

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

FREDERICK H. SACKSTEDER

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is the fourth of August 1997. This is an interview with Frederick H. Sacksteder. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. I am Charles Stuart Kennedy and we'll start. I wonder if you could tell me when and where you were born, and something about your family.

SACKSTEDER: I'd be delighted to. I was born in New York City on July 12th, 1924 of an American father and a French born mother. My father was Frederick H. Sacksteder, but the H, in his case, was for his uncle Herman, which he refused to use, while mine stands for Henry, after my maternal great-uncle Henri. My mother was born in Perigueux in the southwestern Department of the Dordogne, in 1899, the only daughter of a professor at the Lycee of Perigueux, and the sister of the aforementioned Henri, whose family roots have been traced back to the Second Crusade. In 1917-1918, mother, a very good student who had an excellent command of English, was a volunteer at an American military hospital at Perigueux, where she worked with the ladies of the Red Cross. This led to an offer of a scholarship to Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, where she enrolled in 1919 as a junior. Two years later she received a BA with honors and a Phi Beta Kappa key. Moving to New York City, she enrolled at the New School for Social Research in the Masters' program. It was there that she met my father. He was born in Downer's Grove, Illinois in 1897, of English and German stock. In 1917, he was studying electrical engineering at the University of Illinois. When the U.S. entered World War I, he was among many students who volunteered, and he joined a group of his fellow students who formed a unit that became Battery F in a Field Artillery Regiment assigned to the 42nd so-called "Rainbow" Division, under the command of General Douglas MacArthur. A fellow Corporal of my father's in Battery F was Charles MacArthur, author of the Battery's war memoirs, "A Worm's Eye View of the War." He later married the actress, Helen Hayes.

The 42nd Division was one of the first American forces to reach the Western Front, and took part in the major battles of 1918 leading to the German surrender. Returning to the U.S. after occupation duty in the Rhineland, my father was hired by Western Electric International as an engineer, although he had not yet completed requirements for the degree. My parents married in 1922, and mother became a U.S. citizen “by marriage” under the law at the time. In 1925, father’s employers became International Standard Electric, which acquired WE’s overseas subsidiaries, and was later part of International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation. Father and his little family were then transferred to Europe, where we lived from 1925 to 1941.

Q: I think the date is rather significant, ‘41. How were you educated?

SACKSTEDER: Through a hodgepodge of different schools. First, in Madrid, Spain, where we had moved in 1926 after a year in Antwerp, Belgium, at a private Montessori-type school. My parents were active in the PTA-equivalent in Kindergarten in 1928-29. At this point, ITT transferred us to Romania where the company was installing a new telephone system. We lived in Bucharest for three years plus. In 1930, I started in the Elementary School section of the French Lycee, which seemed to be the school of choice for upper-class Romanians as well as the foreign colony.

Q: There has always been that very close tie between France and Romania which still exists today. At that school how were you received as an American? Any problems?

SACKSTEDER: I wasn’t really conceived of being an American by my fellow students, perhaps because French was still my first language. Bucharest at that time used to be referred to as the Paris of the Balkans, and it had a very mixed population but a very small upper-class community. We had an odd household because my younger brother, born in Madrid in 1926, and I, from infancy, had communicated with each other in French. My parents always spoke to us in English, so we knew English but we didn’t speak it. We had a German governess and we spoke Romanian to the household staff. It was a real tower of Babel, with each person speaking their own language and all understanding each other.

Q: How did this whole thing affect your written English?

SACKSTEDER: There wasn’t much written English until after we came to the United States for our first so-called home leave in 1934, when I was ten years old. That’s when my brother and I switched from French to English as means of communication. My parents had always insisted on our reading a lot in English even if we did not speak it. We began to write it, on a regular basis, after that visit to the United States when we spent about four months visiting family, mostly in Ohio and Illinois. Incidentally, my father’s contract had called for home leave every three years, but with the 1929 crash and the Depression, ITT simply couldn’t afford to pay our travel. They did, nevertheless, continue to pay their American staff their dollar salaries.

I am reminded of something that my father had told me many years after the event. At Bucharest, when we were there, there were very few Americans, and only a small Legation. We did not have any embassies in those days. The Minister had a Third Secretary, whose name was Foy Kohler, a bachelor who shared living quarters with another American bachelor who was there with the Y.M.C.A. They were my brother's and my "best friends" because they taught us to play softball. Kohler told us that he wanted to marry, but could not afford it!

It seems that during the early years of the Depression, the State Department did not always transfer funds to pay the overseas employees in a timely manner. My father and his telephone company colleagues, among others, tried to help out so that Foy Kohler, the American Legation Secretary, could pay his rent. In 1957-59, when I served on the Department's Spain/Portugal Desk, Kohler was Undersecretary for Political Affairs. He called me into his office, to ask for news of my parents, and mentioned that one of the reasons that he remembered my family was because of their help to him during his Bucharest assignment. It will be recalled that Foy Kohler had a very distinguished career, and also served as Ambassador to the USSR and as Director of the Voice of America.

Q: When did you leave Romania?

SACKSTEDER: In 1933, we went back to Madrid. After some weeks at the Palace Hotel, my parents found a villa near my former Madrid school in a residential "colony" called "Press and Fine Arts," where our neighbors were the historian Manuel Palacios, philosopher Ortega y Gasset, playwright Luis Arduin, whose four sons became our classmates and best friends. Now that Spain was a republic, the school had passed under the control of the Ministry of Education, and students had to take their final exams before Ministry officials. Every summer, we went to France for visits to our French grandparents, then to the seashore in Basque country. It was thus that we were in France in July of 1936, and Father was returning to Madrid when the Spanish Civil War broke out on July 18. We did not see him again until Christmas, when he was able to join us.

ITT/Spain was known as Compania Telefonica Nacional de Espana (Telefonica), and was run by American executives and engineers under a joint Spanish/ U.S. Board of Directors, chaired by the Duke of Alba, Spain's leading grandee. ITT's contact with the Spanish government, drawn up in 1927, required that a majority of the American Directors be resident in Spain. Thus, the company elected some of its engineers, including my father, to the Board. Consequently, he spent most of the Civil War years, until April 1939, in Spain: first in Madrid, and when the Republican government left the besieged capital, at Valencia, and finally, Barcelona. American dependents who, unlike us, were in Spain in 1936 were evacuated to France, through the port of Valencia, by a U.S. Navy cruiser. Meanwhile, the recently installed and up-to-date telephone system in Spain continued to function, even across enemy lines.

Q: You were in Southern France?

