlier on. It was and is very big. It is remarkable. I recently went back there for the first time in about 35 years to St. Patrick's Day, and it is an amazing thing. The Irish had made a lasting and very profound impression, and St. Patrick's Day was always a big deal. It was a holiday, still is. I mean a holiday for everybody. The city shut down. We had a big parade, and the school that I went to, the Benedictine School, always traditionally led the parade. I was in the band the whole time, but I was the drum major and led the parade which was a great thing to remember. It was great fun.

Q: Studies. By this time you were there in the early ‘50s. Did the sort of outside world, I mean you had the Korean War and the cold war and all of that. Did that intrude much?

MCBRIDE: No, it intruded in the sense that you had cousins or somebody who was older

and actually went away. I did have a couple of cousins who were in Korea. I mean I was in school through all of that. The only thing I remember about the world in a sense was because Savannah was a busy port, the world was always with you somehow. It was easy to walk around, there were a lot of foreigners around because there were all the ships there, and you would see the ships from all over the world in the harbor and people walking up and down the streets, and you would hear all the languages. So it was not surprising in a sense. One bit about the school that was kind of interesting, about the Benedictine school, I think I was the last person to graduate from that school who studied Latin for four years, I mean because the Benedictine monks were very big on that. I don't know why I ended up being the last one. Everybody had to do two. I think I kind of got fascinated because I had a very good teacher and the history part of it was fascinating. There was the drudgery of learning all those declensions and conjugations and things. But I did go on in the end and found it to be very fascinating stuff, and the language and learning of history sort of merged together in a great way. In fact I went on to University and had two more years of it in university, so I did a lot of that because I liked Latin and found it interesting. But I am sad to say I was the last one, and now I am not sure they still teach it at all.

Q: Were you inclined toward the priesthood?

MCBRIDE: I thought about that for awhile, and I did, and I don't think the Latin had a lot to do with that particularly. It was a fancy that came, and I think I spent about a year being serious about it, and actually went away to visit the place where the monks, the Benedictines, came to teach to Savannah, a place up in North Carolina that I mentioned earlier, Belmont Abbey where I went two years to university. I got serious enough about it then, but I didn't pursue it, and I left after two years. I just transferred.

Q: Belmont Abbey, what was it? Was it a training center for priests?

MCBRIDE: There was a monastery. It was rather unique monastery in American Benedictine history at any rate. There weren't that many; there must have been a dozen or so around the country. It was an older one. It was established in the early part of the 19th. century by monks who came down to North Carolina to proselytize I guess really, and to teach, from western Pennsylvania. The thing that made Belmont Abbey unique was that the abbot who ran the monastery was also a bishop of a little two to three county area in western North Carolina. So he had some exalted status. He was the first in line of all the abbots when they got together. That I think is no longer the case. The college is still there, and I gather it is doing quite well. I haven't been back since I left. But the monks from there came down to Savannah, and I went up for the first two years at university to college there, and ultimately as I said, transferred to the University of Georgia.

Q: When you transferred to the University of Georgia, what year would that have been that you moved?

MCBRIDE: Let's see. I finished high school in 1953, and I went straight to Belmont Abbey. I spent the next two years there, so it must have been from '53 to '55. Then I went

the following year I guess, to the University of Georgia. I must have skipped a year somewhere because I graduated. No, I know. I graduated from the University of Georgia in 1959. I worked part-time and went to school at night, so that is why it took an extra year, one more than it would usually normally take. That was as I say, 1959.

Q: Then 1959, what were you majoring in at the University of Georgia?

MCBRIDE: I was an English major, American literature actually.

Q: Did you have any, were you pointing towards anything?

MCBRIDE: Actually I wasn't. I was uncertain about what I wanted to do, and I ended up going into the army. I must have gone into the army, I am very vague about the dates, but somewhere along there. I was drafted into the army. I went into the army and somehow ended up at Fort Holabird in Baltimore where I went to the army intelligence school. Ultimately I was sent to France for two years. So the army did two wonderful things for me, and I am grateful to this day. The army taught me to type, which was quite wonderful, and I have never forgotten the teacher whose name was Miss Klekka, which I thought was a marvelous name for a typist. Then when I went to France, the Army also taught me French, which was a very useful trick to have. That was when you could see the foreign service looming on the horizon.

Q: Where did you take French?

MCBRIDE: I took French in high school and in college, and had sort of passed it because you had to have some sort of language requirement. But I never really came to terms with the fact that there were several million people out in the world actually speaking that language until I got to France and then found it was very useful. The army did on those days allow you to go off and take classes and things which I did, because I felt that if I was there, I might as well learn a little something about the country and enjoy it. And the fastest way to do that I felt was to learn to speak the language. So I got to the stage by then, I mean I had no idea about foreign services scores and ratings and stuff, but I had pretty decent French by the time I left. I spent two years in France.

Q: What type of work were you doing?

MCBRIDE: I was in an office. First of all I went to the headquarters of this organization which was in Orleans. This was before France withdrew from NATO. So we were involved in a lot of security work. I did that by doing investigations of people who I think were being considered for employment in the military at some point. I ultimately was reassigned from the headquarters to, get this, to the Paris Field Office because somebody left. One day somebody just came down the hall and said anybody want to go to Paris? I said, "Gee, I wouldn't mind doing that." I left and went to Paris and had a wonderful time, spent two years in Paris masquerading as a civilian because it was thought that we couldn't very well go and sit down and talk to all of these exalted people being little sergeants or whatever we were. Therefore I was given an allowance to go and find a

place to live and buy some suitable clothing. So I lived very high on the hog, had a lovely little apartment in the center of Paris, and spent two very pleasant years there working and really enjoying life. My office was half a block from the Champs Elysees in the center of Paris, so it was a wonderful way to do your duty.

Q: Obviously with your French and all did you feel that you were beginning to get a feel for this foreign life at all?

MCBRIDE: I think I did at that point. I expect it was probably the first time that I had felt seriously about living overseas and enjoying it enormously. I thought that it might be something I could ultimately parlay into full employment. I hadn't really at this point had any specific career goals or anything, but it certainly was very big on the horizon. In fact when I came back, I actually spent, I guess three or four years working for KLM, the royal Dutch airlines, so I spent a lot of time pursuing the travel, but I was a sales representative I think was the title of the job. I was living in Atlanta at the time and responsible for four or five southeastern states, basically generating business for KLM. I went overseas many times in connection with the work and training programs and things like that. So I traveled quite a bit at that point. But still hadn't thought of a career in public service or anything because I was quite happy doing what I was doing.

Q: During this time did you become married or anything like that?

MCBRIDE: I married not much later. Where are we now, 1960. I got married in 1963, so I have got three or four more years before I actually signed up. I was enjoying life very much in traveling around, meeting a lot of people, going out and dating a lot of people and having a good time. But I didn't get serious until I came back to after being in the service and working for KLM. Then I decided, what was the turning point was I decided I would like to go to graduate school. At that point I had made a fairly clear career decision that I wanted a career in public service, and I wanted a career in public service that had some international dimension to it, and I wanted if possible to keep the language going. But I had not at that point focused exclusively on the foreign service. In fact while that was certainly an option, it was by no means a goal.

Q: CIA, was that...

MCBRIDE: No, I never thought about that. I think perhaps I did think about that at one point because I, when I was living in Paris, I shared an apartment with a friend who actually was recruited and worked for awhile for the CIA. He was so disenchanted and unhappy with it, I think I got a fairly bad impression of it and felt that that was not for me particularly.

Q: While you were in Paris, did you run across people from the embassy?

MCBRIDE: I did in fact, and many of the times my work was tied to the embassy because the intelligence was still exchanged on those days, and we did have a relationship with the CIA and with the other intelligence operations in the military,

because there were several as you know, and we were one. So I did have a fair amount. I had been back and forth to the embassy a fair amount, you know, going to talk to meetings and bringing reports and exchanging documents and things like that.

Q: So we are talking about 1960?

MCBRIDE: Yes, the early ‘60s.

Q: Well, KLM... How did you promote trade?

MCBRIDE: Well what I basically did was work with travel agents to basically encourage them to book on KLM, because they could choose anybody they wanted to obviously. We did a lot with military because there was a lot of people who had come over during the war who were war brides in effect, but still had families abroad. We still had quite a presence in Europe as you know, and there were a lot of people who would rotate back and forth who were married while they were there, so there was a fair amount of business to cultivate. In addition to that we tried to promote our own tour packages which had been put together by the KLM staff. So you would try to develop business and to work with affinity groups. We had a lot of companies in my particular region that were already big established international players. There was a lot of traffic back and forth. It was very competitive, so we went off to try to persuade them to think KLM while they were booking their travel needs.

Q: Well, you decided to go to graduate school.

MCBRIDE: Yes, I was working at KLM, and I decided this was kind of a one way street, and I didn't want to spend the rest of my life handshaking and backslapping basically. I thought I ought to do something about this, so graduate school was on the horizon. I applied to and came to Georgetown in fact.

Q: Why Georgetown?

MCBRIDE: Well, I wanted to be in a big city, and I wanted to be away from the family connections, because I thought it was healthy to make a clean break, because I had gone back to Georgia after I returned from the army. I had a couple of friends who were living here who suggested I might want to come up, and we could share an apartment. In fact the same guy who had the bad CIA experience was by this time living in Washington, and I did come up and we shared an apartment. I went to graduate school, and he was working for some film outfit as I recall. But I went on to graduate school and stayed for, I spent a couple of years I guess, but now the foreign service loomed very large on the horizon. That is what led me there.

Q: You were in graduate from what year to what year?

MCBRIDE: I must have been there from about '62 to '64, something like that. The thing that happened that was pivotal here that gets me to government service was I came up,

and I had saved enough funds to do a year, and I needed to get a job in the summer in order to keep the money coming to pay for the next year of graduate school. I ultimately found a job as a summer intern in this organization that I had never heard of called the United States Information Agency. I was interviewed for a job, and ultimately got it. It was a really interesting job, and I liked it very much. It was in a little office called the exhibits division. What this office did was to provide American presentations for overseas trade fairs. And that is where I started essentially. The office also fulfilled commitments under bilateral cultural agreements and produced the big exchange programs with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. But I was in a very small part of it s called the fine arts division. Our job was to organize art exhibitions that were sent overseas to promote U.S. interests and in many cases to fulfill specific obligations under bilateral agreements. I spent the summer there, and it was a remarkable place to work. There were only I think, three or four people in the office. It was very relaxed, very pleasant. There were two remarkable women who were very dedicated and who were very eager to teach me about the trade. I mean doing these exhibitions, and in the process learning a lot about American art which I didn't know a great deal about to be honest with you. I had been going to museums for a long time, but I didn't particularly focus on any one aspect or another but just wandered through and looked at pictures and things. But I spent the summer working with these two women to put together exhibitions, and I absolutely enjoyed it, and it was a real eye opener. I learned an awful lot. It piqued my curiosity, so I did a lot more than just the job. I mean I started reading a lot about American art, and doing a little research on my own and found it an absolutely fascinating subject. By the time the end of the summer came around, I was really curious about how I could keep this good thing I had going here and try to keep the graduate work going as well. I couldn't quite figure out how to make it work. One day out of the blue, my boss came to me and she said, "Is there any way we could possibly persuade you to stay on." I tried to be as cool as I could under the circumstances. I said, "Well, I don't know. Make me an offer." They were really wonderful about it, and they did make me a very nice offer. They were obliging to the extent that within reason, I could continue to go to classes as long as I did the requisite number of hours. They didn't care if I had to go off one morning for a class or something like that. So they were really very obliging about it. IN the end I found that, sadly the two were not compatible. I mean it took about a year to work this out, and I rationalized leaving graduate school, but I simply said, "My whole purpose in coming here was to find a career in public service with an international dimension that would be a livelihood and here I have found it and I have it." So in a way it would have been nice to persevere and go on to the degree. I simply didn't because I had the objective. I left, and I never looked back.

Q: What were you pursuing at Georgetown?

MCBRIDE: I was pursuing a masters in, I don't know what it was called, a masters in foreign service.

Q: You went to the school of foreign service.

MCBRIDE: I did, and had a very good time there, and really felt it stimulating and very

worthwhile experience. I was sorry in the end not to finish it, but in the end I felt that the career objective by this time was more important. By this time I was getting out there and I might as well do this. It is stimulating; it is what I want to do and it was in a way dumped in my lap almost.

Q: How did it work out? Were you, did you become a civil servant?

MCBRIDE: Yes, I was actually. I was employed first of all as a civil servant, and then I was offered a permanent, I don't know, whatever the basic thing they had to bring you in, a GS-9. I don't remember. Whatever it was, that was commensurate with my experience and background and education and so on. And I spent I guess about two or three years doing that. I enjoyed it enormously. I worked in the same office. They were very good tutors, the two ladies who ran the office, and we got increasingly involved with bigger and more numerous projects. So the office prospered, and we worked very closely with the other people who were doing the exhibitions which were not essentially fine arts, but occasionally ours would be a component of a larger exhibition. So I got to know a little bit about the whole exhibits business which was a useful trick to learn. I spent as I say, two or three very pleasant years there. In the midst of all of this, I met and ultimately married my wife. We were living very happily here. The first thing that made me look at the foreign service was in fact related to the domestic job. At one point I was asked if I would be willing to work on the fine arts component of the Montreal worlds fair. We were going to put a big exhibition in an American, one of those big geodesic domes that Buckminster Fuller designed for this. I was asked if I would be willing to do that. Part of the deal was that I would actually have to move to Montreal to supervise it and to stay there for the duration and to run that part of the exhibition. I thought that sounded pretty good. I had gotten fairly serious with the woman who ultimately became my wife, so we talked it over. We were married by this time, but it was all on the assumption that we would be going to Montreal at some point in the future. We were married in August. My wife is British born, and we were married in England. We then came back, and expected to go fairly soon after that in about September or October to Montreal. In the meantime there was a great crisis in the exhibits division, what I subsequently have come to see as the budget crunch. It often reared its head at very inconvenient times, but it turned out that somebody in the Congress took a big dislike to the plans for this exhibition, and while the design was too far forward and was based on an integral part of the use of this dome, they couldn't wipe it out without spending a lot of money to put something else in its place. But it was really scaled back, and corners cut here and there, and money was very scarce. So as it turns out, the decision was taken to eliminate the position that I was going to encumber in Montreal. So suddenly the whole prospect of going off to Canada evaporated. At this point I was wondering what I was going to do because I had no job in effect because the job that I had been occupying had been eliminated. So I had nowhere to fall back basically. I remember going to the personnel people in USIA and asking what did they have in mind, I mean since I couldn't do this, what else was possible. In the meantime USIA had been having internal problems based on the notoriety of some earlier exhibitions that created a lot of publicity which in the view of many, including a fairly prominent member of Congress who thought we had no business doing exhibitions anyway. Congressman Rooney his name was.

Q: Oh, yes.

MCBRIDE: Congressman Rooney thought we ought to cut all this waste of the taxpayers money out. So his goal was to uproot this festering sore that was called the fine arts exhibition section because in 1964 USIA provided the American Exhibition for the Venice Biennale, which was a big international art exhibition that was probably the most important thing of its kind in the world in those days. In the view of certain people in the Congress and USIA, the exhibition brought notoriety instead of success by winning the first prize. It really put the U.S. on the international art map. The prize went to a remarkable artist by the name of Robert Rauchenberg, and it really launched pop art basically. That success was hard for USIA to deal with, and they were very keen to get rid of this program. The Agency took very serious steps to do that, and ultimately pulled it right out of USIA and persuaded the Smithsonian to take it all. It was transferred lock stock, and barrel to the Smithsonian. All this time I was headed to Montreal, but I could at least, you know in the short term, stay with these folks who were then by this time headed over to the Smithsonian. But I wasn't at all sure that was where I wanted to be because I loved doing the exhibitions, but I was not at all convinced that it was going to be a very good place for me with international ambitions, to be working. So I thought, well, I am not sure that I want to do this, but I wasn't sure what my options were until I had this conversation with the people in USIA's personnel office. So the real decision for me came, however, when we were moving the office physically from 1711 New York Avenue where I was still working in those days, over to the old natural history building which was where the Smithsonian had found space for this office to work. We were up on the top floor of the building. It was a very difficult place to find. I remember going over there to see a wonderful man named Joshua Taylor who was the director of this small operation called the National Museum of American Art or The National Collection of Fine Arts. But anyway he was very helpful and sympathetic and was very pleased to take on the fine arts exhibition component from USIA. I was going back and forth having several conversations with him. One day I remember walking up to his office through this labyrinth of corridors on the top floor of this building under the eaves of the Natural History Building. I got lost, and I found myself walking down a corridor, and I was looking for a doorway. These were corridors that were full of cabinets like these here in your office in a way that were in fact specimen cabinets that were for various things in the Smithsonian. I remember standing next to the door when I finally found it and I looked square into one of these cabinets, and it was labeled miscellaneous bones. I thought I don't want to have anything to do with an office that turns around miscellaneous bones. So my decision was easy to make then. I went back to the USIA personnel office. It was right after the big 1963 march on Washington and all that, so I was very fired up about civil rights and everything. I said I would like to go to Africa because I thought that would be a good place.

Q: It was also the time when Africa was coming into prominence as part of the Kennedy...