SACKSTEDER: At that point, my parents had to decide what to do with their two sons' schooling. They had heard of a small English school at Pau, in the foothills of the

Pyrenees, called Park Lodge, where we could be boarders. For the next four years, we were boarders at Park Lodge. Incidentally, we learned that a somewhat older boy, a young man by the name of Robert McBride, whose father was a fruit exporter in Malaga, had just left Park Lodge to go to Princeton, which spoke pretty well for the school. In 1957-59, McBride was Director of the Office of Western European Affairs. Thus, as Iberian desk officer, I worked for my fellow Park Lodge alumnus. We worked together again later, when he was Minister at Madrid, and I Consul at Barcelona, and when he was Ambassador to Mexico in the early 1970s and I worked on the Mexican border issues from El Paso, Texas.

Park Lodge School had been founded in the 1920s by an American by the name of Chadbourn, whose son Philip Chadbourn, an FSO, served with me at Consulate Lyon in 1952-1953. Our school head when we were there was a former British Army Major, married to the daughter of an English Earl. He must have had private means because the school was very small. One year we had six boarders and one day-student, and about as many on staff. With the exception of the mathematics class, taught by a German from the Sudetenland, an ardent Nazi, who was later revealed to have been a Gestapo agent, we used a tutorial system based on independent reading. Somehow, it worked, and we got a pretty fair education. In 1939, our German “master” disappeared, but later, after the fall of France, he showed up in Pau, in the uniform of a German officer, in the capacity of “City Commandant.” We heard that he requisitioned the school for his HQ. He eventually was sent to the Russian front, where he died.

In 1938 we enjoyed our second “home leave” that fall. Our parents wanted us to see more of our country, so they scheduled a transcontinental train trip to California, where our American grandmother was living. This included visits to some of the National Parks: Grand Canyon and Sequoia, and visits to our only uncle and his family. It was while there that we anxiously followed the European situation, in particular, developments in Czechoslovakia and the Anglo-French appeasement of Hitler. I remember father cautioning friends (he attended, and spoke at, a 42nd “Rainbow” Division reunion while in California), that another war was inevitable, to the disbelief of most of his listeners.

The President of ITT, Sosthenes Behn, had ordered us to leave France for Spain in the summer of 1939, as ominous rumblings filled the news. So it was in Madrid that, on September 3rd, we heard of the invasion of Poland. When all remained calm in the West, and the Anglo-French allies and the Germans on the other side of the Maignot Line settled into the “funny war,” we were told we could return to Pau and to Park Lodge. But conditions changed dramatically in the Spring of 1940 with the German invasion of Denmark and Norway, then the Netherlands and Belgium, and finally, France. This led to the military evacuation at Dunkirk, and to the flood of refugees fleeing southward ahead of the German “panzer” armies and their terrifying Stuka dive bombers.

Pau had been declared an “open city,” the numerous resort hotels (Pau was for years a favorite winter resort for well-to-do British) converted into emergency hospitals to care for both military and civilian wounded. The local authorities called for volunteers to assist at the RR station where the refugee and hospital trains were unloaded, to help in

relocating these homeless persons, and generally to provide messenger services. We were identified by the fact that we wore Boy Scout uniforms, and we had our bicycles for transportation. The head of our school decided in May that classes should be suspended, so that we could assist the Red Cross full-time, and this went on until the total collapse of French resistance, after the French government had left Paris for Bordeaux, and the German army was moving fast toward the Spanish border.

My father decided that the time had come to get us out of France.

Q: You were far enough removed from the German advance I suppose so that you could get out easier, or not?

SACKSTEDER: Father had driven up to the border with France, and telephoned us from there about noon, on, I think, June 19, and said that he would be in Pau in about three hours, and that we should be packed and ready. Although our main interest was in taking our bicycles, we did get most of our things together, and were ready when he arrived. Shortly, we were on our way to the coastal road from Bordeaux to Hendaye on the border, where we arrived only a few hours ahead of the first German units. We crossed into Spain at Erun that evening and without difficulty because Father was well-known to the Spanish authorities, and because we had Spanish resident visas. Many thousands of refugees of all nationalities in southern France were not that fortunate.

Q: What about your mother?

SACKSTEDER: Mother was in Madrid, waiting for us. She went through some very anxious moments waiting to hear that we were again in Spain. By the next day, we were in Madrid.

A couple of months after we returned to Madrid, the company transferred my father to a totally different job in Lisbon. Both ITT and the U.S. government were eager to extricate from German occupied Europe as many as possible of ITT's scientists, engineers, and technicians. Some of them were Jews, and their move to the U.S. most surely saved their lives. Father was responsible for making the necessary arrangements, i.e. obtaining Spanish and Portuguese transit visas, arranging with the American Consulate for U.S. visas, lining up sea or air transportation from Lisbon to the U.S., and generally assisting them during their stop-over in Portugal. A substantial number, with their families, were successfully sent to the U.S., where they were able to make contributions to our defense build-up.

Q: I'm sure, yes, electronic experience.

SACKSTEDER: Electronics, exactly. For example, the system known as "degaussing" of ships, which protected a steel ship from magnetic mines by neutralizing them, was developed by some of these people. Others provided the critical skill needed to develop high-frequency direction finding which could accurately locate German submarines during the Battle of the Atlantic. Known as "Huff-Duff," this was rushed into production,

and after we returned to the U.S. in August of 1941, Father was charged with managing the plant in northern New Jersey that manufactured the equipment. Later, when I was serving in the Navy at the end of the war, we had the direction finder on my Destroyer-Escort.

Q: You came back in '41 so you would have been about 17 then?

SACKSTEDER: Yes.

Q: While you were in Portugal, did you go to school?

SACKSTEDER: I went to an English school called St. Julian's School. It was situated in the part of a large "Quinta" on the coast, between Lisbon and Estoril to the west, where we lived. Also on the grounds were the relay facilities of a British cable company which linked the UK with Africa and South America. The "senior class" equivalent, boys' section, consisted of just three sixteen and seventeen year-olds, two Anglo-Portuguese and me. On the girls' side, there were many more students, as was the case in the lower school. For me, it was a year of brushing up on material that I had already studied, and having a structure to organize my time. Father gave my brother and me a little sailing dinghy. I learned to play golf. Played a lot of tennis, and some cricket. We rode a couple of times a week at a riding academy, and I had a very nice English girlfriend. St. Julian's is still going strong, and is the local school of choice for English-speaking children of diplomats posted to Lisbon. I still receive alumni newsletters.

Q: How did you get back?

SACKSTEDER: We had arrived at Lisbon from Madrid on August 8, 1940. By coincidence, we left Lisbon on August 8, 1941, when we boarded Pan American Airline's flying boat, the Dixie Clipper.

Q: You went to the Azores, and then to where?