MCBRIDE: Right, the whole nine yards. So that is what I wanted to do. So I went up to

the personnel office and said, "I am your man. I am ready to go. I would like to go to Africa, and I would really be delighted to make this move into the foreign service." They were very happy to hear this and said, "Well that is wonderful. We will get back to you in a couple of days." A few days later the guy called me back and said, "Could you come up to see me and we will see if we can work something out here. I have got something to talk to you about." And I went up. He said, "You know, I am very sorry. We don't have anything at all open in Africa right now, but would you mind going to Paris?" I thought, goodness, Paris. I had that very happy earlier incarnation that I described in Paris, and I thought gee, why not. So I went back and talked to my wife, and I said, "I am sorry about Montreal, and I am sorry that it didn't work out, but how would you feel about going to Paris?" She said that she would be delighted to go to Paris and was just as happy as I was. So I went back to this guy, thinking you know, I wasn't even in the foreign service yet, but later on all these people would die to go to a place like that and fight and connive and you know, try to be the right person in the right place at the right time. Again it fell right into my lap. I had no real particular interest n going. The good thing I guess was on paper at least I was still French speaking. So I said, "Sure, I will go to Paris." That was a wonderful piece of serendipity. I went back and told my wife that it was on and that we would be leaving in six weeks. I don't remember, whatever it was. So we packed up our house and moved off to Paris, and it was quite wonderful. My wife, fortunately, was also French speaking, so she had gone to school in France as a young girl and was happy to go back and liked France. So we were really pleased with the prospect of going to France. That is how I joined the foreign service. In order to do this, I had to convert to the foreign service, so I converted. I did a lateral conversion or whatever they called it in those days, and I went off.

Q: You were in Paris from when to when?

MCBRIDE: I was in Paris from '67 to '70. The most interesting to tell you the truth, those dates are easy to remember, is that I was there when France fell apart at the seams in '68. The events of May it was called and it was really an extraordinary time to be in France. I in my army days lived there when the Algerian issue came to a head and they were threatening to drop paratroopers into the Tuilleries Gardens and bomb the Champs Elysees. They were exploding those things in those days which the French called “plastique,” which were these plastic bombs. So I had two very interesting incarnations in Paris, two remarkable times in French history.

Q: When you were in '67 when you went there, how were relations between the United States and France at that point?

MCBRIDE: They were fairly cordial. I mean I don't remember any big issues. DeGaulle was very preoccupied with his “force de frappe,” his nuclear striking force. That caused a lot of upheavals. I think the relations in fact, were a problem but later after the demise of DeGaulle when he resigned and retired. The other issue then on the horizon which was a very painful part of our relationship was of course, Vietnam. Of course I was there also when the talks began, so we were very much involved in all of this, and we saw our relations deteriorate fairly rapidly. It was ironic because the French who had done all of

this before, and had created many problems in southeast Asia. They were very anti U.S. in terms of our approach to dealing with Vietnam and indeed southeast Asia, so it was a very prickly time to be there.

Q: What was your job?

MCBRIDE: The job that I went to fill was assistant cultural attaché, and it turned out that when I got there, there wasn't a job. I mean it was one of these get there yesterday, and when you get there, there was no job. That didn't bother me particularly because I thought I could find something to do. I had a great boss, wonderful guy. I have never forgotten him. He died not too long ago, Lee Brady. He was a wonderful man, and very cultured and a very fine officer. He lived a lot of his life in France, and knew and loved France very well. So he was the public affairs officer in those days. I went to see him after I had been there for awhile just doing odd jobs and kind of learning how an embassy worked, because I had never been working in an embassy before. So one day I just went up and said, "You know, why don't I work on music and art. How would that be?" I will just sort of focus on the visual arts and the performing arts, because that was good having the previous experience working in the exhibitions office in the fine arts. He thought that was a great idea and said get to it. So I made myself a wonderful little job that helped promote the visual and performing arts in France. We did some exhibitions. We brought, in those days there was a fair amount of money to support those things through the office of cultural presentations, and we brought performing arts groups. We did wonderful tours of American artists who lived in France. We organized shows which traveled around the country We had about five or six consulates in those days, so we would do shows in museums in Marseilles or Lyon, Strasbourg, all over France. It was a wonderful opportunity to travel around France which was great fun for me and to use the arts as a means of communicating to the French. I mean they were very looking down their nose asking what do you know about art; what do you know about culture indeed. But in fact after 1964 it was a little bit more difficult for them to say that, so we did make some interesting points with the arts. And they were very particularly interested in the contemporary, so we did some wonderful exhibitions. The main thing for me that was wonderful out of all of this is of course I met all the creative people in that society. In any society, the creative people are the cutting edge of society, so it was wonderful to meet artists and film makers and impresarios and performers. It was a great experience and a wonderful way to learn. It made a very good basis on which ultimately build a career. So, after the Paris experience, I worked on the cultural side of USIA.

Q: What about, Probably more than any other country France emphasizes its culture, and you know, has tended to look down the nose at American culture because, you know I mean, you are always feeling somewhat challenged or just brought up to despise to or something. How did you find dealing with sort of the cultural leaders and intelligentsia and intellectuals whatever you want to call it, who were in the arts field. Was this a problem?

MCBRIDE: It certainly was occasionally a problem. It was not a problem that one dealt with day in and day out however. It was episodic. We were lucky in those days that there

was a program pioneered by the State Department, I guess it was USIA actually, that would occasionally tap a very distinguished American, either an academic or cultural personality to come play the role of cultural attaché deal with the very issue that you raised. It was very difficult to talk to people who had very distinguished pedigrees in whatever their particular interest. The French did admit and acknowledge that they were very pleased to have the distinguished people who were there. I served under I think two or three. I am trying to remember. When I went to Paris for the first time, the cultural attaché was a very distinguished sociologist named Lawrence Wiley who was a professor of sociology at Harvard and who had written two seminal books on French sociology. He lived in a little community down in southern France somewhere and spent a year and actually wrote remarkably insightful stuff about the French character and the French personality. So he was a distinguished man by any standard, including the French academic world which admired him. So as the cultural attaché he was able to disabuse many people of the issues you raised. I think by presenting some of the exhibitions that we did and bringing some of the performing arts groups that we did, it was relatively easy to disabuse the French of the notion that we were a people without culture because whether you like to admit it or not, I mean the New York Philharmonic is a pretty good orchestra and they did come to Paris and play very successfully. These exhibitions that were presented would draw record breaking crowds in museums in France. So it tended to be a problem occasionally when you had people who were not quite so well informed, but by and large it was not a big deal. But there was a certain intellectual arrogance about it that did permeate some of the relationships, but I never found it difficult or frustrating or anything, because you could always make the point by asking how could we have done this if we had no culture. Could we have produced a painter like deKoonig or like Rauchenberg as a matter of fact, or Jackson Pollock whom they admired enormously.

Q: How did the pop art go in France? I mean did they embrace it? I mean this was during a period of...

MCBRIDE: Yes, it was a very difficult period because we all knew French invented culture. So here you come as an upstart from the other side of the Atlantic, and bring to the table, actually what was sort of the hottest movement in the art world, whether the French like to admit it or not. But the thing that was interesting was that it had an instant appeal to young people. The young people absolutely identified with it and thronged to the exhibitions. The French cultural establishment after awhile, could simply no longer ignore it, and they had to come to terms with it. And they did that. To their credit. I think we now have very strong cultural ties with France. But the French ultimately looked at people like Andy Warhol and Oldenberg with his great big hamburgers and people like Rosenquist, and they liked them a lot, and they embraced them. Many of them were also Francophile, the artists themselves and loved to come to France. So they had a good relationship, and I think we basked in a lot of the reflected glory.

Q: On the music side, by any chance did you get the, USIA was sponsoring sometime in that period there, your hometown opera, not quite hometown, Porgy and Bess.

MCBRIDE: I think Porgy and Bess was one of the highlights of the three years I spent in

France. We did it with the help of a wonderful man who actually was working as a contract employee for the embassy for part-time named Doda Conrad, who knew everybody in the music world. He was a quite remarkable man. We, with his help and with a lot of coercing of funds from here, there, and everywhere, persuaded the French government to mount a production of Porgy and Bess. I think I saw Porgy and Bess in France 47 times. I went on a tour with it. We went to 12 cities in France. We took an all-American cast, including the one who created the role of Bess. She was living in Sweden at the time, and she was in the production. We hired a wonderful American black guy who was living also in Paris in those days. He trained the chorus for all these performances, and he traveled around ahead of the company. The chorus all sang in English which was quite interesting for the French. We did I think something like 60 performances of Porgy and Bess spread over about a year. It went to almost every major French provincial city. It came to Paris and played at the Opera Comique for about a week. It was a huge success.

Q: Talking about culture, did you find yourself up against the foreign service culture with State Department foreign service and USIA foreign service and all?

MCBRIDE: Absolutely, and in fact, there was not a very good understanding between the traditional foreign service officer and the folks in USIA about what the role of either. And certainly on the cultural side it was a very difficult relationship. The Department I think, felt that diplomacy had nothing to do with cultural programs and USIA, and that what you did was to write nice reports and go out and interview political leaders and come back and do your cables back to Washington. To this day I think the Department still has a hard time dealing with this issue. It is getting better, and I think in the last year since the integration of USIA into the Department, I don't think the problem has gone away. But I sense that the climate is better, and I have talked to some people who are still working there. I think Evelyn Lieberman who is the first in fact leader of USIA who became the Undersecretary for Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy, certainly understood the role and the power of the cultural diplomacy. Certainly Secretary Albright spoke out on many occasions that she did. In fact one of the last things she did before leaving office was to work with the Department and the White House to convoke a White House meeting on cultural diplomacy. So I think things are indeed getting better.

Q: Well I would have thought, I mean I can understand in some countries where you might say the traditional foreign service would say well this is all very nice, but it doesn't mean much. But in France where you are dealing with a group of people who are the poobahs of foreign policy and everything else, intellectuals, they can be gotten by good wine, good food, and good art.

MCBRIDE: There is absolutely no question about that. One of the ways, I was involved in an event that proved it in spades was we were trying to work out how to deal with a Presidential visit in Paris while I was there. President Nixon was coming to France, and I was asked if I could do some sort of cultural event that would provide the sort of after dinner entertainment at the state dinner that the Ambassador was going to give. It was going to be given at the ambassador's residence hosted by the President following the

dinner at the Elysee Palace that DeGaulle gave Nixon. I took on this assignment and had a lot of fun with it as a matter of fact. It was one of the great things about being in France. I got on the phone and called somebody I knew, and ultimately got together a musical evening that involved Yehudi Menuhin, the violinist, who came to play for the dinner with his sister, Hepzibah who was a very distinguished pianist herself. We had an evening that I don't think anybody who was there will ever forget, because the front row was DeGaulle and Madame DeGaulle and President Nixon and Mrs. Nixon all seated on this little sofa in this very elegant little salon in the residence. Menuhin played beautifully, an incredible concert. At the end of the concert DeGaulle leapt from his chair quite literally, went up the two or three feet to Menuhin and absolutely almost smothered him with his embrace. Then he turned to the audience and gave this extraordinary speech about how as a young officer fighting for the free French from London, he had called on this young prodigy violinist that somebody told him about. His name was Yehudi Menuhin, and he gave a concert for the Free French, and they raised a lot of money. DeGaulle then looks at Menuhin again, gives him another bear hug and says, "And I have never forgotten that." So I think culture made its rather strong statement in that way. It was a great evening and everybody loved it.

Q: What about your contacts, your personal contacts with the French? How did you find this worked, because sometimes this is a difficult society.

MCBRIDE: They are difficult, but on the other hand if you are interested and want to make something of it, you can do it. It is discouraging sometimes because the French can be very arrogant and be very nasty, but then so can we. On the other hand because both my wife and I were French speaking it was a little bit easier to open doors. We did have a number of friends through other contacts so that in a sense we didn't have to depend on our embassy contacts exclusively for our social life. So we were lucky in that sense, and we knew a lot of people, and we got some nice introductions. I keep up with some French friends to this day, and I think we would have nothing but kind words to say about that part of our time there.

Q: What were you all doing and what were you personally seeing during what was I guess May, '68 and before. It was sort of the university student revolt.

MCBRIDE: Well it is interesting. It began, the official beginning now chronicled by historians was a performance of an American dance company in the Odeon theater. The students actually came in at the end of the performance and occupied the Odeon. They kicked out the Paul Taylor Dance Company which was performing there under one of our cultural programs. It was a remarkable evening. We were in the audience, and after it was all over, Paul Taylor who had fallen and broken his foot, and he was on crutches. Anyway we were sitting there; the evening had ended. The students had now occupied it and raised the black flag of anarchy above the theater. Hundreds of them were there, and they were sort of going at the American and the director of the theater He was a remarkable French actor by the name of Jean Louis Barrault, who was himself a left-wing intellectual. He was therefore disposed to listen to what the students had to say. So we sat there until two o'clock in the morning listening to this incredible dialogue between the

students and this distinguished grey head French cultural icon who was just sitting there listening to them.

Q: What attracted them to this...

MCBRIDE: It wasn't that. I think they wanted to draw attention to themselves. The Odeon Theater is in the heart of the Latin Quarter as perhaps you know, and that is where the university is, and that was therefore their home turf so to speak. They wanted something that was obviously going to generate a lot of attention and publicity. The fact that it was a foreign company, that it was an international festival, and the American company was there performing the context of something called the Festival of Nations which was an international festival. So the students were wise enough to know they would get a lot of publicity if they did something like this. They needed to do something spectacular, and occupying a theater like the Odeon was really quite a bold gesture. It generated exactly what they thought it was going to do. It was on the front page of all the newspapers. The television was there. They stayed in the place for about two or three weeks before they finally left. So they made the point. I think that it was only an accident that it happened to be an American company that particular day.

Q: So it wasn't anti American.

MCBRIDE: No, no, not at all. They were just fed up with the terrible conditions that they were forced to put up with in overcrowded classrooms, and the terrible attitudes of the French administration. You know a rather fierce exam schedule, all sorts of things that basically related to their education and how difficult it was, the competitiveness of it all really eliminated a lot of very bright people. They just thought that was enough. You may recall, it is an interesting historical footnote there. DeGaulle was not in France when this happened. DeGaulle was on a state visit to Romania as it turned out. So the media got an interview with DeGaulle in Bucharest and said, "Are you going to cancel your trip and come back?" He said, "Certainly not. This is nothing but a little," and he used a wonderful colloquial French word. He said, "This is nothing but a little student “chienlit.” “Chienlit," is the word he used. That was a rather vulgar expression for someone like DeGaulle to use. It literally means you are going to mess your own bed, foul your own bed. So he thought that was nothing to worry about, and he didn't actually cut short his trip, well until the next day. Then he saw that France was literally falling apart at the seams and he did come back. The rest is history. But that is just an interesting coincidence that this American company was performing in the Odeon when all this happened.

Q: Well did you find as this was going on, you being particularly having, well, let me ask you about ties to the students and faculty. Was this part of your beat?

MCBRIDE: It was indeed, and it is nice now to be able to admit it a little bit more. It was a neglected part of the beat. It was neglected because none of us in the embassy really had been doing our work on that. We suddenly find in the midst of all of this the ambassador got very interested.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

MCBRIDE: The ambassador was Sargent Shriver. Shriver was quite a character himself and a wonderful guy. He is somebody else I still keep up with. He said that it was appalling that nobody in the embassy really knew the guy who was at the head of all this. He was the hell raiser called Daniel Cone Bendit. Danny the Red was his nickname.

Q: He is now in the European parliament.

MCBRIDE: Yes. Anyway, The Ambassador said, "Who knows this guy?" We were at a staff meeting. Nobody knew him. So we were quickly galvanized into something that only Americans would think of doing; we formed a youth committee. Everybody who was youthful was dragged into this service. We all were given our marching orders to go out and cultivate as many of these people as we could. We really were a little self conscious in our effort. I had a colleague at that time, a guy named Jim Rentschler who ran what was the American Cultural Center in the Rue de Dragon in Paris in the heart of the Latin Quarter. So Jim Rentschler and I who were a little older than most of them, joked that we were the only people who had to lie about our age to get on the youth committee.

Q: What did you do?

MCBRIDE: We did go out and cultivate them, and they were very interested, because they were very pleased that somebody would take them seriously, that we were talking to them. They saw a good soapbox, and they used it. I mean we were used, and they were used. It was mutually beneficial. We were at least able to keep tabs on what was going on.

Q: Did you find looking at it that you were, I mean the embassy by making this move and all was a little better placed than say maybe the British or the Germans or something?

MCBRIDE: Oh there is no doubt we were. I mean I think we were certainly better placed than any of our European colleagues. I don't remember it well enough to know how well involved other embassies were, but certainly we were considered to be the people out front. I think it is an interesting testimonial to our non-career ambassador who saw that this was a big void and that we really ought to be ashamed not to know who the players were and where they were coming from. So I think Shriver deserves a lot of credit for what was then considered a fairly unorthodox approach to diplomacy and why were we worried about the students. Well we damn well should have been worried about them.

Q: Let's say prior to the '68 student business, by the time you got there, NATO had left. It was no longer in France and moved. DeGaulle had. What was the feeling you were picking up about DeGaulle from the embassy> Was it split or did they say that son-of-a bitch or...

MCBRIDE: You know I have absolutely no recollection. I know everybody was fascinated by his movements. As you know he ultimately retreated to the west coast of Ireland and sort of gazed out into the Atlantic for a long time. Then he came back and moved down to Colombley-les deux Eglises and kind of lived out his life there basically. But I must say that I just don't remember to be honest with you, and I am sorry that...

Q: Well, I am talking about the time he was in power. I mean was there...

MCBRIDE: Oh, he was the big voice of anti Americanism of course. I think a lot of people found his pronouncements to be annoying, often wrong. And yet he was clearly in charge. I mean the French loved him because he was a big father figure that they could look up to and he made France relevant in a way that it hadn't been for a long time. So I think he did in fact have a lot of popular support, but on the other hand particularly after the events of 1968, it turned out that the French suddenly looked up and thought God, you know this guy is ancient history. This is looking backwards, not looking forwards. By this time France was overwhelmingly youthful. There were far more young people now in France than the older generation. I think the older generation which was still more vocal and articulate in a way, but it was gradually being displaced by younger people who saw a different France basically they saw France's interests certainly in a very different way than DeGaulle did and wanted to promote change and did so. But I think that is what the events of 1968 were all about basically.

Q: Well how did you find, prior to '68 events dealing with the French bureaucracy, because you did have a president who was anti American essentially. Did that set the tone or were you getting people saying oh well that's the president, let's get on with the business?

MCBRIDE: Oh I think we kind of got on with it. Occasionally there would be some irritant. They would get some instruction to do this, that, or the other thing. I don't know. But we had a huge education exchange program with France in those days. In addition to the cultural program we had an enormous Fulbright program. We had a lot of sympathy in the academic community because the U.S. was still regarded as a great place to go to graduate school, and certainly the French were no exception to that. The French academic establishment particularly, the ministry of education, were financial partners as well with us. They were putting a fair amount of money into all of this. So I think there was a line drawn between the official pronouncement and what actually happened because the French saw very clearly that their own self interests were at stake here. It was stupid to cut off your nose to spite their face and send somebody, you know a university somewhere in Romania when they wanted to go to MIT. That didn't make any sense at all.

Q: Did you get involved in the film side of things?

MCBRIDE: Not too much because we couldn't do everything, and I think it was a conscious decision. There were a lot of people who felt that the French cinema was at that point at its heyday. I mean those were the great days of French cinema. I don't think

we really did an awful lot there. I can't think of a single film program that we actually got involved with.

Q: How about music? Did you get involved much in the way of youthful groups, jazz and that sort of thing?

MCBRIDE: Absolutely. We had a the cultural center in the Rue du Dragon and we had monthly concerts there, frequently with American jazz artists. Or we would do a mixed group of Americans and French people, French musicians. So music was a big force in the program and obviously a very popular one. People loved to come; the concerts were all full. We would also support visits if we could by traveling American artists whether we had any money in their tours or not. For example, if there were some big name conductor, I would usually try to get the ambassador to go to the concert if he would. And the Shrivers were very good about this I must say. They would usually give a dinner or lunch or something for Leonard Bernstein or whoever had come to conduct the French National Orchestra. We gave a wonderful dinner I remember one evening for Leyontine Price who came to sing Aida at the opera in Paris. So we did a lot with both popular music and classical music.

Q: How did Vietnam play? Things were beginning to pick up by sixty, toward the end of the time you were there.

MCBRIDE: Yes, the negotiations with the North Vietnamese began about the time of the student demonstrations. I got involved in it when the breakthrough came, when France offered to host the peace discussion, and the delegations came and it went on for years as you know. By that time I was nearing the end of my time there, so although I was there when it got started, but I wasn't there for very much of it. I mean I moved on at that point.

Q: Well '69, where did you go?

MCBRIDE: I went to Dakar. I went to west Africa.

Q: So it was Senegal.

MCBRIDE: Senegal. I went to be cultural attaché at the embassy in Dakar. I had been assistant in Paris. It was a great opportunity to move into the number one job instead of being an assistant, to be the cultural attaché. Also I could keep the French language current and I was very happy about that. In fact I didn't mind going to Africa at all. As I said at the beginning, I wanted to go to Africa first of all, so finally now I did get to do that. It was perhaps not the best thing at the time, because by this time we had two small children, both born in Paris, daughters. When we left to go to Dakar, two kids under two. One in fact was three weeks old when we went to Dakar. And Dakar was not an agreeable place to be with children of that age because it not a healthful post.

Q: Fever close.

MCBRIDE: Terrible in terms of the physical hardships. It was really bad. We had no embassy nurse, no embassy doctor or any of that stuff. We had a terrible health record. In fact I think three people died at the embassy in Dakar in the first six months I was there from matters related to health issues at the post. So it was not a happy time in a sense, but it was a remarkable transition. I remember the night before I arrived there taking my wife out to dinner. I thought we ought to do something really nice as it would be a long time before we do this again. So we went out to Maxim's to dinner the night before I hopped on a flight. My wife and children would follow a couple of weeks later. So when I stepped off the airplane in Dakar the next day and thought My God, how remarkable. Now here I am in the middle of Africa and last night wining and dining in Paris. But Dakar was in many ways professionally a great post. I did two things there that were...

Q: You were there by the way from '70 to...

MCBRIDE: I was there for three years.

Q: '73.

MCBRIDE: Yes, and we can go through that very quickly in a sense because I only did two things that are worth talking about. Historically the cultural attaché had had a really interesting job, and that was to teach the President of the republic, Leopold Senghor, English. So every other Monday I would go tooling off to the palace. On alternate Mondays my distinguished colleague from the British Council would go. So Senghor balanced it all very well. But he was a great person, and a remarkable man and rather a good student in a sense because he took it all very seriously. He was himself a frustrated scholar in many ways, although...

Q: He was a poet wasn't he?

MCBRIDE: Yes, a great poet and a man of great humanity and culture. But by the time I came along his English was pretty good. I think I was maybe the third guy to do this. At any rate, he was far more interested really in the American part of the learning experience than the British. I read T.S. Eliot with him. T.S. Eliot is a tough row to hoe. I remember being in graduate school reading T.S. Eliot and thinking this is good stuff but it is hard work. He loved it, and he did it very well, and he did it with a lot of enthusiasm. So one of the great things that justified my existence for the three years was this first hand encounter one on one with the president of the republic. That was a very positive part of it all. He is a wonderful man. I liked him a lot. In fact he is now old and senile, but until a couple of years ago I got Christmas cards from him every year. The other thing I did was a spin-off from the events of 1968 in Paris. France was still a formidable force in West Africa particularly in Dakar because you know they administered the whole west African empire in the good old days from Dakar. So Dakar was established. The University of Dakar was the most important French educational institution in Africa. One of the things that I did was to teach a course in American studies at the University of Dakar. That was a great way to keep your pulse on the student public. It was a wonderful experience, and I enjoyed it enormously. It was a wonderful experience and I enjoyed it ver much. It was a

great job that involved great deal of reporting about the student unrest and so on. Much of what had happened in France ultimately found its way down to Africa. There were several upheavals even while I was there. In fact I physically couldn't go to the university for a couple of weeks. The students did go on a rampage, and the government closed down the university. But it, was great. The Embassy political officer and I became good friends and we did lot of reporting, joint reporting, on the student unrest and the situation in the universities. That reporting was obviously a very important part of the job at the time because the student upheavals in Europe were being felt all over the place, especially in Francophone Africa In Dakar it was curious because we wanted to see how far the government would let things go without intervening. They were very good I must say. They gave them enough rope to hang themselves in the end. They did intervene. They did close the universities. A lot of people were disciplined, but they opened again and it all went on. The government made some very important changes, based on legitimate complaints and gripes of the students. So I think it was all fairly positively handled by the Senegalese government. So those were the two things that I thought were the highlights of my time in Dakar.

Q: Well while you were there, how did you see Senegal as far as American relations go during this '70-'73 period?

MCBRIDE: Oh, I think they were very positive. They were good, and, in fact, Senegal was always one of the places that would be held up as an example of how good our relations were with Africa. It was a stable democracy. It was a country that had gone through a lot of painful change. Not easy, it had been difficult, but they managed to strike the right kind of balance. I think we had a very good relationship with the Senegalese on many different levels. The trouble was it was a one crop economy. If the peanut crop went bad, the country collapsed. Peanuts were not making a lot of money on the international market. So the Senegalese were trying to develop tourism. We were trying to help them. A lot of hotels were built and a lot of infrastructure was put in place with our help. We had big exchange programs through the international business program. We did a lot of help stuff with our AID mission there. We had a big AID mission. So I think we had a very good relationship with Senegal, and it was kind of an example for others. But Senegal was not an important country in terms of Africa. In our relationship Nigeria or South Africa, a lot of places were far more important than Senegal.

Q: Well now, did you run into any problems with the French because particularly you are talking about culture or something, the French get very sensitive in their former colonial empire.

MCBRIDE: Actually I am going to end the Senegal segment with one story that does this in a very humorous way. When I was asked to teach at the University of Dakar, I readily said yes. I asked the ambassador and he said, "Sure, go do it." I then went to the University and was told that I had to be paid. There was no way that I could do this job without being compensated. I said, "You know, I can't take any money. I am employed by the U.S. government. There is a conflict here. I am not allowed to do that." They said, "But if we can't figure out some way to do this, you will not be able to teach." So I went

back and worked out this deal with the Peace Corps. I said, "I will take this money, but I will give it to you to do good works for the Peace Corps, and you can buy books or do whatever." My salary will go to the Peace Corps. Everybody thought that was okay. Here again I learned that the role of the French was so pervasive, but you didn't know that until you scratched the surface. Every time I got paid, I went to the French embassy, and I was paid by the French government because the French government actually underwrote the cost of the University of Dakar in a major way. I was on the payroll of the French government.

Q: Did you run across people anywhere within the French apparatus who were concerned about what you were doing, I mean American culture penetrating?

MCBRIDE: If that were the case, I was unaware of it, and I had a very warm and very good relationship. There were a lot of French expats there. The French community in Dakar in those days was almost 100,000 so it was huge. There were a lot of French people at the university, and there were a lot of people who came down under the French aid program to teach at the university, so I knew a lot of French people. They were colleagues at the university, and we had a wonderfully good relationship, and there never was any problem whatsoever.

Q: How did the Peace Corps work?

MCBRIDE: Terrific. I think they just didn't have enough to do what they wanted to do. They also were involved in this program that was self help, and they were setting up co-ops and getting women to do tie dye things and sell their wares in the markets to the tourists. They were digging wells out in the villages and basic hygiene. They were doing wonderful stuff there. It wasn't a very large program, but it certainly was a very effective one.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

MCBRIDE: The ambassador was a wonderful career guy named Ed Clark who died about ten years ago. In fact we still keep up with his widow. She is back here in Washington now. His son who was also a young kid while we were there is Ted Clark who you may hear on National Public Radio. He reports for National Public Radio. (End of tape)

Q: We just finished the last tape where you left Dakar in 1973. Where did you go after that?
MCBRIDE: I went to language training here at FSI. I leaned Serbo-Croatian, and I went to Belgrade.

Q: All right. We will pick it up at that point.

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Today is April 5, 2001. Now we are talking about you started Serbo-Croatian, which is an eleven month course?

MCBRIDE: It was a long course. It was almost a year. I did a year at FSI.

Q: What year was that? I mean was it you started probably two...

MCBRIDE: It was in the '60s. I can look in my papers here and see if I can locate language training.

Q: Okay. You took '73-'74.

MCBRIDE: Right.

Q: For language training. Who were your teachers?

MCBRIDE: A wonderful man by the name of Jankovich, who died a couple of years ago, but who was also the brother-in-law of perhaps the most celebrated Serbo-Croat teacher, a man named Popovich.

Q: Dragutin Popovich.

MCBRIDE: A wonderful man. Sort of difficult at first, but extraordinarily kind and generous. He was also the private tutor of my wife. We lived very near them which made it very convenient. I studied with the brother-in-law who had emigrated somewhat later than Popovich. But they both came over in the early days, I guess, of the communist regime in Yugoslavia in the pre Tito, well maybe it was Tito, after the war. But they settled here and became very involved in the Serbian community. They proved in the end to be very good friends as well as very helpful teachers. We began with Jankovich, I think, in those days we had only one teacher, but at the end we did get a couple of part-time teachers. The names of both of them elude me now, but at any rate, one of them was a woman who is also a Serb, and the other one was a Serbian Orthodox priest, who did a little teaching on the side. I would like to make one little anecdote about Popovich which I think is kind of humorous. He really put the fear of God into my wife the first two weeks she was his student. When she was drilling with these totally impossible Serbian verbs, some peculiar quality of the verb. I don't remember. But at any rate, any time my wife would make a mistake, Popovich would grab a pencil, and he would snap the pencil. My wife was thoroughly intimidated by this. But she in the end, got used to it an found him to be quite a charming man, and learned Serbo-Croat very well. I think they did a very good job in teaching. They also did a very good job of bringing you sort of culturally gently into the incredible world that was the Balkans. We learned a lot about the Yugoslav life, culture in general, which proved to be invaluable by the time we got there.

Q: Of course you learned that the center of the universe was Shabac.

MCBRIDE: Shabac, exactly. You were a part of that. But it was a wonderful experience and a way to for me. I had long thought that my career interests were going to be served by spending time in eastern Europe. This was the first opportunity to do that, and so I was really quite excited and buoyed by the experience of going to that part of the world. I couldn't have had a better introduction than the Serbo-Croatian staff at FSI.

Q: I must say that I was with the class of Larry Eagleburger and David Anderson, and we had Popovich. At some point we rebelled because they wouldn't mix. We were told Jankovich would give a little different perspective. But looking back on it, Popovich was a hard line Serb and gave you a feeling for Serbia that holds up today in the year 2001.

MCBRIDE: It certainly does. I think in fact that Jankovich and perhaps the rest of the family were a wonderful sort of, I won't say balance because there was not really a lot of balance there, but the extreme position represented by Popovich was somewhat mellowed by Yankovich and his very charming and very soft spoken wife. But there was a Popovic sister who was very rabid as well, but there were two daughters who were very enlightened in their views in the sense that they were very realistic. They were obviously very pro Serb, but they were also able to see that there were some imperfections in the Serbian races, perhaps something that escaped the attention of Popovich.

Q: Anyway, so where did you go, Belgrade?

MCBRIDE: I went to Belgrade, yes.

Q: And you were there from when to when?

MCBRIDE: I was in Belgrade for four years and a bit. I was there from '74 to '78, and so I saw a lot of the changes that were quite dramatic. Unfortunately not the demise of Tito, because that occurred after we left. But it was a wonderful time to be there because we were still in a way enchanted by the independent position that the Yugoslav government took with respect to the Soviet Union, and their worker self management concept which seemed to be all the rage and sort of seduced everybody who thought that this was a different path. Indeed it was to some extent, but it was a very exciting time to be there. I was the cultural attaché at the embassy again. We had a lot of activities and a lot of programs. Many of them were overfunded if I can say that. I think mainly because we were trying to lavish attention and court the Belgrade government. These programs were quite effective and helpful in doing that. So it was a great time to be in Yugoslavia, and with country wide responsibilities, I traveled from one end of the country to the other. In those days we had several American cultural centers in Yugoslavia. In addition to Belgrade, we had one in Novi Sad, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Sarajevo and Pristina. We also had one in Skopje. But that was quite an elaborate presence for those days.

Q: Let's talk about what you did and what was sort of the work.

MCBRIDE: Yes, the mainstay of the program in Yugoslavia from the cultural perspective was supporting the centers where we did active American programs. It

involved speakers; it involved musical, cultural events, films. Each of the centers had a very good library. We promoted American studies through uses of the center. We had a very active, in fact in those days, the largest Fulbright program in eastern Europe. We also had the only binational commission in Eastern Europe, which was quite a feather in the cap of the Yugoslavs, again reflecting its independence. But we did manage with the Fulbright program to have the financial participation of the Yugoslav government. Sometimes it was difficult, but by an large, they were supportive to the extent of, I don't remember the figures exactly, but they put a couple of hundred thousand dollars a year into a program that was pushing a million dollars in those days. And because we had a binational commission, in addition to the government representatives to the ministry of education, we had other voices represented. From the arts community, I remember we had some very good people. We had a couple of writers. It was in fact more difficult to find Americans to serve on the committee who were not official Americans. But we did manage, and we had a pretty good selection. So the Fulbright program was important. The other program that warrants a little comment here was the so-called cultural presentations program that the State Department had been running for quite some time, to bring American visual and performing arts events to posts around the world. I think we were perhaps the last highly visible vestige of that program which, although it didn't go under, but it certainly went into a decline after that. But the performing arts in particular were very well represented in programs in Yugoslavia. That was because we had two big festivals there that had traditionally had important American representation. One was the Dubrovnik Summer festival which was a great cultural event on the Adriatic and brought performers from many countries. We had very heavy representation, primarily dance and music. We had the New York City Ballet was there. The Paul Taylor Dance Company was there. The Los Angeles Philharmonic was there. Merce Cunningham was there. I mean there were very important American cultural events in all of Yugoslavia, but particularly in Dubrovnik. We also supported a theater festival in Belgrade called the Belgrade International Theater Festival. We brought many prominent theater companies. The Actor’s Theater of Louisville was there. The Yale Rep was there. We did quite a bit in that field. It was interesting because again the Yugoslav government or the concert agencies, which were quasi governmental, were financial participants as well in most of these ventures, so we were able to do quite a bit. But with the two events that I have mentioned, and a strong and rather continuous flow of solo artists who came either to perform in concert, a pianist and violinist what have you, or as soloists with some of the local orchestras. The Zagreb Philharmonic was a very good orchestra, as was the Slovenian Philharmonic. Both at least once or twice a year in their seasons would have an American either as a soloist or a conductor or something like that. So it was quite an active time. That programmatically was what the cultural section was heavily involved with. Again as I say, because these programs were countrywide, I was on the road a lot and traveled all over Yugoslavia. I found it a very stimulating job. We met a lot of Yugoslavs and worked with different people in the arts, in theater, in music, and particularly in education.

Q: How did you find the artistic community, both theater and music, particularly theater and writing because as far as their relationship to the government? You know I am thinking, here is a communist society.