SACKSTEDER: Right. We went to the Azores, to Horta, where we had lunch on shore. Then we had a long over-night flight to Bermuda, where we had a meal at the U.S. Navy seaplane base, and finally on to New York and the so-called Marine Terminal. We were in the air about 27 hours. The Clipper was not exactly fast, about 100 knots, but remember that this was a flying "boat." It did, however, have a lot of endurance. Pan American told us that the Sacksteder family was among the first 2,000 people to fly across the Atlantic, starting with Lindbergh.

Q: So many people were trying to get out. Were you aware as a young lad of the huge backup of people in Portugal?

SACKSTEDER: We were, indeed, because this was the chief subject of conversation, and because we were constantly seeing people off. And we also knew who were on waiting lists, for U.S. visas, or for transportation, Pan American Clipper, or ship. There

was one American Export Line ship about every ten days. These ships were about 15,000 tons displacement, and carried about 150 passengers, as well as some cargo. To accommodate this number, some of the public spaces had been turned into men's dormitories. Called the Four Aces, they were the SS Exeter, SS Excalibur, SS Excambion, and SS Exochoda (sic). Father knew the Captains and Pursers, whom he wined and dined at ITT expense, and my brother and I and some of our friends were invited aboard for American treats like apple pie and ice cream. By the way, these four Aces, serving later as troop transports, were all lost to German U-boat attacks. They were replaced by a second set of Aces after the war, and my parents and my own family made transatlantic crossings on them.

The air traffic in those days consisted of one Clipper per week, when they could make it. The big problem was the sea conditions in the open roadstead at Horta, in the Azores. This was an essential stop-over for refueling in both directions, but if the swells at Horta exceeded a certain level, the Clipper could not be set down. Result: canceled or aborted flight. ITT president Sosthenes Behn came through Lisbon on the clipper every two to three months, and more than once would leave Lisbon in the morning, only to return the same afternoon because of weather conditions developing at Horta. With so many travelers coming through Lisbon, we held "open houses" a couple times a month. Among the guests would be American legislators, military officers, and diplomats, many of them bound for England and changing to British "Sunderland" flying boats at Lisbon.

My assigned job at these functions was bar-tending; the "house drink" was bourbon old-fashioned; the bourbon whiskey courtesy of American Export Line. While I plied my trade, I had interesting chats with some very interesting men. As can be expected, the traveling public in those days was almost entirely male. I remember a General Smith, nicknamed "Howling Mad" on his way to England, and who later was famed for his conduct at Guadalcanal. A passing Congressman, who, I think, liked my old-fashioned, and with whom I talked sailing, offered to appoint me to the Naval Academy. Dad later told me to forget about it; our guest just wanted to be "nice."

Q: You came back to the U.S. in 1941, when you were in 17. What happened?

SACKSTEDER: I could probably have been admitted to college in the fall of '41. It was not at all difficult in those days, but our parents felt that, not having lived in the U.S., their sons needed some time to become "acclimatized" to life in America. We were very fortunate. Mother had kept in touch (she was an extraordinary letter-writer) with college friends. One of them helped us get into the George School, in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, a Quaker, co-educational boarding school. It was the perfect solution, and gave me one year (my brother two) to find our place in American society. Although most of my classmates had been in school three or four years, my fellow seniors accepted me very readily, and I became a very active member of the class. There was a great deal of interest in my European life and education. I formed life-long friendships there.

On Sunday, December 7, I had attended the Quaker "service" at the nearby meeting house. When I walked back to the Main Building for lunch, the news of the attack on

Pearl Harbor was on the radio. War was no longer something going on in Europe that Fred Sacksteder talked about.

Q: What happened after your year at George School? By this time it would have been 1942.

SACKSTEDER: Right. And we were in the war. Graduation was in early June. I had, of course, by this time, been thinking of college, and remember speaking to my parents about Harvard. I did not know much about it, beyond the name and the reputation. This drew a negative reaction, on several accounts. First, the cost, then the size of the school and the origins of the student body. Mother, in particular, thought that I would fit better in a smaller college. She spoke of Amherst, which she knew from her Mount Holyoke days, so during the Easter holidays we went up for a visit. I had been doing acceptably at George School, the only real transcript I could present. Dean of Admissions Scott Porter asked me about our life in Europe and my education there, and admitted me to the class of '46 then and there. I believe that tuition, room and board, and fees was then \$900 per semester, which is what Park Lodge had cost per school year (at the then prevailing very favorable dollar-franc exchange rate). It was understood that I would work in the dining hall to earn my board.

Q: Most of the young men were off somewhere else. So you went to Amherst and were there from '42 until?

SACKSTEDER: First, I decided that since I would sooner or later, probably sooner, have to enroll in military service, I should take advantage of the accelerated program offered by the college, which meant starting with a summer session. So, in just over two weeks after graduation, I was on the way to Amherst. Close to half my class did the same, as did smaller percentages of the preceding classes. Having turned 18 in July, I was registered for the draft.

In the fall of 1942, we learned of a program which was to be launched by the Navy, called V-12. The program was to lead to Naval Reserve commissions as “desk officers,” in contrast with V-5, which led to Naval aviation. The Navy promised to provide up to three semesters of college, depending on the academic standing of each student accepted for the program. In my case, I would continue in college for three additional semesters, with pay and in uniform, and under Navy discipline. In exchange, the student would be required to study certain subjects considered pertinent to naval officer training, i.e. navigation, meteorology, physics, even mechanical drawing. I signed up, and was accepted and “sworn-in” during the fall of 1942. I then continued at Amherst, finishing three semesters in June of 1943.

It was then that the Amherst men selected for the V-12 program, including some 60 of my classmates, receiving orders to report to the V-12 unit at Williams College. It was well known that the two schools are historic rivals! At least one Amherst man, Stansfield Turner, '45, told me later that he had been accepted for V-12, but chose an appointment to the Naval Academy, preferring Annapolis to Williamstown. He made the Navy his

career, wore four stars as Admiral, and was appointed Director of Central Intelligence by his Naval Academy classmate, Jimmy Carter. On the other hand, another member of '45, William H. Webster, who also served as Director of Central Intelligence, came to Williams and was my platoon leader.

Q: For the record I have to confess that I am a William's graduate. I went there from 1946 to 1950. Were you finding as you were doing this that you were having to play catch-up on Americana, on American history, baseball teams, both the culture and the guts of the matter, the politics and all that?

SACKSTEDER: I had done most of the necessary catching up during my year at George School. I knew as much as my contemporaries about the United States, our government, and politics. Remember that expatriates such as we, who lived outside of the U.S., were no less conscious of their unique citizenship, and perhaps more so than many who had lived their entire lives in America. In addition to reading American history, both in Europe and since returning to the U.S., I acquired a more than superficial understanding of such Americana as Major League baseball. The summer of 1942 I followed the radio broadcasts of Red Sox baseball from Fenway Park, and the achievements of my personal hero Ted Williams and his .400 batting average. In fact, Ted Williams and a group of major leaguers who had been "enlisted" by the Navy were assigned to Amherst college early in '43, pending their re-assignment to major Navy bases, where they were to play for NAVY. I was then working as a waiter in Valentine, the college dining hall, and was assigned a table of ball players, including Ted Williams. Was I proud!