MCBRIDE: Sure. It had its good days and its bad days. A lot of it really depended on the current state of international relations. If there was a problem going in the bilateral relationship, we would usually get a very frosty reception, getting family member nominations for candidates for Fulbright programs or something. On the other hand, the artists asserted, and usually got away with, a fair degree of independence. But if they could, they ducked most of the hot political issues. But occasionally there would be times where we would find ourselves in an embarrassing situation because of one event or another. But more often than not, the obstacles came from very practical things. It was just like negotiating any other deal. I remember when we were negotiating to bring the Los Angeles Philharmonic to Yugoslavia, which we ultimately did, and they played in three cities and had a wonderful success. But the Yugoslav concert manager, who was involved in this, was negotiating on a lot of other deals which he simply didn't have the financial backing to pull off. We would find ourselves at the end pulling rabbits out of the hat, putting more money in projects to salvage what we knew was worth doing. But in a way it was gentle blackmail looking back on it, because I am sure the guy knew very well that he was in no position to deliver what he had agreed to provide. One example: the orchestra was coming to us from Rome, and he had agreed to provide an airplane to transport the orchestra over from Rome to Zagreb where they were to perform first. That was fine, but he produced an airplane which was too small to get the entire 120 odd member orchestra and their instruments and luggage on board. So in the end we had to go back and put extra money into chartering a larger plane. So little incidents like that made life interesting, but it also was an example of the resources that the Yugoslav government had available. But by and large, they met their commitments. You asked about writers. For example, there was a big festival every year in this lovely little place in Macedonia called Ohrid. Lake Ohrid is on the border between Albania and Yugoslavia. They sponsored a poetry festival there. We brought two or three very distinguished poets over in the time that I was there. One of them, Mark Strand, I remember particularly, had a huge success. The Yugoslavs were always very careful to have stars from the east as well as the west, so there was a very heavy sprinkling of Czechs, of Russian poets and writers to match the French, the Americans and the other Yugoslav literary community who participated in this event.

Q: How about on the Fulbrights? So often from sort of the east, particularly from the Soviet Union exchange things would be heavily in to the from the eastern side, heavily into the sciences and all, and on the western side heavily into culture and language and that sort of thing.

MCBRIDE: That was absolutely true in Yugoslavia, and it was the one element in the mix that was a constant problem for us. We took the position on the American side that, the Fulbright program was open to all disciplines except medicine basically, that we had to uphold that principle, but we negotiated very tenaciously to bring some sort of balance to the program. We thought that it was important to see that the social sciences in particular were well represented, but we respected the right of the Yugoslavs. They were also financial partners and had a voice as far as the composition of the program was concerned. Ironically what happened in the end was that we won a victory of sorts. We

did finally install the principle of balance in a structured way. What happened was that we would reserve a certain number of grants for the sciences, and a certain number of grants for the arts, the humanities, and the social sciences. In a way that saved the day. But the Yugoslav idea of balance was that they would send all scientists and technological folks to the U.S. and we would send all the social scientists and the literature people to Yugoslavia. We said, well that may be one way to look at balance, but it wasn't quite what we had in mind. But in the end we did succeed. We succeeded in large measure because we persuaded the Yugoslav government that the gentleman who had been running the commission, the executive director by tradition had been a Yugoslav, and the chairman of the commission had been an American. We persuaded the Yugoslavs that it would be in everyone's interest if we got a little fresh blood into the commission. The man who had been running it for almost 15 or 20 year, I think since its inception, was ultimately retired, and we did succeed in getting a far more enlightened and I thought rather pleasant man to take his place. The program then took a distinct upturn after that.

Q: Did you find that you were consciously or subconsciously in competition with the Soviet Union there culturally and all?

MCBRIDE: Interestingly enough I don't think I sensed that. The Soviet Presence was quite substantial, as you certainly know. But I think I looked more in terms of what other western governments were doing in terms of where we stood. I think the strongest other presence was perhaps the French. But the French had an interesting, it is funny how little things tweak your memory here. The French cultural center which was also a very active place in Belgrade and attracted a lot of attention, was run by a gentleman who was French, a French citizen, but whose name was Tolstoy. He was indeed a descendant of the great writer. That, I think, added stature in a subtle way to the French presence there. He did a very good job. He was very likable chap, and he ran a very good program. The French had a far larger budget at its disposal than we did certainly to promote French culture. And they did a lot more in language teaching than we did. We did no language teaching to amount to anything. We had a teacher training program that involved language, but the French were actually out there offering the man on the street an opportunity to come in and take French classes if they wanted to. Our teacher training program was highly effective, and I think was also a big element of the overall success of our mission in Yugoslavia, because we taught teachers of English. We did seminars for teachers, and we must have done 30 or 40 a year. They were very professionally run. We had a very good local employee who was very well connected in educational circles, and she knew the English as a second language game very well. We worked with the Yugoslav government very cooperatively. A new partner after about a year, thanks to a deal that I negotiated, was the British Council. We went together with the British and offered English language seminars. We jointly funded and jointly sponsored programs..Before that we had been competitive. I mean they were going after the same teachers. We were doing the same thing. It just seemed a total waste of resources to go it alone only to have the Yugoslavs pit one of us off against the other. So we just pooled our resources, and it worked very well. We would staff seminars together, and if we couldn't get a particular specialist in a field, we could turn to our British colleagues and

they were very happy to cooperate. They, too, thought it was a sensible arrangement. So in the end we did a better job, and I think also managed to keep the Yugoslavs a little happier and prevented them from playing one off against the other. We didn't think that was very healthy.

Q: What about you mentioned there wasn't sort of a large just straight English language program. I know in other countries, Italy and elsewhere, we have had these sort of self sustaining English language programs. Was this contemplated? Is there any reason why we didn't have one like that?

MCBRIDE: I think we felt that there were other people doing that who were doing it very well. We felt our resources with respect to English language and teaching were far better used teaching teachers than teaching individuals. We just got a bigger multiplier effect for that. So that was the rationalization for it, and we never really seriously entertained direct English teaching while I was there. Some of the American centers did by allowing local organizations who sponsored teaching come in and use the space. We put little or no resources into it.

Q: How about the libraries? It can get tricky in libraries because you will find books that are not on the A list or something in a communist regime getting into the libraries. Did you have to watch that?

MCBRIDE: Good point, because I am going to jump ahead a bit. That issue was a major problem in my next assignment which was Bucharest. But in Belgrade it was practically a non issue, because the Yugoslavs were able to travel so much. The government, as you remember in those days, guaranteed anybody who applied for a passport very fast service. Yugoslavs were big travelers, so if there was a book that the regime was not interested in, they could go to Italy and buy it, or they could get a friend from London or Paris or America to send it to them. So the book issue was not a very big deal in Yugoslavia. We didn't have any problems. Some people were interested in local books and asked if we had the latest Djilas book. Well, of course we didn't. That was not a sensible thing for us to do. Djilas, although he had a great following in America, was Yugoslav and our whole stock in trade was presenting American writers and American works, and therefore we didn't stock foreign authors. Although much of his stuff, as you know was published first in English before it was published anywhere else.

Q: I was there in the '60s. I remember a local employee saying, "You want to go down to the Yugoslovinska Media," which is the big bookstore, publisher, "And go under agriculture and look at some of the books there." There was a whole big stack of Animal Farm by George Orwell. A curious place to put it. Well it was sullied very nicely.

MCBRIDE: That is a great line. I will have to remember that. But we did use publishers occasionally as partners in projects, but they were more often than not generated by the publisher. If they wanted to bring out a book that they knew was not going to be a particular best seller, but they thought it was important to have in translation, they would occasionally come to us. Infrequently, I can not remember a specific title, but we did help

occasionally to subsidize a few titles that they would then bring out in a Serbo-Croatian version.

Q: How about movies? I mean most of it is obviously commercial and I mean the Hollywood bit. Did you find that Hollywood was helping, hindering or how did you feel about this?

MCBRIDE: Well again because Yugoslavia was a more open society than most in Eastern European or the Balkans in those days, there was no shortage of American films playing in Belgrade. The only problem was that they couldn't pay top dollar, so you didn't get immediate first run films, but there were a lot of American movies shown with subtitles or dubbed. But there was little activity by the embassy mainly because it was an expensive game to get in to. We did a very few sort of invitational showings that we would get mainly with the help of the defense attaché, because they somehow used to get first run films for the staff use. We got some special permission through Jack Valenti to have an exceptional screening sponsored by the ambassador by invitation. We would occasionally show hot new movies. But by and large the film part of our business was very small because it seemed to take care of itself. Now images of America derived from films is a problem in a lot of places, and Yugoslavia was no exception thus you would see one aspect of American culture that was there because it was commercially viable to make films about bad situations that we wouldn't necessarily want to focus on. It was a strictly a commercial venture, and the producers in Hollywood were not fools. They obviously did jobs to make money, and they did. Some of those images were not the ones we were most happy to project, but on the other hand, the freedom of expression was worth a little something in that regard, too, so we didn't get too upset about the film situation. Again as I say, we didn't get too involved either.

Q: Did you have any ties with the universities?

MCBRIDE: Lots. We had contacts through the Fulbright program essentially, and we had one or two key university rectors who were on the Fulbright commission. They usually rotated. But we worked a lot with particularly the two big universities, Belgrade University. Actually there were three, Belgrade, The university of Zagreb, and the University of Ljubljana. They had the most grants and the largest number of Americans. They also tended to send the most students and scholars to the United States. Mainly our contacts were through the American Studies program which was quite strong in Yugoslavia. An important figure was a professor of American History named Dragutin Jivoinovich whom you perhaps may remember. He taught at Belgrade University. He had a Ph.D. from Columbia and was very involved in the whole American studies movement in the country. There was another man who was a translator of Melville, who was at the University of Ljubljana who was also very active, and a Woman named Sonia Basic who was in the English department at Zagreb University. While we were there she went off to Yale and got a Ph.D. in American Studies at Yale and returned to became the head of the department. One of the grantees we sent off under the Fulbright program I met years later by total accident in London. When the Croatian ambassador turned up at an event that we staged for American studies, he turned out to be an old Fulbright grantee from

Yugoslavia. So it was nice to see him again and a nice demonstration of the effectiveness of these programs.

Q: Did you find that you had a problem sort of staffing and getting enough say down in Macedonia? I can remember talking to the exchange professors, and one of them was in Ljubljana and having a wonderful time, and the one down in Skopje was saying, "You know I am an expert on Melville, my first class of students asked me if Queen Elizabeth was an American, and something about Marilyn Monroe." I mean, he found it really a very disappointing place.

MCBRIDE: I found the same thing. I suppose in a way the less prosperous republics were also the ones that had the most infrequent contact with the west. That was certainly true in Macedonia which also harbored other ambitions we are reading about in the papers now. Those folks seemed a little bit more hard line I guess. They were tougher. Negotiations with the University of Skopje were always difficult. The rector there seemed to be more blatantly a political appointee who had one view of the world that didn't often match with ours, His view of running the university was not comparable with the enlightened views of the rector in Belgrade or in Zagreb perhaps. But I found dealing with those two republics, with Pristina and with Skopje the hardest sell. But on the other hand, when you did get people in or events scheduled there, it was very rewarding to see the turnout because there was a huge curiosity about things American. It was still the envy of most Yugoslavs in those days to visit the United States or to follow the footsteps of a cousin or somebody who had emigrated to Pittsburgh or to Cleveland or where ever. But the story that I can tell you, I apologize in advance because it has one terribly vulgar word in it, but it was very funny. I went down to Skopje with an exhibition or with a curator of an exhibition that was going to come down ultimately to Macedonia. We went around to look at the proposed exhibition site. The guy thought it was fine, and we ultimately went back with the exhibition which was about the American west. The woman who was the curator was a very tough lady, and a hard line communist. Again it was a political job. She was only peripherally interested in art, but it had been her lot in life to become the director of this Skopje museum. It was in an old converted Turkish bath, a han. It was a beautiful building architecturally, and it had been converted quite tastefully in to a museum. We were walking along, and the woman was being a little aggressive and nasty. The pictures were hung. There were wonderful scenes, you know, Bierstadts, Buffalo Bills, Remington sculptures. It was quite a good exhibition from the Buffalo Bill Museum in Wyoming. But at any rate we were walking along, and there were none of the normal sort of things you would expect in an American museum. There was no climate control; there was no, the security was very vague and lax. There were windows open and the air and whatever else wanted to come in did so. This woman was really being nasty as we were walking along. "I guess you are concerned about all the things like the lack of security and the poor climate control and everything." This wonderful curator goes up to one of the paintings and he takes his finger and he flips a little thing off of it. He said, "I am not really too worried about that. What I am really worried about is the bird shit on the paintings." The birds would fly into this room. I mean he was very cool about it, but the message was communicated, and suddenly those windows were closed. We no longer had that particular problem. It was a very nice way

to relieve the tension as well. So we got along famously with the woman after that.

Q: During this time, I mean this was not your job, but obviously you were talking to the intellectual community. In France the intellectuals were very important and Britain the chattering class had its influence, too. Did you get any feel from sort of the intellectuals and artists in Yugoslav society in its government and all?

MCBRIDE: I don't think they were nearly as important in the mix as the two examples you have cited. I do think they had a fair amount of influence. I think the government was mindful of their presence. They could take academic freedom only so far. I mean they were not going to get away with blatant criticism of the system and they were going to be in great trouble if they went too far. But too far was a very murky line. Let me give you one example of that, that I felt was kind of interesting. I mentioned that we worked with this organization called the Belgrade International Theater Festival. They sponsored an annual festival, and one year they came to us to ask our help in bringing a new production that had been all the rage in the States and very controversial because it was one of the first times there was full frontal nudity on the stage. This was “Hair.” If you remember about it, it was quite a, I mean it was quite a breakthrough. The woman who ran this festival, who was very well connected politically asked our help. We declined. We didn't have any money. I think it was convenient that we didn't have any money, because we weren't too keen on the controversy. But be that as it may, undeterred, this very shrewd woman managed to buy the performance rights for Yugoslavia, and worked very closely with the producers in New York, and ultimately brought the production to Belgrade. It was maybe a year after it premiered in New York so it was still a hot ticket. It was very controversial, and it was the kind of thing in the kind of society that Yugoslavia was in those days. Prudishness was a pretty important factor there. The fact that this woman could not only decide that she wanted to do it, but pull it off without worrying about the consequences that the government might sort of close her theater or slam her or do something. She did it, and it was fine.

Q: Hair was not only nudity and all that, it was anti-establishment. I mean, it was arousing Americans to, it was during the Vietnam...

MCBRIDE: Sure all those things. But let me go back a little bit. I think it was very much to her credit that she could see her way to do it and find the wherewithal to make it happen. You know, I complimented her for doing it. She was therefore an important force in stretching the limit as far as it could go. She did that with a number of things. I mean Hair was just one example, but she was very much aware of what was going on in the west. She was determined that the Yugoslav audiences were going to see what was there, particularly in the avant garde and things that were generating controversy. She was a very useful person to work with.

Q: She may also have been the person back in my time around 1966 or so, she brought Who Is Afraid of Virginia Wolfe which was an avant garde play at the time, which played in Belgrade before it played in London.

MCBRIDE: I am not surprised because she was very good, and I expect she did have a

hand in it. But there was a long tradition there in two theaters. The one that we were talking about was called the Belgrade International Theater Festival, BITFE, and it was at Atelije 212. That was the number of the street. There was also something called the Yugoslav Drama Theater which was another theater that was very much plugged into the west. They staged many American and western productions there, so there was a long tradition of this.

Q: I remember seeing, going to I had no idea what it was, La Mama.

MCBRIDE: La Mama sure. Absolutely.

Q: I came there it was the first time I have ever seen masturbation played on the stage.

MCBRIDE: As an art form. She was a frequent visitor. The woman who ran La Mama was there a lot, and she was often invited to be a jury member to a certain event where they wanted to have western representation. Everybody liked her, and she was very popular in Yugoslavia.

Q: We are now talking the year 2000, where Yugoslavia exists no more and is broken up into ethnic groups and we have had I think four wars. We are almost starting the fifth now over the ethnic problem. Did the ethnic divisions play any role in what you were doing?

MCBRIDE: A lot, because there was always the question of balancing interests in the federal government. The Yugoslav government had to reconcile huge differences between the competing republics. So whether it was trying to decide what you were going to do in Sarajevo to keep the Bosnians happy or how you were going to appear not to be overwhelmingly in favor of the more advanced republics, the Coats or the Slovenians, you were always aware of that tension. In several conversations we had with the Yugoslav authorities, they would never admit it publicly, but would discuss it privately. They had very strict instructions in terms of funding, because they were funding partners in many U.S. projects, especially the Fulbright program. That brought with it certain strings. They had to have a certain say in managing projects. Each of the republics had a strong say in the way in things worked. There was always this tension between the republics, particularly those like Bosnia where there was a strong Muslim influence. Those views were often at odds with the more western sophisticated advanced views of a Slovenia, say. So those issues were constantly there. And seeing what has happened now, I think it is tragic what has happened to Yugoslavia. I am very sorry that Yugoslavia has disappeared, but it was all too predictable in many ways. Tito held it together while he was there, but this sort of concept of rotating presidency was bound to give way sooner or later. So all the strife and ethnic conflicts that now are part of contemporary Balkan history were never far from the surface, certainly in the days that I was there. I expect the same with you, maybe more so even; I don't know. It was a great issue all the time, and it was one that you had to be very careful to keep both in focus and in balance because you could go down a very slippery slope very quickly, almost before realizing you were on one.

Q: Well when I was there again, mid-'60s, Tito was very much in power, and I think we were, we somehow thought he was going to create a new generation of Yugoslavs. It is obviously wishful thinking. You know, every time you turn around you are getting hit by this other, by the nationality thing, but I mean Tito was standing up against the Soviet Union. We wished them well. And also I, it was one of these things. My God we know these people. They may have their disputes, but they are not going to go out and kill each other. Which is of course exactly what they did do. I think we felt...

MCBRIDE: I think we certainly felt the same. We were there at a time when the relationship was on a big upswing and things were generally quite positive. You felt that you could do almost anything. To this day I count many Yugoslav friends, not only Serbs but others as well. It was quite difficult in the last few years to talk to them, even the history professor that I alluded to earlier, who was the mainstay of American studies in Yugoslavia, Dragutin Jivoinovich. I saw him a time or two here with some Serbian friends whom we kept up with here. We found after the last encounter that it was very difficult because the whole issue of Serbian nationalism absolutely boiled over. A man who we thought was enlightened and sort of sophisticated, had traveled a great deal, had studied abroad, and had been exposed to many different kinds of cultures and ideas was, in the last analysis, a very rabidly nationalistic Serb. It is hard to imagine now how breathtaking our naivete was in a way. But it doesn't help in any way. It is still a very tragic situation. I am sure that you have followed it, too, but I noticed something quite recently about the Serbian situation that fascinated me. Watching the Lehrer report on television the other night after the arrest of Milosevic, one of the panelists was Dusko Doder who was a former journalist for the Washington Post. As you know he has written a couple of very interesting books about Yugoslavia, and his comment I think, was really insightful. It was not a throwaway, but it was in the middle of a lot of other stuff, and you really had to fish to get it out. What he said in essence was that the Serbs have historically and even up to now confronted their past with great difficulty. And if they don't have some opportunity now after the arrest of Milosevic, then they really need to have this catharsis, to get it all out and come to some terms with their past, and to admit that they were really pretty rotten bastards a lot of the time. If you don't get this out, the healing is going to be awfully difficult. Plotting a sensible course for the future is going to be equally difficult. I am not sure that is very high on the radar screen in Belgrade.

Q: What was the impression you were getting on this about, I mean while you were there Tito was in Power.

MCBRIDE: Very much in power.

Q: But was he getting older?

MCBRIDE: He was and the question of succession was increasingly widely discussed. He had devised as you know, this rotating presidency before he withdrew from the scene. But it was difficult for the Yugoslavs that I talked to, to imagine how this was going to work in fact, because it was Tito who really held the thing together. And if it didn't work

he would just grab people and knock their heads together and say, "Goddammit, we have got to do it this way and that is that." He could do that, and it would all work somehow. It didn't because there was no person of that force or stature to take his place. The succession question was one of the most troublesome for the government. But the government tried to put the best face on it obviously because that is what the person then in power decided would happen, and everybody closed ranks behind him, and that was that.

Q: You said you had three ambassadors while you were there.

MCBRIDE: Yes, I went to Belgrade in the days of Malcolm Toon who I overlapped with for about a year or so I guess. I don't know exactly, but he was very much a kind of Eastern European old hand. He had been both there and in the Soviet Union and was considered to be quite a seasoned and experienced diplomat. We were there together as I said, for about a year.

Q: What was your impression?

MCBRIDE: I think he was a little authoritarian actually. I thought he was very smart, and I thought he was one of the people that really understood Yugoslavia almost through the prism of the Soviet Union. In many ways that was shrewd, smart, and helpful. In other ways it was a great liability, because I think the Yugoslavs resented that comparison. In some ways they were quite right to do so. I remember one famous story that I don't get the details quite right, but Tito came on a state visit to the U.S., and the ambassador accompanied him over. I think he got into deep trouble with the entourage particularly with Tito. The problem was the Russian reference or connection or something. Maybe he was speaking Russian; I don't remember what, but I think it was not a very happy beginning. The state visit was a huge success. He then went on to be ambassador to Israel after he left Belgrade. He was succeeded by Larry Eagleburger who was an incredible man and a person for whom I have enormous respect. He ran the embassy very well, and I think he was certainly of the three, the most successful ambassador. He was ultimately succeeded by a man named Larry Silberman, who is still a force in Washington life.

Q: He is a judge here in Washington on the appellate, one rung below the Supreme Court.

MCBRIDE: Exactly. And he was, I think, a more traditionalist in of his perception of the relationship. I think he was from a legal background; he was a very distinguished lawyer. I think his take on it was basically through the legal prism. Larry Eagleburger on the other hand, was a foreign service officer, and a very successful one at that. Deeply involved in the tragic earthquake in Macedonia. It was considered a very smart move when he was named him to a country which he obviously knew very well, as ambassador. I thought it was a very stimulating time to be there. He was very supportive, not only the cultural section, I am saying he was very supportive of everything that was going on in the embassy. He was very much aware of what was going on. He was also highly effective in dealing with officials, the government, with other people in other institutions

that he had to relate to, to do his job well. He was commercially very active, and by and large, I think, ran a very fine embassy and left a very important legacy there.

Q: Did you get involved when Ambassador Silberman was there, with the case that dragged on about an American who got caught up in a sugar mill thing and arrested? Do you remember that?

MCBRIDE: It is very vague. I do remember the incident. It came at the time when I was leaving, so I don't remember the details of it. I do remember vaguely that I thought he extended too much capital on it in a sense. I mean the whole relationship turned on it in the end, and maybe it got a little distorted, but on the other hand, the ambassador and the embassy must obviously represent the interests of Americans first and foremost. That is why we are there. So it is hard to accuse him of going too far in one direction in that regard. But on the other hand I remember that a lot of other aspects of the relationship did sort of suffer a bit it seemed to me at that time. But the other thing I should mention before leaving Yugoslavia is that I was there also at a time that from our point of view then was considered to be a very important landmark in our history. That was for the Bicentennial, and we had a very active program to support this on many levels. I think the most visible dimension of it from my point of view was that we were selected by Washington to be the recipient of a very big and important exhibition that had been organized for traveling around eastern Europe to promote the bicentennial. It was called 200 years of American Painting. It was a large and really important exhibition that came to Belgrade. We had it there for about I guess six weeks in the end. It was a major show with very significant paintings. It spanned the 200 year history of America, and it was a way to show a lot about the country through American art. We did that very successfully in Belgrade and built a lot of other programs and activities around it. We had American studies events that focused on 200 years. We did a lot of speakers that took as their theme the American experience, and we used the curator of the exhibition who was I think from the Baltimore Museum of Art, I am not entirely sure on that point. But at any rate she traveled around and lectured a great deal. So we made a fairly substantial impact based on the bicentennial.

Q: I recall, again I go back to my time the earliest days, but Tito had sort of the expected reaction toward modernistic art that Khrushchev had. I mean they didn't think much of it. How did you find...

MCBRIDE: You know that is true. He was very conservative in his artistic tastes, and that was very well known. Yet he allowed perhaps the most stimulating museum of art in that part of the world to flourish in Belgrade. That is where the show “ 200 Years of American A”rt was presented, and with a very enthusiastic and highly intelligent and enlightened director. His name was Protich. I remember very well. He was very supportive and eager to have the show there. Tito, in terms of the celebration of the bicentennial, behaved very appropriately. I don't recall that he went to the exhibition, but he certainly never blocked anything like that, that we wanted to do, although his taste as you correctly point out, were very conservative indeed. But no, I don't think his taste had a lot to do with the way the institutions and the country were run.

Q: It seems to my mind that the Yugoslavs, at least the ones we saw, were particularly responsive to art, to literature, and to music. Although they could be essentially considered a backwater, these are people out searching and looking, engaged. A lot were.

MCBRIDE: Yes, I think they were. You have to temper that a little bit to say we are talking about a very thin stratum of society here. We are talking about basically urban educated, intelligent, middle class if you can use that word to describe anybody in a classless society. But people who were educated and enlightened. They were a very thin layer of all of this, and when you go out to the Sabac or the provinces, you find a very different person there. You don't want to use the word peasant because that's not a good way to describe them these days, but there were a lot of people who fell squarely into that category.

Q: They were peasants. Folks who would come into town and looking at the big buildings.

MCBRIDE: Yes. They would almost get killed by traffic because they had never seen so many automobiles before. So that is truly the bedrock of society, but on the other hand the people we were dealing with, we made no bones about it, we were out to get the people, I mean to influence people who were in a position of influence and to reach out to those people was our mission. I think we succeeded by and large pretty well with that. But that was not a very large chunk of the population. So I think the Yugoslavs, if you describe Yugoslavia as the country it was, was a very conservative, somewhat backward society. The people that we were dealing with represented a small, but extraordinarily significant minority.

Q: Well then you left there in '78. Whither?

MCBRIDE: I left there in '78, and I actually came back to Washington to run an office that was basically at the time called I think, American Programs, it wasn't American studies. I forget the exact title, but basically it was running programs that dealt with how we presented American cultural and intellectual activities to the world. My mission when I took the job was ultimately to try to fold together all of the cultural programs that USIA was doing, involving the visual arts, the performing arts, the speakers bureau, and everything except the educational exchange piece which remained separate. My mission was to pull all of these things together. Some were still in the State Department in those days, what was left of the office of cultural presentations. The visual arts part was already under the roof of USIA. My job was to pull it all together and make some sense of it and to try to make it more efficient in working to represent the U.S. abroad in the cultural sphere. What emerged was an unnamed office and I guess we sat up nights trying to figure what to call it. I guess I entertained all the ideas and decided what we were going to call it was Arts America which seemed a pretty good label to put on it. What I did was to bring into USIA, with a lit of kicking and screaming I might add, the vestiges of the cultural presentations program, which was, as I said, in the Department then, but also out

on a limb all by itself and was kind of an odd man out in a way. But no one had really made an effort either to cut it off or to integrate it into USIA which is what I was asked to do. I did in the end with I would call it mixed success. I actually a the structure in place, got all the paperwork and the administrative steps taken care of to integrate, I guess at that time there were about a dozen or 15 employees. Almost to a person they didn't want to be moved. They rather liked being off in a little corner on their own. But in the end we did integrate it all, and I think it worked reasonably well. But many of the people came with the programs they had run historically, and didn't want to have any integration into a bigger picture, and only wanted to do what they had been doing. That was the most difficult part of the operation because we decided to organize it thematically. We said we would have a visual arts department; we would have a performing arts department, and we would have the speakers piece. It was not going to be possible to let somebody do only the, you know, music in the Soviet Union. That just wasn't going to happen anymore because we didn't have those kinds of resources. And we certainly were not going to have those kinds of programs either. So we had a lot of trouble on the personnel front ultimately achieving the integration. I used to joke with this woman that I came to admire enormously, she was a great friend until her death actually. Her name was Irene Carstone. She ran the music program for the Soviet Union and was not to be budged from this job. She eventually would do the other things, but she never did them with much grace, and she never did it with any degree of enthusiasm. But she was a wonderful person, totally dedicated. Her job was her life. In the end we did have an occasion to use her talents, particularly with negotiations with eastern European governments because she had a lot of experience that was certainly applicable in dealing with the Poles or the Czechs or who else. We did ultimately get her to spread out a little bit. The combined program was ultimately put together in a single unit called Arts America, and we did succeed in trying to use our resources a little bit more carefully. But it was a time of reasonable growth. We got a little bit more money to do a few things, and although we made some intelligent decisions, I think, about the scale and the scope of what we would do, we knew we would not be sending many more visits of the New York City Ballet or the Los Angeles Philharmonic because we simply couldn't afford that. But what we could do is try to focus on smaller groups that would still make the point about American artistic excellence, and maybe wouldn't be quite so expensive to move around. We tried to rationalize our decision to more or less match our foreign policy priorities and objectives, instead of saying we wanted to send XYZ to Prague because so and so wanted to go to Prague. If Prague was not high on our priorities, we would try to place the event in a country where we needed to make some stronger statement to support broader foreign policy objectives. A policy that I think was so sensible that I wonder why we hadn't been doing it all along. But we didn't seem to register very high on the scale of why we chose X to go to country Y. One of my jobs was to try to make that point and to use that in the decision making process, both for the allocation of resources, and of choosing what went where. To avoid the trap of getting the artistic community outraged that a government bureaucrat would be making these choices, we managed to work very closely with the two national endowments. In those days they were very eager to play a bigger international role.

Q: The national endowment for the arts.

MCBRIDE: For the arts and humanities. We went over to negotiate with Livingston Biddle who was then running the arts endowment. He had a very good understanding of why this was important not only for the American arts but for the American government to present and use the arts creatively in advancing U.S. interests overseas. So he was a very willing partner, and we negotiated a deal whereby the two national endowments set up panels to advise us. These were peer review panels. That I think, made it safer for us to do what we were doing, and to do so on the very strong recommendation of artists themselves who were recommending peers to these particular assignments. So that process, which was not easy to set up because the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities were not sure whether they wanted to do this because they also saw that their cooperation could be interpreted as manipulation. In the end we made the point that what we were asking them to do was just to designate distinguished people in the field, whatever, whether it was painting or music or dance or what have you, and let the people who knew those disciplines best make the recommendations. That was going to be good for everybody because we were going to be sure that the best that America had to offer was presented, and that we would be able to do that with the solid backing of the arts community, which we felt was important. It also was a way to assuage Congress that we were not making silly decisions but that we were doing this with the active involvement of the two national endowments and the arts community. Now, that is a great thing to say, but it was not without its pitfalls. Those pitfalls are still with us today. There were many people who were totally hostile to any role of the government at all with respect to the arts, because they didn't think it was right to spend the taxpayers money that way. Later, the whole thing that came up again in Sorrano and the Mapplethorpe exhibition in the endowments. More than less, I think, the Congress realized that the arts were a powerful message to use, particularly in the parts of the world where there was no artistic freedom. And that if we could do this cleverly, it could be a great advantage to the United States to use the forces of creativity to help democracy get established and really sustain itself. Freedom of choice and artistic freedom are a part of that concept. It is in the U.S. interest to make that point, so we didn't have entirely free sailing, but we had more understanding than lack of it basically from the Congress. And so the program did flourish for awhile. We never did gigantic, massive stuff that we did in the Soviet Union in the early days, like sending the Cleveland Orchestra and all these enormous cultural exchange projects. We did more in a sense with less, because we used the individual, the small ensemble, the solo artist. Dance companies were very popular because they tended to be smaller. Modern dance was very exciting across the world in those days where it was considered to be an amazing and much appreciated art form, more around the world than in the States, but nonetheless, it was generally acknowledged that the best companies were American. Everybody was eager to see them, so we were happy to send a lot of dance companies on tour. They did enormously good jobs for us.

Q: Well, as you did this, you know, I can see focusing on those countries which we were sort of an adversarial thing mainly, sort of the communist countries. Did we have any reason to sponsor this or do anything say in Germany or England or did economic forces take it?

MCBRIDE: After a while we decided that it was not very important to see that Europe and America had a very healthy cultural relationship, and a great deal happened whether the government was involved or not. So we rarely did projects for Europe. I mean we did a few that had a kind of national dimension that were important international events where that was official representation, but usually no governments. The best example I can think of that is the Venice Biennale art exhibition which was in those days I suppose the most important art event in the world. Those representations were all done by government to government invitations from the Italian government to in this case the U.S. government. We worked very closely to see that the U.S. was represented there. But what we tried to do was to use our resources to make things happen in places in the world where it wouldn't happen without some support from us. So we tried to go to parts of the world where American cultural and artistic activities were not so widespread as they were certainly in Europe or Japan. So we kept the focus on eastern Europe because that was a clear political decision, but we then tried to move out a little bit more into Latin America. We tried to move out into Africa, which was the biggest challenge of all and still is, because we have difficult situations with respect to where you could present things in Africa. Venues were tough because there were no museums. There were few museums. You could do other projects but they were very labor intensive, and they turned out to be almost one on one. It was hard to justify the expense in those days. But we also had an arrangement with the geographic areas who would help us establish priorities within their areas, priorities. We therefore would try to work to those priorities. We managed, I think, fairly well, I won't give us an A+ on it. And I think the question is still difficult. For example, we don't do an awful lot in Africa. We say that we don't for a lot of reasons which change with the times. But the bottom line is that Africa doesn't loom very large on American priorities these days. That is a sad thing because are a lot of opportunities there, and we, I think, ought to be focusing more on places like that where the help is much more needed and where it would make a bigger impression. Often there is not the political will to do it. I mean to give an example that now is kind of interesting is China. There are enormous resources devoted to China, probably because now China is an important part of our relationship with the rest of the world. Things change. I went a couple of months ago to visit my old friends down in the educational exchanges office of the Department. The biggest Fulbright program in the world these days is in Vietnam. That really surprised me. I was kind of taken aback. Certainly we have a great debt to repay in the eyes of many in Vietnam, but should it be the largest Fulbright program in the world? I am not sure that it should. But that was, I think, because of political pressure. There were some very influential members of Congress who were important members of our appropriations committees and subcommittees who were powerful enough to say if you want this, we want to extract that.

Q: Well if you look at where aid goes, it goes to Israel and Egypt. Looking at this, particularly in a cultural field, you know there was a period, and I go back a fairly long time, where the United States was till trying to prove to people in western Europe that we were a cultural country. We did have a culture and all that. By the time you got involved, had that spirit sort of gone, I mean it was no longer a problem?

MCBRIDE: It wasn't really a problem; it was still lurking behind a lot of places, and I agree with you that that was a big issue. It was one, American culture, what's that? In fact that says more about the asker of the question than anything.

Q: But I have heard people who, somebody who, Barry I think his name, he was cultural attaché in London. Every once in awhile he would say, "Oh, I didn't know you had..."

MCBRIDE: Yes, the English can be particularly arrogant. We are jumping ahead, but I spent four interesting years there doing the same thing. That I am happy to say, didn't come up a lot, but it certainly did come up from time to time, particularly from the patronizing chattering classes you were talking about earlier. They were the ones who were the least likely to receive any impact from whatever we were trying to do because they built this insular wall around their brain which prevented them from being really open minded to see there may be another point of view on something. But let me get back to answer your question in the context we are talking about now, because I think it relates to an even bigger question, I found in that job in running Arts America.

Q: You were doing that from when to when?