Q: Going back now to the V-12, were you pointed towards anything while you were in the V-12 program?

SACKSTEDER: First and foremost, you wanted to stay in the program. If you failed V-12, you were quickly on your way to "Boot Camp," and service as an enlisted man. I was one of many whose grades improved markedly while at Williams, away from the distractions of Smith and Mt. Holyoke. Other than the above-mentioned "Navy prep." courses, we carried full loads of college credit courses. I emphasized political science, which became my major, and took every class I could with Frederick Schumann...

Q: Yes, red Fred. It was Frederick L. Schumann who wrote THE standard textbook on international politics called "International Politics." One of the targets of Senator McCarthy.

SACKSTEDER: I think it was even before that. I think the Truman committee got after him.

Q: I must say Williams' stood up very nicely for him, supported him. I was there at the time.

SACKSTEDER: He was an excellent teacher. I also took a seminar course with James Phinney Baxter, our president, who taught this course on Friday nights. He worked with

Vannevar Bush at the Office of Scientific Mobilization or something like that in Washington. He would commute by train back and forth and taught this course on naval history. He only took a few of us for it and I was fortunate enough to be one of them. The fascinating thing was he really spent more time telling us what was going on in Washington than he did on naval history.

Q: He wrote a book called "Scientists Against Time" which won a Pulitzer Prize for history in about '46 or something like that. It was about the scientific efforts during World War II done by that office.

SACKSTEDER: That's right. The only thing one might have against Williams' at the time, minded there were no automobiles, Williamstown is pretty isolated. The nearest college was Bennington.

Q: Which is 20 miles away.

SACKSTEDER: Fourteen. I happen to know exactly because one evening I had a date in Bennington and missed the last bus and had nothing to do but to walk back all the way. There was nobody on the road to hitchhike with. I was in uniform and if somebody had come along I'm sure they would have stopped and picked me up, but I ended up walking back. It was nevertheless a good year. The first part of my sophomore year at Amherst when everybody was "off to war," was academically nearly disastrous. I dropped to a C average. The enforced solitude of Williamstown saved my academic average and I ended up doing very well up there. In June of 1944 I finished my year there.

The navy had a horde of young men ready to go to midshipman school and not enough capacity at the schools. Arbitrarily, the first half of the alphabet went to midshipmen school and the second half of the alphabet were sent to Asbury Park, New Jersey, where they converted two beach front resort hotels into a pre-midshipmen's school, which was just a holding tank. I spent three months there doing gymnastics on the beach, running up and down ladders as they called the staircases, doing K.P. and all the other nice things that boot camp would train you in. Finally, in September they reached the lower part of the alphabet. I was lucky, I drew Northwestern in Chicago which was referred to generally as the "country club" of midshipmen schools.

In January of '45 I was commissioned as Ensign, USNR. I still couldn't get away from school because I was assigned to Harvard, to the Communications School. How Navy Personnel figures things out is rather interesting. They told me that given the fact that I spoke foreign languages, I ought to be a good communicator. Communications in the navy means knowing about radios and things like that. So I went to the Communications School at Harvard. I had married the day I was commissioned so I went there with a bride. The Navy had decided that I would be a communicator on a Destroyer type ship and for that they wanted me to be qualified as a deck officer as well, so they shipped me down to Miami to what they called the General Line School. By the time you left you were qualified to stand deck watch, as a senior watch stander. Finally, in June of 1945, I did get assigned to a ship, a Destroyer-Escort undergoing conversion to an Attack

Transport. It had been kamikazed in Okinawa and the officer I was to replace had been killed.

Q: You mentioned kamikaze, this was a Japanese suicide bomber.

SACKSTEDER: That's right. The ship was the USS England, (APD-41). Although Destroyer-Escorts had inadequate anti-aircraft firepower, and should not have been placed in the "picket-line" between Okinawa and Japan, the Navy put some in to relieve Destroyers which had been taking a serious beating. ENGLAND took her turn, and, in due course, came under attack by two Kamikaze aircraft at the same time, a common tactic. One was shot down, and the second damaged, but the AA fire was not sufficient to splash it. He crashed into the conning tower, started a fire, and took forty lives. As a Destroyer-Escort, USS ENGLAND had a very distinguished war record. During an eleven-day period at the blockade of Truk island, she sank six Japanese submarines which were trying to break the blockade, all confirmed sinkings, using a new anti-submarine weapon called "Hedgehog," which fired a pattern of charges ahead of the ship while still in sonar contact with the target. The ship's message file made fascinating reading. The final message, forwarded to the ship by President Roosevelt, was signed, "A Former Naval Person," and read "May there always be an England."

Q: This of course, the formal naval person is....

SACKSTEDER: Winston Churchill. The previous sinkings were marked by other congratulatory messages but this, the president relayed to the ship. There is still an ENGLAND in the U.S. navy. Somebody has remembered. The ENGLAND wasn't named for England, it was named for an officer by that name, a pilot, who was killed at Pearl Harbor.

USS ENGLAND welcomed a new skipper about the time I reported for duty. Lt. Commander Phillip Le Boutillier returned from the Pacific, where he had already commanded an Attack Transport. He was the son of the owner of Best&Co., and upscale New York department store, and from a noted yachting family. Our ship had been assigned to the Pacific fleet for the November '45 invasion of Japan. ENGLAND was to carry the Underwater Demolition Teams that were to clear of obstacles one of the Kiushu invasion beaches. Fortunately, we did not have to carry out the invasion plans, for the task assigned to us could have been suicidal, in view of the Japanese defense preparations. At the end of August '45, the Navy decided to de-commission the ship, and I received orders to report as Communications Officer of a new Destroyer-Escort, the USS SCROGGINS (DE-799), which was serving as a training ship for the submarine school at New London, CT. This was pretty tame duty: every day, five days a week, we steamed out of New London and to Block Island Sound. There we sailed a pre-set pattern and served as a "target" for submarines training sub-mariners in torpedo attack tactics, firing dummy torpedoes. If the torpedo, set to run lower than our keel, passed under us, it was considered a hit. If not, it was a miss. After the day's run, we returned to port. It was like commuting to work! The Navy also assigned us to duty out of Norfolk, VA with a Carrier Task Force. The objective was to see if our newer turbo-electric Destroyer-

Escorts could substitute for Destroyers in screening and plane-guarding Aircraft Carriers. We could, at “flank” speed, do better than 25 knots, but we soon learned that not only did we not have enough speed, but we seriously damaged our boilers, which meant time in the ship yard.

By mid-April of 1946 I was released to inactive duty in the Naval Reserve, continuing to serve as a temporary reservist with the rank of Lieutenant until 1956.

Q: Had you finished college by this time?

SACKSTEDER: No. I had one year to go, and opted to return to Amherst as a senior, with a wife and an infant son. Finishing in February of 1947, I applied to take the Foreign Service Entrance examination.

Q: How had you heard about the Foreign Service?

SACKSTEDER: Many of our closet friends during the sixteen years we were in Europe were in the U.S. Foreign Service. I thought that my background would be helpful in such a career.

Q: At Amherst what were you back to, international politics or what?

SACKSTEDER: I continued my political science major, and also studied economics with Colston Warne (sic) who was founder of the Consumers Union, and History with Lawrence B. Packard, a naval historian. For the foreign language I chose German, on the ground that I was already fluent, or bi-lingual, in French and Spanish. It turned out that four years later my German helped, when I was assigned to Germany. By the way, during my time at Williams, I met a former Spanish diplomat by the name of Antonio de la Higuera, who was teaching Spanish. He had continued to serve the Spanish Republican government as Consul in Mexico during the Spanish Civil War, and was not welcome by the Franco regime. So he ended up as a refugee in the U.S. We became friends, and got together informally for conversation. He did not have many opportunities to chat in his own language. We met a couple of times in his apartment. Years later, in 1960, when I served at the American Embassy in Madrid, I learned that de la Higuera had returned to Spain at the end of World War II, thanks to the efforts of a brother who was the Bishop of the Diocese of Madrid. He was also restored to his rank in the diplomatic service, and ended his career as head of the Consular service in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

I finished college in February of 1947, and decided to take the Foreign Service entrance exam that year. At my parents’ suggestion I went to Washington (we were then living with my wife’s parents in Westchester County, New York) to speak with friends of theirs. One was C. Burke Elbrick, then Assistant Chief of the Eastern Europe division. He had been in Lisbon while we were there, and the two families had kept in touch.

Q: He was my ambassador to Yugoslavia, a very distinguished diplomat. I think very highly of him. He was one of those who, along with Claiborne Pell or Douglas

MacArthur, was there at one time in Lisbon working to get refugees out.

SACKSTEDER: Right. So I called on Burke Elbrick, and we shared memories of Lisbon in 1940-1914. When I told him about my plans to take the Foreign Service exam, he said, "You should speak with Franklin P. Roudebush." Burke arranged that we meet, and Roudebush kindly made some suggestions to help me prepare for the written exam, and gave me a reading list.

Q: Roudebush had a cram school for the Foreign Service.

SACKSTEDER: Yes. He did not suggest that I come to Washington for his cram school, but he did give me a pretty good idea what the examination process would be like, and he was sure right. I then took the two and a half day exam in an old Federal building in downtown New York, in the summer of 1947. Candidates were required to pass a test in one foreign language, but could take it in two languages, which I chose to do. After the exam was over, I was convinced that I had done poorly, except for the French and Spanish language tests. I thought that I would have to take the exams again in 1948. In the meantime, I learned that my father's company, I. T. & T., as a corporate sponsor of a foreign affairs school in Washington, could designate a student. This was SAIS, the School of Advanced International Studies.

Q: It's run by Johns Hopkins.

SACKSTEDER: In its early years, SAIS was an independent school, the creation of Christian Herter and Paul Nitze, founded by the corporate contributions of such as ARAMCO and other major oil companies, I. T. & T., and G.E. The link with Johns Hopkins came several years later. I was in the second class. We lived and ate on the school premises at 19th and Florida Ave NW. My next door roomer was Clifton Wharton, Jr. In late fall of 1947, I received my exam grade. To my considerable surprise, I had passed, with a bare passing score of 71. I did receive 100s in both foreign languages, but this was not weighed in with the other exams.

Q: Yes. I passed mine with a 69.8 or something. I was averaged into the Foreign Service.

SACKSTEDER: One of the students at SAIS was Helen Green, the daughter of Joe Green.

Q: Known as Jerry Green or was this a different Joe Green?

SACKSTEDER: Joe Green was the long-time Executive Director of the Board of Examiners for the Foreign Service.

Q: Did you take an oral exam?

SACKSTEDER: Yes, but that came later. I had mentioned to Helen Green that I had passed the written exam; she suggested that I see her father. So I called on Mr. Green,

who was located in one of the temporary buildings on 23rd Street. He asked me what I had done with my life to date, and I told him. He said, "Young man, you've never done anything but go to school." "Well, sir, that is pretty much the case, even in the Navy." He replied, "My suggestion is that you try to find yourself a job. We will be more impressed by someone who comes to us with work experience, not just school after school."

I did not know where to start. At the end of the semester at SAIS I went back to New York and visited I. T. & T.. One of my father's good friends was the Executive Vice President of International Standard Electric (I.S.E.), the manufacturing subsidiary. He said, "As a matter of fact, I am looking for someone to be my Administrative Assistant, who can take on special assignments for me. Your foreign languages would be useful. We could call you 'Protocol Officer,' since you plan to be a diplomat." The main job was meeting, greeting and taking care of executives from I. T. & T./I.S.E.'s world-wide subsidiaries visiting headquarters in New York. I would escort these visitors to the company's laboratories and manufacturing plants and to their meetings with the senior executives of the company. On occasion during baseball season I would take the visitors to the I. T. & T. box at the Polo Grounds, and explain the game to them, if necessary. Even if it was not a real job, it was a job. And even if I seemed to be paid a small salary out of "petty cash," I was paid. I also received a number of tempting jobs within the I. T. & T. system, mainly in Latin America.

When I was summoned again to Washington for the oral exam, in late spring of 1948, I was again in the presence of Joseph Green. This time, he was behind a long table at one end of a long room, flanked by four or five other serious-looking greying gentlemen. I was invited to take the solitary chair that was placed in the middle of the room, and the questions began. I might add that I was one of two candidates examined that morning. The first was called in by Mr. Green as I arrived. He came out, smiling, in less than a half an hour. I later learned that he had passed the written exam with one of the highest, if not the highest, grade.

Q: Do you recall the questions that were asked?

SACKSTEDER: Not specifically. Most concerned American history, and most of those dealt with our Civil War- not only Bull Run and Gettysburg, but various engagements in the Middle West. All too often, I had to answer, "I don't know, Sir."

Q: What happened after that?

SACKSTEDER: When I dared glance at my watch, I saw that I had been "on the hot seat" for over an hour- and it felt like three! A few minutes later, Joe Green called me in again. He was alone. I was very crestfallen, and must have shown it. Then he informed me that I had passed, but he urged me, on behalf of the panel, to do a lot more reading on American history. I did, I should add, and still do. Then Mr. Green said, "Don't quit your job, just yet. For budget reasons, we are not going to offer any appointments for some time, at least a year."