MCBRIDE: I was doing that from about 1978 to 1982. The job that was toughest for me was to convince the powers that be, both within the agency and the Congress and in a broader sense the world out there in the arts community, that there was a role for government to play in this field. I believe government had a particular responsibility because it had the resources basically to enable us make some important statements about American life and American culture, but there were a lot of people who didn't see that as either important; they didn't believe it. They didn't think it was necessary, and much of what was going on was resented mightily within other elements in the Department who felt that cultural diplomacy, what's that, first of all. Why are we doing this? This is not the kind of stuff that American diplomacy ought to be focusing its interests and attention on. We ought to be out there doing the political work, the economic work, the traditionalist view. That was far harder to deal with. I don't think I dealt with it successfully. I don't think it has been dealt with successfully yet. I think there is a much more sympathetic view to the importance of these programs now because they have proved themselves. But that was certainly not the case in 1978-'82 when I was trying to get Arts America off the ground. Much of the work that I devoted my time and energy to was to convince people within the establishment, the diplomatic establishment, USIA as well as the Department, that these were important programs, that there were circumstances when American interests could be best represented through cultural diplomacy in much the same way that an ambassador would say I am going to reach out to do commercial development, foster economic ties or to what have you. It was a very hard sell in those days to convince the powers that be that this was a viable piece of American diplomacy that deserved support and attention.

Q: Did you run across, you know, one talks about the sort of Washington and you are sitting down and working on you are sitting down and working on your plans and all. There was the other side of the equation, and that is the American ambassador. The

American ambassador doesn't subscribe to this. Did you find this a problem in some cases?

MCBRIDE: Oh always a problem, I mean always to the extent that you needed to have a chance to sit down and talk to or explain the rationale for what you were doing. The bright people got it and were supportive or at least those who didn't understand were disposed to give it the benefit of the doubt. There were hard liners who didn't give a damn about it. You are wasting my time and the taxpayer's money, so go do something else. That was too bad. I think, in several examples of ambassadors that I have worked for who had rather narrow views on this and others who were terribly enlightened and very supportive, but by and large the overwhelming sentiment to almost the end of my career was this is peripheral, this is fluffy stuff, this is not really the serious essence of diplomacy. I am glad that view is disappearing. It isn't gone, but I think it is easier to penetrate the shell now than it was before. I think the Department has to bear a lot of the burden for that because in the halls of Foggy Bottom, there was a more traditionalist view of what diplomacy was, and cultural diplomacy was not a piece of that view. USIA,'s leadership in my view could have always been more forceful in making the point and getting people to be a little more receptive and to understand better what this was about. We weren't doing this because we wanted to help the ABC dance company or whatever it was. We were making a point about American creativity, American freedom, and what all this means in a broader picture. If you want to understand what makes us tick and therefore be more receptive to the argument for a given political issue or whatever it is, anybody now who has studied any kind of these disciplines at all will realize that being plugged into a culture is going to make you far more likely to understand why people think the way they think. That is what cultural diplomacy in my view is really all about.

Q: Did you have a problem. I mean here you are, you have got a to on your plate, keeping au courant with what was happening in American art in all its various forms?

MCBRIDE: Can you think of a more exhilarating challenge?

Q: Oh, I know, but I am just saying, how did you, you must have had...

MCBRIDE: Yes. I did a lot of going around. I traveled the country, I saw a lot. I looked at a lot of exhibitions. I went to meetings of professional societies. I tried to get myself on the agenda for national meetings to make the case for what we were trying to do. I went to a lot of them. I went particularly to the American Association of Museums, the American Association of Art Museum director, Opera America, the ballet. All of these organizations were very receptive to what we were doing. I tried to be au courant by being familiar with the organizations, looking at shows, going to see what kind of dance things were happening. I tried as best I could to be up to date on the arts in general, and to see that when our panels gave recommendations for what we ought to be doing, that I knew a little bit about what they were talking about. Why company A was better than company B in the view of the professionals. So it was a great education for me, and it was a wonderful opportunity to make me a better cultural attaché when I finally did go overseas essentially.

Q: Speaking of ambassadors, one very respected ambassadors of the last couple of decades is Arthur Hartman. I interviewed him, and he put a tremendous amount of emphasis, both in Paris and in Moscow.

MCBRIDE: A wonderful man. I think his two great marks in terms of cultural diplomacy were Moscow and Paris. He understood it. He couldn't have been better, couldn't have been more responsive, more receptive, and more enthusiastic. Ambassador and Mrs. Hartman were interested. They were well informed, and I think they made a very big effort to see that American culture was given the right place in the whole arsenal of embassy activities that you would use at any given occasion to advance whatever interests you were trying to pursue. So I give then full marks for working it very well. In fact one of the things that I did with Arts America was to take part occasionally in briefings for ambassadors who were going out, to tell them about what cultural resources were potentially at their disposal in their embassies. It was particularly useful to do this to the political appointees who did not know the landscape very well. So I thought that was an important precedent to establish in a way that someone from the Arts America office would be engaged to talk to outgoing ambassadors. Also I think we tried with mixed success to do some programs here at FSI, because we felt that it would be useful in the preparation and training not only foreign service officers, but ambassadors as well to understand the role of cultural diplomacy.

Q: Did you find that when one thinks of political appointees, one usually thinks of one with money who want, I am talking about the non career type people who come out with every new administration. I would think they would be, well I guess both sides, even the career foreign service officer wouldn't be that knowledgeable of what was going on.

MCBRIDE: No, absolutely. I think it was a mixed bag from any perspective. Ambassadors, be they professional career types or political appointees, if you had a chance to talk to most of them, you could make them at least understand what you were trying to do, you know, if they were receptive, the programs were going to flourish in their countries. If they were not so sure, you had a tougher row to hoe. But I think from my experience, I had career ambassadors who were incredibly supportive. I have also had them who were, you know, just thought it was a waste of time. My first ambassadorial, I mean the first encounter with any ambassador was Sargent Shriver, who was ambassador to Paris when I went there, who could not have been more supportive, and who really went out of his way to see that we had American musicians who performed in events at the residence. We had amazing exhibitions while I was there. We had wonderful support for the Fulbright program. I think that in terms of that issue, how the ambassadors grasp the usefulness of these programs was almost, you know, an individual thing. Perhaps it shouldn't have been. Perhaps it should have been part of the training and part of the briefing, but it was not. And so you dealt with each case individually, I think. But that leads me on to the next assignment.

Q: Well before we go on, you see I am holding you back.

MCBRIDE: That's okay.

Q: I think of the fall and early winter of 1979 when you had both the Iranian taking of American hostages and the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviets, and the Carter response to that. Did those two have any effect on your programs?

MCBRIDE: Well, the Iranian thing certainly did because there was at that time, before that time the Iranian-American society ran a very important program with the embassy support and help. We did under the Shah a lot of programs there because there was a lot of money for one thing. But those funds quickly dried up and evaporated when the hostage situation took place, and that meant that we were certainly not involved at all in Iran, obviously. But we were also a little bit more concerned with security, of receptivity, and hostility of the audiences in that part of the world to programs. I don't remember any specific examples, but I do remember talking about should we cut back a little bit, and maybe just divert programs. We diverted programs to other nearby countries, mainly because we weren't sure of what the outcome was going to be, and whether there would be hostility in Kabul or whether there would be problems in northern India or whatever. I mean we just weren't sure. So we tended to take that lesson very seriously. In the long term though, I don't think it had much impact on decisions relevant to the program.

Q: Well what about, I mean you mentioned your lady who was up to her neck in Soviet music, sending music to the Soviet Union and all, I mean we put a real deep freeze on a lot of contacts with the Soviets after, this is directly after Afghanistan, directly from President Carter. Did that affect you?

MCBRIDE: You know I guess if you look directly back over the time we are talking about here, our relations with the Russians, with the Soviets in those days were so at the side. I mean there would be high points and low points and high points and low points. There would be some issue that somewhere else in the world the Russians were involved in one way shape or form. So maybe I have a distorted view of that because it seems looking back across the years, there were always ups and downs, so one event or another would trigger it, and after awhile in the following calm you would send Arthur Miller back to lecture in Moscow or something. So I don't think that the program was any different because it was always, how do you say this, you never knew until the last minute whether it was going to happen or not with the Soviet program. So then, these things obviously did have an impact. Afghanistan had an impact; Iran had an impact. I am sorry to give you a very disappointing answer.

Q: No, but I mean, there wasn't a before or after.

MCBRIDE: No, I don't think so. What I remember most of all in, to go back to the period of time we are talking about, the Arts America part in my career, I began to think at the end of it as a good foreign service officer it was fun. I spent four years here doing that. In fact it was the longest assignment I had in Washington during my entire career. I then began to think more about where I wanted to go next, and what I wanted to do. Arts America proved to be a very interesting springboard to the next assignment. I wanted to go back to eastern Europe, having had that experience in Yugoslavia which I thoroughly

enjoyed. I began talking to my colleagues in the European area to see what was going to be coming up, and ultimately the choice, sorry, I didn't have a choice, I bid on jobs like everybody else did. The thing that seemed most appealing to me was to go to Bucharest, because I knew the job in the embassy in Bucharest was coming up, and I bid on the job and ultimately got to go as PAO. But the reason I was chosen I think was the area director told me at the time, what we were really going to do there was essentially a cultural job because that was the basis on which we had the strongest relationship with Romania. That would be what my mandate was going to be. Therefore I was probably a better choice in that job than somebody who had been on the press side or the information side because that was obviously not going to be very prominent in our relationship. So that suited me, and I was very happy to go to Bucharest which I did. I guess the important thing to note for the record is I was in Bucharest from '82 to '85. Bucharest was in those days, at the time that I arrived also like Yugoslavia in a way, the maverick Ceausescu was very much admired, because he was in his way standing up to his eastern masters, and he was also a little bit more receptive to what came his way from the United States than other leaders of Eastern Europe were. We had more or less developed a pretty strong program in Romania. My job was to go out there and to reinforce that and to be sure that we kept the dialogue going with the Romanians essentially we wanted to charge and use our programs and our presence there to broaden more freedom and to broader participation of the Romanians in western activities, and to expose Romania more to the west. We were going to do that primarily through expanding trade and commerce with them. We were going to do it by using the programs that we had to bring more Romanians to the USA- (end of tape)

In Bucharest I arrived with a lot of expectations, and Arts America had unwittingly feathered my own nest because I had no idea when I was beginning a project in Arts America that I would be the recipient of it in Bucharest. But there was a wonderful exhibition about American impressionist painting. It ultimately came to Bucharest very soon after my arrival there, and I was obviously delighted and pleased because I had been intimately involved in putting the show together before. It had a huge success in Bucharest and opened up the eyes of many Romanians to a school of painting that was more associated with the French than with the Americans, and which was taken to a very different level by American artists. The show was very popular and had a big impact in Romania. It was very good for me. It also acquainted me with the views of the political ambassador who was on Bucharest in those days named David Funderburk. He was the protégé of Jesse Helms, and who had been sent there because as a Fulbright scholar, he had been a student in Bucharest and had begun a long and abiding relationship with Romania. He was also put in that position because he had very strong views on human rights as well, an issue that in those days we felt could be improved with respect to the way Romanians ran things. So that was my first encounter with the ambassador, who I don't think was very concerned about the cultural program, but who was passionately concerned and committed to improving the human rights situation in Romania. So I begin the assignment there with almost an adversarial relationship in a way because the ambassador was determined to see that everything we did in Romania basically had a dimension that reflected our concern for the rather bad track record Romanians had in human rights, particularly religious freedom. So, much of the time in Bucharest was spent

y working that side of the street because that is what the ambassador decided we were going to do. My position on the issue was while this was a critically important piece in our relationship, I didn't think it ought to be allowed to influence everything else we did. That was not a view that was shared by the ambassador. Thus, working in Bucharest was not very pleasant. I did manage to keep things going which was our mission, and we kept a Fulbright program going which surprised me in the end. Also, the ambassador also increasingly unpopular with the Romanian government because he kept pressing this one issue all the time. So much that we had take for granted that we were able to do was eventually and gradually sort of reigned in because the Romanians were very unhappy with the way the ambassador was pressing the human rights issue there. In the end we all felt this pressure because after awhile the Fulbright program became far more difficult to negotiate. We didn't have a binational agreement, but we had a very active program. Increasingly the Romanians were hostile. They didn't want Americans coming. They particularly didn't want Americans who were going to talk about things like the social sciences or they didn't want to expose the Romanian public to Americans with these radical views about things like human rights and so on. So the program in my view, suffered in Romania. In the end we did quite a lot and the program moved along on kind of a momentum of its own. I felt for most of the time rather uncomfortable in Romania. I was just not philosophically attuned to the way the ambassador felt that our relationship ought to go. But I also felt that I had an obligation to be a good soldier because he was calling that shot, not me. I had every opportunity at staff meetings to make my point or to say why I felt we ought to do something else, but I think it was also important to close ranks and do what your leader decided you are going to do. If you don't like it, you go.

Q: Did you find that the public affairs side, I am particularly thinking of press relations and all that began to absorb more of your time?

MCBRIDE: They did in a way because the Romanians almost wanted it to. They did it because what happened in essence was that much of the sort of nastiness in the relationship played itself out publicly in the press in Romania, which was totally controlled by the government. As a result you had to pay attention to the press because, in effect, what we were dealing with was the image of the United States, the public perceptions of the United States. That said, there was a very small and almost invisible group of people there who were strong and who were aware of the fact that Ceausescu was a lunatic, and that he was taking his country to hell in a basket. But they were too small and too intimidated by the state to be very effective. We obviously maintained some relationship with those people because they really were able to convey to us the true feelings of the country and the sentiment in spite of the propaganda in the papers and so on. But the press became increasingly a bigger piece of the job because we had to deal with the accusations in the press about America, the distortion of facts about us. And we had to deal with the government who chose often to make its point through the press rather than directly to us. So, the press part to my surprise, became very time consuming and became in the end the biggest piece of the job because you had to deal with that before you could deal with anything else. There was no audience, no receptivity, no official permission. We came closer in Romania to losing touch with everybody but for one issue that I had been on the wrong side of for many years and it turned out in the end

to be the one way that we were able to make any inroads in Romania at all. We had never as a government been very big on signing cultural exchange agreements with other governments, which was very popular as you know, with the eastern Europeans and the Soviet Union in those days. But we did have an agreement with the Romanians, and it was under that agreement that the American impressionist exhibition came. It was the one vehicle we had to bring American events to Romania because there was a signed bilateral agreement. So, whether the Romanians liked it or not, we had by this agreement the permission to bring two or three big exhibitions. The Fulbright program came under this agreement. Other cultural activities in general were possible, and it was the only way they were possible. So we had very tedious discussions about what the agreement really meant. If it said you can bring two violinists, don't you dare try to send a cellist or a pianist because it says you have got to bring two violinists and that is what you are going to do. So they were very literal in interpreting the regulation. Nonetheless, we took it as a mandate to reach out to the Romanian public because the events were normal and very popular. The exhibitions were designed to reflect themes of American life that were conspicuously absent in Romania. Whether it was about the American home or whether it was about the theater in America or whatever, there was a message in the exhibition that was aimed at people who were deprived of whatever the theme was. As a result, the Romanian government was really very unhappy at the enormous turnout we would get at these exhibitions. Usually the agreement stipulated two or three venues in the country, so we would not only take it to Bucharest, which is where they all had to begin, but we would go out to the other big population centers, to Cluj which was particularly important because the Romanians were beating up on the local Hungarian minority. That was a very big issue. We often had a way to communicate through an exhibition, support for the minority rights or whatever the issue was. So we were very keen to see that these agreements were scrupulously respected by the Romanians. We then were able to bring the exhibition, the concert, the whatever. They were the lifeline in a way, because that is almost all we were able to do. The whole embassy suffered as a result of this because the commercial contacts were very limited except to the extent that the Romanians saw the vital need for the hard currency that came in as a result of the commercial contacts. So they were slightly more receptive to that than to others, but the political relationship was almost dead in the water. Certainly the human rights thing as the ambassador chose to play it was like waving a red flag in front of a bull, and we did not have a very good relationship with Romania the whole time I was there basically.

Q: Was there an intellectual class you could deal with?

MCBRIDE: Yes, but they were scared to death because the system in terms of rewards and punishments was so pervasive. Neighbors were ratting on neighbors if they burned lights too long because you were only allowed 20 minutes or whatever it was a day. If you see a forbidden light coming on, your neighbor ratted on you and got an extra kilo of sugar because of that. So the whole climate was so repressive that it was very difficult for people with whom you did have any reasonable relationship even to see you let alone talk to you. I had made contacts that I would meet in huge public areas, markets or stuff where there would just be thousands of people going about all the time. And I would talk about a whole range of issues and learn a lot from the Romanians I had contact with about what was really going on, and as a result I became an important source of

information for the reporting from the embassy about what the situation was really like. So it was a tough time, and I think it was made more complicated by the position the embassy took through the very outspoken position of the ambassador who tended to interpret almost every aspect of the relationship through the human rights prism. So it was not a very pleasant time to be in Romania. In the end, I left before the fall of Ceausescu. I left in '82, excuse me, I left in '85. I arrived in '82. The fall when it came, was entirely predictable. He was the most widely hated man in the country, and the people that you talk to when you finally did break through the barrier, and they weren't afraid to tell you that he was loathed at almost every level. Everybody who claimed any connection to the intellectual community was horrified at what he was doing to the country and to the society and to the future of people. They and their country were all mortgaged because of this obsessive man.

Q: When you went to Cluj or something, what would you put on there; what was its effect?