Indeed, that is what happened. I continued with my “job” at I. T. & T.. I was also enrolled in a U.S. Naval Reserve training unit and had been promoted to Lieutenant (j.g.). I. T. & T. was very generous in giving me leave to serve on temporary active duty and I served for over a month on a Destroyer during the 1948-49 winter fleet exercises in the Caribbean, and during a training cruise the following summer. I also contacted the CIA. They were interested, and pending a security clearance, offering me a P-1 temporary appointment during the summer of 1949. Most of my time with the Agency was spent doing some research on Latin America in the Library of Congress. In November, I received a phone call from State Department Personnel. They were recruiting, from the list of eligible FSO candidates, a group of young officers to serve with the U.S. High Commission in Germany as Kreis Resident Officers, or KRO’s. Military government in Germany was phasing out. KRO’s would take over some of the functions of the local Kreis, or County, Military Governors. One of the requisites for these assignments was military service as commissioned officers during World War II. I accepted, without hesitation or regret, and my CIA contacts were quite understanding. On December 6, 1949, 27 of us were sworn-in as F.S. Staff officers (pending our future appointments as FSO’s). Nearly all were married men, some with children. The others were “engaged” to marry. We ranged, in age, from the mid-twenties to mid-thirties, with one older exception, and in former military rank from lieutenant to lieutenant-colonel.

We promptly began a three-month indoctrination at what passed then for the Foreign Service Institute, located in a row house on C street (about where the entrance is now). Mornings were devoted to intensive German language training, with native speakers meeting with five or six students at a time. Afternoons we learned from a High Commission officer, detailed to Washington for the purpose, about the functions we were to carry out as the field representatives of U.S. High Commissioner John J. McCloy. We were told that we would “wear many hats,” including as Committing Magistrates for the High Commission Courts, as Liaison Officers between the U.S. Military forces in our assigned areas and the German local authorities, as travel control officers for Germans wishing to travel from the Soviet zone to the West, as hunting and fishing permit issuing officers, and as implementers of policies and programs which would not be formulated, not always with our concurrence or input, by the High Commissioner’s staff for the U.S. zone, or the Land (or State) Commissioner’s staff for the German area to which we would be assigned.

Q: I like to put at the beginning here you were Kreis residence officer from when to when?

SACKSTEDER: The whole class went to Germany in late March of 1950, after a send-off by Secretary Acheson. We reported to High Commissioner McCloy in Frankfurt and spent several more weeks in briefings there as well as in Berlin and Munich. We were then assigned to the various states, or Laender, of the U.S. zone. About half went to Bavaria, the largest land in the U.S. zone, a smaller group to Land Hesse, and five to Land Wuerttemberg-Baden. I was assigned to the latter, and to Kreis Bruchsal, on the right bank of the Rhine, and south of Heidelberg and north of Karlsruhe. Bruchsal had been heavily bombed in the last weeks of the fighting, prior to its surrender to the French First

Army under Marshal Koenig, in and American incendiary raid. Eighty percent of the city of about 40, 000 people was destroyed. This included what had been the summer palace of the Bishops of Speyer, who were Electors of the Holy Roman Emperor, and was known as the “Pearl of Rococo” for its XVII and XVIII century ornate architecture.

In mid-May 1950, I took over a staff of some 12 German employees. I moved into a large residence, situated on a hill, called “Belvedere,” overlooking the town, which had been requisitioned from a brewer’s malt manufacturer whose former Nazi ties were widely known. A large American flag flew over my residence, as well as over my nearby office, and thus, over the town. We represented the “Beatzungs Macht,” or “Occupying Power.”

Q: I understand the Kreis Residence Officer system was designed to allow the U.S. military to get out of occupation duty.

SACKSTEDER: Yes. But also because with the establishment of the High Commissions in the three Western zones of Germany (American, English, and French), a considerable degree of authority over internal affairs reverted to the German federal and state authorities, notably in the economic sphere. But certain enumerated powers were retained by the former “occupying powers,” and formed the basis for our functions. We retained some supervisory authority over public safety, including the police. We exercised control over fishing and hunting, the latter particularly important to avid German hunters. We could extend the temporary residence permits of visitors from the Soviet zone. We had jurisdiction over certain categories of persons charged with violation of German law, and over all violations of High Commission law.

It is not surprising that the local population continued to call us “Herr Gouverneur,” given that we had all the trappings of a Governor.

In May of 1950, shortly after I reached Bruchsal, I had a call from American Consul General Pat Mallon in Stuttgart, who asked me to come by his office and to sign my appointment as an FSO-6. I exchanged my Special passport as an FSS-7 for a diplomatic passport and a salary cut of forty percent!

The next phase of the relationship with the Federal Republic of Germany came in early 1952 with the grant of autonomy over most domestic affairs and foreign affairs. The High Commission apparatus, including the Kreis Resident Officer program, began to phase out.

At the end of 1951, I was given an onward assignment as Information Officer (Films and Exhibits) at the American Consulate General Duesseldorf. For the next few months, I divided my time between Bruchsal and Duesseldorf, half of the week at each, and used the excellent direct sleeper train service between. My new job involved setting up a public affairs program in the consular district of North Rhine-Westphalia, the most populous and heavily industrialized in Germany. It included the Ruhr, and the banking center and business headquarters of major German companies. It was in the British zone, where they had NAAFI’s instead of PX’s, and where they had called their KRO

equivalent “British Resident.”

Q: Before we get to that I would like to talk a bit about the KRO work. I realize you had these various functions, but what were the main things? You can have a variety of functions but in your district, in Bruchsal, what were you doing?

SACKSTEDER: Not only in Bruchsal but throughout the American zone, one of our major responsibilities was the promotion of democratic institutions. In some parts of Germany that was tough sledding. In my area, it was not, because Baden had a well established democratic tradition. The Landrat (who was the head of the County, or Kreis, government) was most cooperative and quite willing to hold open town meetings, and to explain his policies and answer questions. In contrast with the Prussian tradition of issuing orders.

Another was the role of liaison officer between the U.S. military and the German authorities and population. Bruchsal was within the Karlsruhe Military-Post area, but also next door to the Heidelberg headquarters of the U.S. European Command, headed by four star General Thomas Handy. Handy and High Commissioner McCloy issued a directive to clarify the relationship and scope of responsibility between Post Commanders and Kreis Resident Officers: the KRO would be considered to have equivalent rank to the Post Commander. The Karlsruhe Post Commander was a Brigadier General who, as with my Landrat, was old enough to have been my father. Yet we had excellent relations and worked well together. And with Major General Gross, who had led the transportation corps during the invasion of France and Germany as Land Commissioner for Wuerttemberg/Baden at Stuttgart, High Commission and U.S. military relations were excellent. Troop units in the vicinity of Bruchsal included a combat Engineer Battalion. The C.O. and Exec., who were both West Pointers, became good friends. They were always looking for opportunities to exercise their men and their equipment, and I was more than happy to propose earth-moving projects such as creating athletic fields!

General Gross learned that I spoke French, so he assigned me a very pleasant additional duty: to be his liaison officer with the French High Commission authorities. My immediate counterpart on the left bank of the Rhine and I kept in fairly close touch. When the French held major meetings of their High Commission people, I was invited to represent out Land Commissioner.

An example of coordination and liaison was arranging for a military pontoon bridge exercise across the Rhine in Kreis Bruchsal. This required a temporary stopping of river traffic on the Rhine through German River Navigation authorities in cooperation with the U.S. Navy's Rhine River patrol; it required arranging with the Kreis and local authorities on both banks for access to the river at the point where the bridge was to be floated. Although this exercise was a U.S. Army project, I had to have the cooperation of my colleague on the French side. I invited the Landrat and other German authorities to accompany me and view the completion of the pontoon bridge across the five hundred foot width of the river at that point. When the bridge was in place, and coming from the French side, was a tank. Standing in the open hatch of the tank was a Captain. When I

greeted him, I found that he was General Patton's son. We reminded one another that we had met before. We had been dating Vassar students when he was at West Point and I at Williams V-12 in 1944, and had shared a room during a weekend dance.

Q: How did you find dealing with the Germans at that particular time in your area?

SACKSTEDER: Very cooperative in general. At first, I had a little problem with the head of the "Real Gymnasium," the classical secondary school. But even he became much more cooperative when he found that I had access to a special fund High Commissioner McCloy disposed of to match local self-help projects. I secured approval of a project to modernize and improve the school's laboratories, one of three such projects we obtained for Kreis Bruchsal. Another was to build a multi-use community center in one of the smallest villages in the Kreis, which also is the family seat of the Krupp/ von Bohlen family, My Army engineer friends furnished all of the grading work, and provided truck transport of building materials- much of it donated. Timber came from the village forest. And I "shamed" Krupp to donate steel and reinforcing bars!

Of course, there had been some Nazis, and more Nazi supporters, in Bruchsal as everywhere in Germany. But they did not brag about it. Some of the programs we were tasked to implement were looked upon with amusement by the people. I gave the local newspaper, which was C.D.U. (Christian Democrat) oriented, regular interviews and access to meetings with the public.

We promoted a program of "land consolidation" to encourage more productive farming. Largely because of tradition and the inheritance laws, farmland was cut up into very small parcels. The average farm in Kreis Bruchsal might total five hectares (about 12 acres), but might be in as many as 35 little parcels scattered over a wide area. The objective of consolidation was to bring about exchange of parcels to regroup them in larger and more effectively workable fields. It was not easy to convince these very conservative and traditional farmers. The Landrat, Agriculture specialists, and I would hold meetings in the villages that could go on for hours. How often did we hear variations of the conviction of Farmer A that he could not exchange his parcel for that of Farmer B because "everyone knows that the plum tree on my parcel is much better than the plum tree on his parcel!"

We had a public affairs program that included a popular film program. My two projectionists covered the Kreis to meet requests for showings, to schools, groups, etc. Most popular were the documentaries of the type of National Geographic or Smithsonian. Least were "political education films," such as those on "grass-roots democracy," "the electoral process", or "how to run a town meeting."

We controlled hunting and fishing. Hunting was a major concern. Hunting areas were either communal or privately owned. Kreis Bruchsal was heavily wooded and rich in game, but as a hold-over of the military occupation, hunting was reserved for occupying forces. Germans were not allowed to own firearms- even shotguns- although it was known that many had hidden theirs away. We Americans, however, could invite Germans

to join American hunts on their own hunting preserves, and lend them rifles or shotguns! To meet request for hunting permits, I organized hunting drives (where beaters flushed the game toward a line of posted hunters). Several times I arranged such hunts for the Heidelberg high command, including General Handy and his Chief of Staff, General Noce. Some of the best hunting was along the Rhine.

We also issued residence permits for visitors from the East Zone. More often than not, they would come to us to request extensions of stay. This gave us the opportunity to learn about conditions in the “socialist paradise” of East Germany.

Q: In 1950, the Korean War broke out, the Berlin air-lift had come and gone, Czechoslovakia had been taken over by a “putsch,” so the Cold War was in full swing.

SACKSTEDER: Yes, indeed! I had been in Bruchsal just a month or so, when North Korea invaded the south. We were well aware that if the Soviets decided to capitalize on the situation in the Far East, the U.S. and our Allies were far from capable of stopping a ground invasion through the so-called “Fulda Gap.” We made as many advance preparations as we could: putting up a reserve of gasoline in jerry cans, packing essentials, including food, and determining evacuation routes and safe-havens. I had an additional concern.

My father, recently returned from Lisbon, Portugal, where he had been the managing director of the I. T. & T. subsidiary, had been asked to accept an FSR appointment with the U.S. economic development agency. In March of 1950, he and my mother arrived in Seoul, Korea, where he was to serve as an expert consultant on telecommunications in to the Korean government. On the fateful day of the invasion, they were still in temporary quarters while their household effects sat in a warehouse and the new automobile they had ordered was in their hotel’s garage. We were without news from them for quite some time, until a cable from Washington informed us that they were both safe in Tokyo. Mother had been evacuated immediately with the women and children of the U.S. Mission on a freighter that had just put in at Inchon Harbor (with a load of fertilizer); Dad and the other senior Americans left by air later with Ambassador Muccio.

Meanwhile, in Germany, reinforcements for the under strength “Constabulary” began, slowly, to arrive, drawn from National Guard divisions that had been activated. KRO’s were asked to play a role in this effort, which included “orientation” briefings for the arriving American troops. The thrust of these was to convey the notion that we were on a new “playing field.” We were not coming to Germany as “conquerors,” but as “friends and allies.”

Q: Were anti-communist efforts pretty strong in what you were doing?

SACKSTEDER: Yes. The communists in Kreis Bruchsal were few, and they were largely known to the local authorities, so that they were more a nuisance than a danger, and they did not do much more than to occasionally scribble some slogans on walls, to the great annoyance and disgust of the population. “Ami Go Home” was their favorite.

Q: Did you have any other functions as Kreis Resident Officers?