MCBRIDE: Well one of the things I remember about Cluj was the big impact of a show on the American theater. We used the theater as a means of communicating because the exhibition showed you about the techniques of presenting plays and writing and directing and all sorts of things. There was a visual dimension to it, but there was also a real theater in the exhibition. The theater had regularly scheduled performances. The company that was performing was the Actor's Theater of Louisville, which is a wonderful theater company. They chose plays that had very relevant messages to contemporary Romanian society about freedom, about choice, about democracy, about man and his place in society. These were obviously very popular with the Romanians, and also a real thorn in the side of the Romanian government since they didn't like what was going on because the message was antithetical to everything the government stood for. But it was a wonderful way for us to reach out and to keep alive any semblance of contacts, not only with the common people in Romania, but also with the intellectual community, with the academic community, with the professional community, the theater community in this case. Therefore Cluj was maybe, I don't remember statistics, but I think the popular attendance was higher in Cluj than any other city in Romania because it was particularly relevant in terms of the Hungarian minority in there. Those exhibitions represented a very important breakthroughs for the embassy in general.

Q: What about the Fulbright program? I would imagine you wouldn't find people eager to return from their Fulbright program.

MCBRIDE: That was a big problem. There were a lot of defections, and we felt that was a two edged sword in a way because the point of the Fulbright program is that people come back to their countries as you know. To participate was a very difficult personal decision. But we did find that after defections, the pipeline would just dry up. The Romanians would refuse to accept any other than the very narrowly defined parts of the bilateral agreement that focused on the educational exchange program. They would be very critical of the attempt to bring anybody in who wasn't a technical person who would deal with issues that had no social or political dimension but who were engineers or that

kind of thing. We were, of course, interested in the exact opposite. So we had a lot of difficulty. I was summoned very frequently to the ministry of foreign affairs All this was run through the foreign office, so I would be summoned and be read a lecture about how we are trying to evade the principal in this bilateral agreement, and that the Romanian government was not going to approve any substitutes. Further, this was going to jeopardize not only the program but the bilateral relationship, the usual litany. But it became so routine that after awhile I would just go and I would listen and say thank you very much and go away. They know I would do nothing about it, but I would just go back and report that I was summoned yet again to the foreign office, and this is what they said. But it was tough.

Q: Well, you left there in '85. This probably is a good place to stop, but just to put at the end, where did you go in '85?

MCBRIDE: Could I do one more and that will leave the last two which I think will take a bit more time.

Q: Okay.

MCBRIDE: The thing that I did from there was to go to Madrid. I went to Madrid after coming back to Washington for Spanish language training. But the job in Madrid which I went to in 1986...

Q: You were there until when?

MCBRIDE: I was there until 1990. I had quite a long time in Madrid as it turned out for a reason that will emerge later, but it will be very easy and really fast to explain. But I went to Madrid to be the cultural attaché, again my own choice. I was happy to do that because Spain was just becoming a big player on the European stage having shaken off the last vestiges of the Franco regime. The new socialist leader of the country, Filipe Gonzales, was making a big splash in the world, and Spain was really opening up. We were eager to be in on this, and we wanted to particularly expand the Fulbright program in Spain, and so that was my main mission and mandate when I was sent out there. It was to try to expand and develop the Fulbright program, and to use another program that was a vestige from another earlier agreement that we had had with the Spanish government, the NATO Bases agreement we called it in shorthand. It was the part of the agreement that we had signed with Spain that allowed the American military presence in Spain. So we had many American military bases at that time in Spain. Part of the agreement at the insistence of the Spanish was that a percentage of the resources had to be used for education and cultural exchange to benefit the Spanish. The so-called bases agreement generated a fair amount of money for us to run these programs. The agreement generated a separate pot of money from the Fulbright program but related to it, and ultimately was administered by the same bureaucracy. What we had in Spain was a binational commission of long standing which had basically been there since the days of Franco, but with fairly restricted opportunities. Nonetheless we pressed for and got a new Fulbright executive director which I helped to find and hire. Suddenly, we had this incredible opportunity to

channel these funds from the bases agreement and to commingle them with the Fulbright money that was from the two governments. My job was to try to put this together and make it a bigger and better program. It turned out that the way we were able to do that was to involve the private sector in these programs in a big way. I think if I look back on it, that would be my most significant accomplishment in Spain. It was possible because we had a very sympathetic ambassador named Reggie Bartholomew who was also involved in the negotiation of the bases agreement. He understood very well what the various components of the bases agreement were, including the one that generated the money for these cultural activities. So he was very supportive. What he also was eager to see was how we could creatively involve the private sector in these programs. So with his complete blessing, we went out to expand funding for the Fulbright program. The public affairs officer and I did this together. We were both on the Fulbright committee together. But our job was to try to develop a program that would be as much focused on the private sector as we could and still preserve the integrity of the program. Now, I guess it is easy to say this, our control of those programs. We didn't want to surrender control for the money. And it was a very tricky road to walk here. But what we did was to go out to various corporations, largely American, which were very eager to expand. I mean there were plenty of Americans already there, but we found very receptive partners in the big American corporations who could see that Spain had a lot of catch up to do in fields like education where they had been cut off for a very long time. The Spanish to build up their institutions. We saw this as an opportunity to get their engagement and involvement in supporting these programs. So the long and the short of it was that the Fulbright program when I arrived in Madrid was a big program. It was funded at about 2.5 million dollars, and it was a good program, and it was well supported by both the Spanish government and the American government. But when I walked away from the program four years later, the budget had just passed 10 million dollars, the bulk of which came from the private sector. Suddenly there was a massive infusion of money and a huge jump in the size of the program. We were working with companies like IBM, Ford, a couple of the big banks, Merrill Lynch, all of whom had become partners in these exchange programs. It was particularly important with respect to Fulbright. We persuaded the sponsors to fund the scholarships was that we need to set a brand to the scholarships which would be co-branded. It would be the Fulbright- IBM scholarship or the Fulbright- Ford scholarship. The agreement we struck with the companies in exchange for their contribution was unique, and they had no say so on the selection or the discipline or anything. They were very generous about it. But what we did agree was the candidates who went off on these grants, when they came back to Spain, the IBM or whoever the sponsor was, had the first crack at employing that individual, and if they wanted to offer him a job, that was fine. He had no obligation to take it, but they had the first right of refusal so to speak. It worked very well. It was a pattern that was ultimately picked up by several other Fulbright commissions around the world, and the Fulbright program became a model in the sense of how to build public private sector partnerships. We did it with a lit of enthusiastic support from Washington because the Fulbright budget at that time was in decline. We were able to sustain a program, not only sustain it but to build it up over the years and to respond clearly to both American and Spanish interests. With the addition of the money we had from the bases agreement as it was called, we decided to use that money for what we called the cultural presentations program. We brought the

performing arts; we sponsored art exhibitions; we did publishing ventures. We used the other piece for the educational exchange. So we had an enormous program in Spain that involved big exchanges of exhibitions that had a another unique dimension in terms of cultural programs in other embassies. We could not only bring Americans to Spain, we could send Spanish projects to the United States, because we could use the bases money for that purpose as there was no restriction. So, for example, we worked very closely with the Guggenheim Museum in New York and did an enormous Miro exhibition that went to the Guggenheim thanks to a generous grant from this bases agreement support. We sponsored Spanish performing arts. We cosponsored the Spanish National Ballet which did a tour in the United States with a grant from this foundation. We also supported arts exchanges. Artists would travel around Spain and have an artist in residence program which we could not have funded under the Fulbright program. So we had the best of all worlds in a way with a program that not only allowed us to bring the best of American culture to Spain, but we could also sponsor Spanish cultural activities to the United States. The Spanish loved it.

Q: How did you find sort of the Spanish community, the arts, the intellectual community you were dealing with?

MCBRIDE: They knew that America was the cutting edge in things like the arts, particularly dance and the fine arts. The Spanish were really eager to catch up. They wanted to go and see and study, and they wanted to bring those exhibitions of artists, those works to Spain. So it was a wonderful time to be in Spain. The intellectual community was highly supportive. The universities wanted to establish new chairs. They wanted to wipe up some of the old vestiges of the bad old Franco days, and they turned to America to do that. So it was a great opportunity to expose America to Spain and Spain to America. We did it with the creative use of a lot of these programs, and a lot of money from both Spanish and American sources, public and private. It was almost an ideal way to see the programs blossom and develop because the receiving side was just as eager to benefit from them as the sender.

Q: Did you run across any, I won't say problem, but I mean here you are talking about the Reagan administration and the Bush administration, and you have got a socialist administration in Spain which was highly supported and touted particularly in Germany and Sweden and the socialists in France, the socialist side of things. Did you find yourself sort of in competition or did this come up?

MCBRIDE: It frequently came up, and I was always as surprised as I could be that we had such a warm and cuddly relationship with the socialist government, that in many ways was particularly out of tune with the government in the United States at the time. Because Filipe was pretty far left on the scale anyway, and dealing with President Reagan, President Bush was not always easy for him. But he was a pragmatic politician, and I think he deserves a lot of credit for that because he wouldn't let things get in his way if he saw in the end that Spain was going to be better off for it. So the Spanish really were wonderfully receptive. The political leanings of one government didn't get in the way of the other, and the Spanish intellectual class was very happy to pursue things American

because they say that in the disciplines where weaknesses existed in Spain, the strength was in America. So forging links between universities was relatively easy and straightforward. That made the Fulbright program work very well. So we were really lucky that all these stars came together at the same time. Madrid proved to be from my point of view certainly if not the highlight, a very close competitor for the best job I had in the foreign service, simply because we had so many good things going on. The one downer which will lead me to wind this down was at the end we were in the doghouse in Spain with the government. By this time the Bush administration was well established. I worked very closely on this with a new ambassador, Joseph Zapala, who was keen to make a big statement in 1992, the quincentenary of Christopher Columbus. The Spanish were eager to have us as strong partners because after all, we are the big success story of Christopher Columbus in a way. The idea was that we would be a very strong presence in the world's fair that was going to take place in Seville. The Spanish had been very actively courting the United States to make a strong statement and be a big presence at this event which was going to be the jewel in the crown as far as they were concerned for commemorating the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus. I came to the States a couple of times with the ambassador because we were getting trouble from USIA about participating in the Seville World's Fair. This position dated from Director Charlie Wick who promised Congress that we would not do any more worlds' fairs leftover from the Charlie Wick days that we would not do anymore world's fairs. But the Seville event was a world's fair. There was no way to participate without going back to Congress for a supplemental budget request. Nonetheless, I returned to Washington with the Ambassador top make the pitch. He was particularly keen to do this project and he wanted me to manage it. We went to see USIA; we went to the Department. We went to the White House. We got one of the trips to deliberately timed to coincide with the visit of the King of Spain. The King goes to the White House. Bush promises the King that we are going to be there. This is very reassuring until we go back. But USIA was hearing none of this and the money was not forthcoming. In the meantime we had however made a commitment to the Spanish to take the biggest plot on the whole fairground to put up this dazzling American pavilion. But the long and the short of it was we never got the money. It was clear to me after about a year into this, that the congress was not going to budge. We were not going to be able to get money from the private sector unless we had a pretty good infusion of public money to start it with, and that money was not there. Zapala, the ambassador, was pretty upset by this because he felt in a way that he had engineered this commitment by the President to the King of Spain that we would do this. So we got busy at the last minute trying to find a person who would go out and raise the money and would do so with minimal financial participation by the U.S. government, but that we would be nominally up front on it, but it would all essentially be private sector money. The person chosen to raise the money, selected by the Bush administration was not successful in convincing the private sector sponsors that we turned to to support this. As a result, we bitterly let down the Spanish. We had a recycled geodesic dome that was designed by Buckminster Fuller in the '60s that had been in storage somewhere that we built on the Seville site. As a result, we really made a non-statement of U.S. participation in this, and it was very embarrassing for everybody. At this point I left Spain having extended, having been extended at the request of the ambassador, to take on this job. I finally just went up to him and said, "You know, I am really sorry to be as bluntly honest

as I have to be with you, but I don't see this coming together." He admitted that he didn't either. I said, "As a result we can no longer justify my continued presence here because there is not going to be a big exhibition." There is not going to be justification for my involvement as deputy commissioner general. I said, "That is just not going to happen. There is going to be no show to run, and I feel that it would be unfair for me to stay here. USIA really wants to reassign me and send me somewhere else. I want to leave on a good note. I don't want to just run and jump from a sinking ship. I can see nothing further that I can do here, and I would like to get your permission to pursue another assignment." He wasn't happy about it, but he was very gracious. At that point in 1991, I guess it was, I left Spain, and did so very sadly because by this time I had persuaded the FBO to re-open the consulate in Seville which we had closed, to use as the residence for the commissioner. I had in fact moved down to Seville, and was in my fifth year of an assignment to Spain But I reluctantly left and declared that phase of it over. I am glad I did because the Spanish never missed an opportunity to tell us how disappointed and how sad they were that we dropped the ball as far as they were concerned. And indeed we did.

Q: Well we will pick this up the next time in 1991, and you went where, just to put at the end?

MCBRIDE: I left Spain and came back to Washington first of all with a short TDY assignment to Prague and then I went quickly to London.

Q: Well, we will pick it up then.

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Today is July 3, 2001. What happened?

MCBRIDE: I did indeed go to London. I got there in the summer of 1991. I spent the next four years very happily working as cultural attaché in embassy London. I did so under two very interesting ambassadors. The first, who was ambassador when I arrived was Ray Seitz, who has the distinction of being the only career ambassador who has ever served to the Court of St. James's. I still keep up with him and in fact go back to London quite frequently to see him in his new capacity as a very distinguished international banker. I think for J.P. Morgan. I may be wrong on that, but at any rate, I began the assignment in London as cultural attaché. The main thrust of the work there was not unlike Spain. It was basically educational exchange and other duties that involved American studies and trying to keep a little bit of interest in the performing and visual arts without a real budget. There were a lot of opportunities as it turned out because London was a popular destination for traveling exhibitions and many distinguished American performing artists who came there because it was a commercially viable situation. But let me begin if I may with the work in the embassy. We had a very active Fulbright exchange program with the United Kingdom. It was not large, not small. I guess it was something in the neighborhood of two million dollars a year in terms of budget, but we had a very wide ranging exchange program, and we facilitated it a great deal more because the Fulbright secretariat served as a screening vehicle for many other

private exchanges. We were happy to do that because we had a very able Fulbright commission there. The most significant issue in terms of Fulbright were related to staffing, well two related problems, one of which was fairly long term and the other was of fairly recent origin. The first challenge was to find a suitable accommodation for the offices because the leased space in which the commission had been operating for the last several years was suddenly no longer going to be available to us because the owner had decided to develop the property. We were given unfortunately a rather short time to find other accommodations for the commission. It was a difficult time because we had to face the commercial real estate market in the United Kingdom which in London as you probably can imagine is really pretty heavy going. What we did in the end was a fairly creative solution. I tried to convince my people in Washington that rather than doing this again and again, i.e. moving from one rented or leased property to another that if they could see their way from the present resources to give me a sum of money that was more substantial than the rent, that I would go to the British government to see if I could find matching funds, and we would try to buy a suitable property that would become then the permanent headquarters of the Fulbright commission. It worked, to make a long story short, but not without some fairly fancy footwork on both sides. We did indeed get permission from the two governments to proceed to buy a property. We then began the search for a suitable place, and we did ultimately find a very interesting old building, an 18th century building, but in very good shape because it had been renovated totally about three or four years prior to our purchase. It was in an interesting part of London very near London University in the Bloomsbury district. In the same street was the house where Charles Dickens lived, so it was altogether a very nice place to be. So we brought the house in Doughty Street. The two governments shared the cost. Actually we shared it in an interesting way. We shared it in a direct proportion to our contributions to the Fulbright commission. At that time, the U.S. government was putting up slightly less tan 2/3 of the money and the British government was putting up about 1/3 of the money. That is roughly the percentages we each produced to buy the property. We had a very interesting board member who was a London real estate developer and a very successful one. He helped us with a lot of the details and helped us locate the property, and negotiated a very good price for us. He also helped us arrange a commercial loan with one of the big London banks. With the two substantial inputs from the governments we managed to buy a property for something in the neighborhood of just under a million pounds, which is very good because it was a five story building on a corner, good real estate, good access. Everybody was happy with it, and it solved the long term housing problem.

Q: With the tube and all that.

MCBRIDE: It was perfect. A better location than we had before, so it all worked out very well. We then decided what we wanted to do was to name it in honor of the program founder, Senator Fulbright. So we called the Senator who had a very good and long standing relationship with London, and he agreed to come over and dedicate the building for us. So we were very pleased to have all that. One of our other board members at the time was John Cleese, the actor. He agreed to serve as master of ceremonies for our event. He was a very good draw in himself, so we used it as a fund raiser of sorts, and we had a

very nice invitation printed up, and did it all properly. Sadly about two or three weeks before, Senator Fulbright had a stroke and obviously couldn't come. We were in a bind, and in the end, his charming wife came and agreed to open the building on behalf of her husband and read a nice little note from him. It wasn't obviously the same thing, but it certainly saved us from a difficult situation. She was gracious and charming about it, and was very much able to play the role of Mrs. J. William Fulbright, which she did with great distinction, and we were very pleased. So the building opened and the program prospered. What it enabled us to do was to launch the Fulbright program in a new direction, which then brings us to the second problem that I said we solved. We had at that point a very distinguished retired naval officer, Captain John Franklin who had run the commission for many years, but who had reached the mandatory retirement age as far as the British law was concerned. So we had to find a new executive director. We launched a search for a new director, did it with the help of a very big and successful international head hunting firm who worked with us very closely. We recruited a new director, and ultimately succeeded in getting the commission headed in a new direction. What we tried to do was to bring the private sector into it in a major way because we were concerned that the two government's resources were not adequate to meet the demands of the program. We were also concerned because we had to turn down so many extraordinarily good candidates. So we mounted a drive not only to get ourselves moved which we did. but we then with the new executive director launched a real appeal to reach out to the private sector. In the process, I guess in about two years, we virtually doubled the budget of the Fulbright commission. We did it by going again to corporations who had an interest in the exchange program in terms of the qualifications of the people it would produce who ultimately become potential employees for them. So we in the end I think, turned it around. The program is still flourishing, and it has become kind of an example for others. I think there were a lot of firsts there. We were the first to actually go out and buy a place. A lot of offices had been donated to the commission through the years, but I think we were actually the first to mount the search and the purchase a building. We also succeeded in getting a professional head hunting agency involved in the search for an executive director. I think we really got a good and professional look at what was out there in terms of choice. We also got the commission into the business of sort of co-sponsoring awards. By that I mean if we found a sponsor in say Lloyds Bank, we would name the scholarship the Lloyds Bank- Fulbright award. We would brand it so to speak. That required some negotiations with the legal offices in Washington because in those days it was considered not perhaps the way to go, but we did finally overcome those obstacles. That I think, is now fairly well established as a legitimate way to augment the government resources for these kinds of exchanges. Let me stop for a minute.

Q: I just want to ask a question. I take it the place where you put the Fulbright commission was known as Fulbright House?

MCBRIDE: It is called Fulbright House, right.

Q: In the British terms I was thinking it would.

MCBRIDE: Yes, that is exactly what we decided to call it. It became a mecca. We used it. We used it for educational counseling, and that generated a little extra money for the commission because we could charge a fee for that. We also used it for college day events in connection with various American universities who wanted to sponsor events to recruit students. So we were able to use the property, and that was part of the justification for buying it. I think we did it with a fair amount of success. The other thing I would like to talk about for a minute with respect to London was something that was only peripherally related to the education and cultural exchange, but somehow involved the embassy and almost everybody else in London at the time. By this time we were under the leadership of Ambassador Crowe who had come along to succeed Ray Seitz Ambassador Crowe, as you know, had a very distinguished career before coming to diplomacy, and came to us from being chairman of the joint chiefs of staff. He was appointed by President Clinton to come to Embassy London. Under his leadership the so called Irish question came yet again to another head. The Irish question was interesting because there was a situation where we had an ambassador in Dublin, Jean Kennedy Smith, who was also very determined to see if she could find some way to help solve the problem. It frequently became a little bit difficult for the embassy in London because Ambassador Smith would, I don't think frequently, but she would occasionally decide to go up to Northern Ireland And she did so of course, crossing a boundary into another sovereign country, but it was still, you know the island as far as many people were concerned. But that caused, as you could imagine, difficulties in London, because without letting anybody in London know, and she would do that from time to time, occasionally making public speeches. Some of the points didn't necessarily reflect the current position of the US Government as far as the Irish question was concerned. So we did have some difficulties there. I think Ambassador Crowe represented the one saving grace in all of this because he dealt with what was obviously a very delicate situation very professionally, never lost his cool, or never started screaming about his counterpart in Dublin who didn't realize that there was an international border up there. But we obviously had some friction. The issue in question was of whether or not the United States would talk to Gerry Adams, who was at that time and still remains the head of the political wing of the IRA. Our position was that the IRA was by everyone's standards a terrorist organization, and that we didn't talk to terrorists basically. Mrs. Smith and to some extent the embassy in Dublin lobbied very strongly for the position that we weren't going to get anywhere unless we did talk to Gerry Adams if we wanted to play a role in all this. I think that sort of generated a certain amount of tension. I believe Ambassador Crowe ultimately intervened to reaffirm the position that the USG didn’t believe Gerry Adams should get a visa to travel to the United States to solicit money and of course win Congress to the cause of the IRA, because we were on record that the IRA was a terrorist organization. He was its leader, and there was a very clear prohibition against giving him a visa. Ultimately as you know, the president personally intervened and decided to give him a visa. That was certainly his right to do it, but it did, as you can imagine, cause a little tension as far as working at the embassy was concerned. The decision was in a way a problem for all of us who had territorial responsibilities in Northern Ireland, because Northern Ireland or the Northern Ireland programs were administered from embassy London. We were doing other programs in Northern Ireland outside of the context of the Fulbright program. We were trying very hard to do a lot of conflict resolution programs

up there among various strata of society. We would occasionally promote conflict resolution programs in an academic setting where the Fulbright program was involved. Sometimes we would use it in union terms in working with labor organizations. Sometimes we would promote it in a broader social context. Thus we had many ways to reach out to try to help, and so we were frequently in Northern Ireland. Sometimes it seemed that from the point of view of the government of Northern Ireland, we seemed to be speaking out of both sides of our mouth, depending on whether you were listening to the Dublin or the London view. So there was a little inherent tension in what we were doing. Looking back I guess, I felt very strongly that our position was very clear that the IRA was a terrorist organization, and that we shouldn't compromise on that. But in the end the president intervened, and we have all closed ranks and said that was his decision and we supported it. It proved to be a very smart move. In the end it brought the IRA to the table and although the situation is far from resolved, it certainly is better than it was five years ago when nobody was talking to anybody. So the Irish question was quite interesting. That, as I say, was the other activity that was going on. In terms of the more traditional cultural and exchange programs in London, the British could be a little arrogant and liked to talk down to us about American culture. The usual line was, "What is that?" We did a great deal to try to turn the other way and not pay any attention to the utter nonsense that that point of view represented. But it was fortunately rather old stuff, and the younger generation was very eager to learn more about America and its institutions, more than just the pop culture. But fortunately there were a lot of institutions on both sides of the Atlantic that were very keen to promote these kinds of exchanges through their own means. I guess the most active was a fine arts exchange program because there were many very important institutions in the UK that has strong and long standing ties to American institutions. The Tate museum was one example. They had every year at least one or two major American exhibitions. The Royal Academy did the same thing. The National Gallery was also less directly involved, but certainly a player in all of this as was the Heyward Gallery, all these were public institutions. What we could do is when we learned about a project, we could help by bringing the embassy into it as a player. The Ambassador would frequently host events when the two institutions, the American institutions and the British counterpart institutions were trying to raise money for the projects. We would work with the development offices, and occasionally the ambassador would host a lunch or a dinner, and the development director would use that as a means of making an appeal. It was quite effective. So I guess we would have to call this in the traditional sense, facilitative assistance. But it was a conscious effort to try to help the institutions that were bringing major American cultural events to London and to other places in the UK. We also worked, for example, with the Edinburgh Festival which I guess, is one of the oldest festivals in the world. They also were very good about bringing important, particularly avant garde American events there. So we saw a lot of the visual and performing arts, and our role was to try to be a helpful presence and to use our good offices in any way we could. I would usually work with the Ambassador's office to try to get him to host some sort of social event in connection with the exhibition or performance and obviously attend the event. Both Ambassador Seitz and Ambassador Crowe were really very good about that. I will tell you one little story about Ambassador Crowe that was quite amusing. I am sure he wouldn't mind; I have told it many times, and I have told him I told it. There was a big exhibition of William DeKoonig, the American

abstract painter at the Tate Gallery. DeKoonig as you know, painted a series of women, portraits. They were very unflattering, some were extremely abstract, not what you would look at as a pin up exactly. So we went off to this opening exhibition at the Tate Gallery. Ambassador Crowe was there and his charming wife, Shirley. We were all walking around with the director of the Tate who was trying to give us sort of a little highlight tour of the exhibition. When we got to one of these particular paintings that was quite small but a rather ferocious looking woman who had very hard, chiseled features and was against an abstract background, a typical DeKoonig painting. Ambassador Crowe turned to Nick Serota who was director of the Tate and looked at his wife and said, "It looks like a girl I used to date before I met Shirley." So he did have a sense of humor about it. He really confessed to me afterwards that he found that abstract paintings a little hard to deal with sometimes, but he never lost his sense of humor. Also he never hesitated to support one of these activities, if you could make a case for why it was important for the United States and particularly the American ambassador to be involved. He was a good sport about it, and I enjoyed working with him very much. He did a great deal in a quiet and very different way from Ray Seitz, but he certainly was a very fine ambassador, and it was a great pleasure and honor to work with him.

What else? We worked very closely with American studies in the UK, is the other single and the final thing I would like to talk about as far as London is concerned. The American studies programs in various British universities had mixed fortunes over the years. I mean it depended almost on the power of a personality who became interested in a particular subject. One of the places where the program had been very well run but had fallen into a period of decline with the retirement of the professor who had run it. The program was something that we the embassy had helped to create back in the ‘60s called the Institute for United States Studies at London University. The Vice Chancellor of the university called me up one day and asked if I could come down and talk. He said that he wanted to talk about resurrecting the American Studies program. I was delighted and said, "Yes, we would be very pleased to help." So we did work very closely with London University to establish, to re-establish the Institute for United States Studies. The tangible way we helped them was first of all to use the Fulbright program. We awarded a grant to the university to recruit an American Studies specialist who would come and run the program for a year while the university mounted a search for a serious full-time professor to run the program. In the end we at the embassy put up additional funds to help the actual recruitment process. In the end the institute did recruit a very distinguished professor of American studies from Harvard University who accepted the position and in fact is still there. I was in London about two or three weeks ago, and I saw him and he says that he is as happy as can be. He says it was the smartest move he has ever made. He has turned it around in a fabulous way because he has taken it off in new directions. By that I mean he is using a lot of American institutions and some very good connections that he had to build a distinguished lecture series. He brought the director of the FBI one time. It was William Webster I think. He brought the Reagan attorney generals through a personal connection that he had. He has brought many new and interesting people. Arthur Schlesinger came to lecture a couple of times. He has appointed a number of both distinguished British and Americans to the board. The current chairman of the board is Lady Thatcher. So he has done very well by American studies and has turned it around financially. It now is a very successful program that turns out about 20 or 30, no I guess

they turn out about 20 masters students a year. They have a Ph.D. program and a basic undergraduate degree as well. He really put it back on the map, and I tip my hat to him for his perseverance in holding out. He has now also accepted a tenured position by London University, and I think the fate of American Studies, at least at London University is secure. Also when I was there a few weeks ago, Oxford University saw the opening of a brand new building dedicated to American Studies that got its genesis in the last year that I was at the embassy in the '90s when Oxford mounted a very massive and well funded and well organized campaign to reach out to the Oxford graduates in the United States and in the UK to raise money to build a building and to fund an American Studies chair, which they did. That, I gather, is going very well now. There are now at least half a dozen other serious American studies programs that are working very well in the United Kingdom. The Fulbright program is a possible helping hand, but by and large the programs are now very well established and seem to work quite well on their own.

Q: I went through the American prep school educational system, and we got a good solid dose of English history. What about British schools? Probably more of the public schools than the state schools? But in your time did you see were they getting much of an opening to the United States.

MCBRIDE: It is not bad across the board as a generalization, and it isn't that sweeping, but it is certainly better than a lot of other European Secondary Schools Program There is a bias obviously, and there is room for improvement, but by and large, in American history and American geography, the British secondary school student is pretty reasonably informed. I mean as well as we would be with respect to American students studying in British institutions. I think it is not bad.

Q: Because I have done this my understanding of French, German, and Italian schools it is abysmal.

MCBRIDE: It truly is. My experience in Francophone countries would certainly support that. But I think in Britain they tend to be a little more interested, and also because there are so many American schools in the United Kingdom. In London alone I think there are at least six American secondary schools including the American School of London which has long been established there, and has a student body of well of 2,000 students. So it is a huge force and an enormous campus in north London and a very good record. I think they do a pretty good job. They also reach our to non American students obviously, but the fees are so high that it is kind of restrictive. But the public school system, that is in the American sense public, the state run schools in the UK, do in my view a pretty reasonable job. Now I can say that fairly confidently at least in the time that I was there, because we worked with the department of education on the secondary level, and we had a huge and maybe the biggest teacher exchange program in the world on secondary school exchanges. We had a program run jointly with the British and American governments that did teacher exchanges, so they exchanged houses, dogs, classrooms, everything. It was highly successful, and every year we had about 100 that went in each direction. So the American input to the state run system was pretty good.

Q: Well, I just was thinking, you were there form '91 to '95.

MCBRIDE: Oh, how could I forget this? One incredibly important thing, well important to me. The other two events that I was involved with that I should take a minute and talk about were we had two presidential visits while I was there. One of them was a fairly major one because it involved the commemoration of the 50th. anniversary of the D-Day Normandy landing. So it involved not only our president but also many heads of state who were present there. The part that did involve us in the bilateral sense was that the President was also offered an honorary degree by his old Oxford college, well it was offered by the University but it was all orchestrated by University College Oxford where he had been a Rhodes scholar. I was asked by the embassy to be the embassy control officer for the President's visit to Oxford. That was an experience like no other that I had had in the foreign service. But in this case it was a huge, huge whiff or nostalgia for the president because he had not been, I guess he had been back once, but he had not really been back to stay for very long since his days as a Rhodes scholar there. So he was really very keen to have this visit to Oxford. It was quite an experience working with the White House on the one hand which has a pretty good idea about how it wants things to work, and an institution like Oxford University which also has a pretty good idea about how it wants things to work. You would get these wonderful show stopping lines when you would go with some perfectly outrageous demand from somebody on the President's staff or somebody in the White House that was inconsequential. I mean it was not something directly from the president. I would go to the vice chancellor of the University and ask some outrageous thing. They would be very calm about it and then they would ask, You know, "Could you tell me why the president wants the parade route to be changed?" I would give the reason or whatever. They would say, "No we don't think we would like to do that because our experience, and we have been doing it this way for 600 years is that it works very well going this way." So you would get all that sort of stuff. But in the end it was a highly successful visit. The President obviously enjoyed it enormously. He stayed three hours longer than he was supposed to on his schedule which was quite frustrating for the folks down the line. But instead of surface transportation to the next event that had been programmed, we got a helicopter and flew him down to the coast somewhere afterwards. But the event at Oxford was really quite an eye opener. He loved it. The folks at Oxford I think, were quite pleased in the end about the way it went. We had an event at not only University College where he was a student, but because he was a Rhodes scholar and we involved the Rhodes establishment, we had a nice reception for all the current Rhodes students, American and others at Rhodes house in Oxford. That went down very well. The university authorities were very pleased that he spent so much time there. He gave a very nice speech in the Sheldonain Theater in Oxford. And to prove that Oxford is still the quirky kind of place, there was a very loud and pretty well organized demonstration going outside at the time of this speech. So when you listen to the recording of it, which we did, you can hear these voices of dissent in the background. To his credit, the president made reference to how important free speech was, and that he respected their right to do just what they were doing. He recalled that as a student himself, he had done that once or twice as well. So he did it all with a good deal of style and everything went down very well. That was a great experience, and the whole embassy London experience was very nice, too. Also on a personal side at that time, my youngest

son was the last of our children who was actually living with us at the time. But he was fortunate enough to win a scholarship to go to Eton. And he was at there for five years, and had a wonderful experience himself.

Q: How did he find when he went from there, I suppose he went back to an American university.

MCBRIDE: He did. He came back to Harvard.

Q: I talked to somebody who did that one time, a foreign service officer, and said that it was difficult, but he was brought up sort of in a British family, a British-American family. He found that this kind of back in the '40s.

MCBRIDE: It was interesting. I had conversations like that, too. I was always very pleased and flattered because it was a competitive scholarship. The thing at Eton was based on a competitive examination. When the time to go to university came, he was tempted to follow most of his colleagues to Oxbridge, and indeed applied to and got into Oxford. But in fact he didn't get into the first college that he wanted. He applied I think it was to Balliol. I forget what the other one was. But whatever it was, Balliol didn't offer him a place and the other one did. He decided that he really was only interested in Balliol. I said, "Well what are you going to do in terms of application to other institutions, because if you don't want to go to Oxford if you can't get into Balliol, where are you going to go?" So he did apply very quickly. I thought, although I wanted him to go to an American university, his attitude could use a little work here. He said, "I am going to apply to Harvard." I said, "Great, but where else?" He said, "No, I am only going to apply to Harvard." He did and he got in, so this story has a happy ending. But he went to Harvard from Eton with a little bit of a chip on his shoulder because I think the one thing that Eton turns out is boys with an attitude. But he also got a first rate education, I don't mean to belittle that. It comes with a little baggage. They call it confidence; I call it arrogance. But anyway he went to Harvard, and fortunately it worked. I mean fortunately because I think he jumped in and sort of saw this as totally different kind of experience, but one that he found pretty exhilarating. He had a great time at Harvard, and I think it worked for him. I could see, however if it hadn't worked, he would have been in a terrible mess. He took to Harvard like a duck to water. I think Harvard could also eat you alive if you weren't careful and sort of have a little give and take there. But I mean it worked okay and I am glad he did it. He is glad he did it, too, but it is also as a footnote interesting to report he went back and is currently working as a foreign correspondent for The Economist, So the London anchor is still there.

Q: Okay. Well, I think this is a good place to stop.

MCBRIDE: I think it is.

Q: What did you do after you retired?

MCBRIDE: I came back to America and had one quick assignment in USIA where I ran

something called the Office of Academic Programs which meant the Fulbright program basically. That was a very fine final assignment to have, because it coincided with the 50th anniversary of the Fulbright program. I was asked on behalf of USIA to organize the commemoration of that event. We did a wonderful program that involved, we got a grant from the Ford Foundation to do a study, and a research publication on the Fulbright program and what its goals and objectives for the next 50 years might look like. So that was a great way to go out. I did that job as I say for about three years, and then retired in 1998, or '99 which was it? But anyway I did that job for three years and then retired. I retired from the foreign service and from government service, but I went back to work afterwards as many people do as you know, and I am still doing it, for a presidential committee that promotes after the arts and the humanities. But I do it now on a part-time basis.

Q: Great, thank you very much.

End of interview