SACKSTEDER: We should discuss our role as “Committing Magistrate” for the High Commission court system. We functioned as a grand jury would in the U.S., i.e. deciding whether to indict the accused of a violation of High Commission law, and whether to hold an indicted person for trial, or grant bail. Possession of firearms was one such violation, and, in my experience, the most frequent. Most of the accused were also guilty of poaching, and were vigorously pursued by the German police and Forest Service authorities. We also had jurisdiction over all cases involving refugees, and I had two sizeable refugee camps in my area. Jurisdiction over such cases had been retained by the High Commission on the plausible grounds that such persons might not receive fair treatment in the German courts. However, it was not a very burdensome task. If a trial was to take place, this would, in the case of Bruchsal, be at the High Commission Court in Karlsruhe, before American judges.

Q: What was your impression of the change in Germany? Were you watching a change going on there as far as democracy and all? You say Baden had always been a liberal area but did you find sort of an acceptance?

SACKSTEDER: Absolutely. During my two years there I had the opportunity to observe several both state and federal elections, and believe me, all the trappings of democracy were out there: competing parties, and very open, free and fair election processes. Some of the details now escape me, but for example there were minima that had to be met by candidates and their parties. For instance, the Communist party in Bruchsal never obtained, say, five percent of the vote to elect a candidate under the proportional representation system in effect.

Q: In your area the two major ones were the S.P.D. and the C.D.U.?

SACKSTEDER: Bruchsal was strongly majority Christian-Democrat, C.D.U., but the Socialists, S.P.D., enjoyed the support of many workers in industry, such as the big Siemens manufacturing plant. The elected authorities, Mayors, town councils, county board (Kreisrat) and Landrat, who ran the country, were strong C.D.U. supporters.

Q: Which was Konrad Adenauer’s party at that time. Did you and your KRO colleagues get together to discuss your respective problems and experiences?

SACKSTEDER: Oh yes. First of all the KROs in Wurttemberg Baden, my recollection is that we were something like 26 or 27 or maybe 30 in that state in Germany, would meet usually once a month at Stuttgart at the Land headquarters with the Land Commissioner Gross and his staff. I might add that in part it was also to sort of defend ourselves, because HICOG (High Commission for Germany) had built a relatively huge bureaucracy in Frankfurt and sizable bureaucracies in the state capitals like Stuttgart. All of these people had narrow interest in their respective fields, and would come up with proposals for programs to be implemented by the field officers, the KRO’s. We would

simply try to hold them back a little bit.

Q: I would like your impression that with the American occupation forces, and I'm talking really about the civilian bureaucracy, that there would be a tendency to have those who had sort of been left over from the war to be really rather second rate. I don't know whether this is true or not but when you have a large bureaucracy built up, those people who really didn't have anything to go back to in the States, I mean the KROs are different things because these are aspiring Foreign Service officers who are on the make you might say, as opposed to the sort of bureaucracy that had developed around the large...

SACKSTEDER: Unfortunately that was true and this is what united us, the KROs, both at the Land level, the state level, and for all of the American zone. Incidentally we also met periodically, usually about every nine months or so, at Frankfurt. All the KROs would meet for two or three days and hash over problems with the High Commissioner and his senior staff. There was a good deal of sympathy for our point of view but at the time there was still this large bureaucracy who kept bringing up projects: "we have to do more for youths, we have to do more here, more there, more for women." All of this was great but give us the resources. That wasn't there because the resources were concentrated at the federal and at the state level. The KROs had staff. As I mentioned, I had a staff of 12 people in my office including projectionists, a so-called interpreter who I didn't use because he didn't interpret, he said what he wanted to say which I discovered very quickly. I had a women's affairs specialist, a youth's affairs specialist, a political advisor. We also would be grinding out reports especially prior to and after elections doing the kind of work a political officer does in an embassy or consulate.

Q: You moved to Dusseldorf in '52, is this right?

SACKSTEDER: In '52 we began phasing out the Kreis offices and for approximately two months I was closing my office and opening one in Dusseldorf. I worked it on the basis that I would spend three days in Dusseldorf and three days back in Bruchsal. Fortunately I had good train connections and a sleeper so I could take the sleeper up, spend two nights in Dusseldorf, and come back on the fourth night. I would take care of my business in Bruchsal, partly over the weekend, and then back again to Dusseldorf.

Q: How long were you in Dusseldorf?

SACKSTEDER: Not very long. When I finally did move to Dusseldorf, it would have been March, I was there until the later part of June, just a few months.

Q: You mentioned you were trying to set up information centers?

SACKSTEDER: We tried to set up an information program. I was responsible for films and exhibits for the entire Dusseldorf consulate district which was North Rhine Westphalia, the most populous and business oriented part of Germany. It was mainly a matter of hiring people, getting it organized, getting the necessary equipment,

establishing outlet offices in the major cities throughout the land, including the Ruhr and the rural areas.

Q: Did you get involved with the America House program?

SACKSTEDER: Yes. The Amerika Hauser were the information outlets for the Consulate General.

Q: With the material that we were giving out, particularly the films and all, you mentioned that they were rather naive to begin with, did you find that there was a better sophistication or did it still sort of come out of Hollywood at a pretty low level?

SACKSTEDER: We had two types. We had the films that all of the people wanted to see and these would be documentary films of the *National Geographic* type. They were very popular. Then there were those that we would sneak in about how a community is run, little films about elections and the right to vote, and that sort which carried a message but it was pretty juvenile. As I said we would have to pretty much lace it in with a good thing that they wanted to see.

Q: Did you find in Dusseldorf any difference as far as your impression of the Germans that you were dealing with in that whole area in the Rhineland?

SACKSTEDER: Yes. First of all because Dusseldorf was, and may well still be, the financial and business center of Germany, you were dealing there with people who were the CEOs of German industry, much more sophisticated people. Also you were in the climate of the British zone of occupation and the Brits had a quite different approach than ours. They were not terribly interested in making democrats out of the Germans, because they just assumed that it was impossible anyway, so why bother. On the other hand the British were very good hosts to us Americans who were in the consulates in their zone. My experience in Dusseldorf was, as I said, relatively short so I don't have the same kind of feel for the cultural and social climate there as I did in Bruchsal where I knew everybody.

Q: We're leaving Dusseldorf now and this might be a good place to stop for today. In 1952, where did you go?

SACKSTEDER: My orders were to be the vice consul in Madagascar as the vice consul of a two-officer post, after some home leave and consultation with the Department.

Q: So this is obviously good training for you.

SACKSTEDER: I have never known how the Department came up with the Madagascar for this soon-to-be ex-KRO, but I was quite excited with the assignment for purely personal and family reasons. My French-born mother had three uncles on her mother's side, who all had careers in Africa. The elder, a physician, died of a tropical malady in French equatorial Africa before I was born. The middle one, my great uncle Henri, was a

colonial administrator, first in Senegal, then in Madagascar, where he served as Governor-General from the 1930's until about 1942. He was relieved of his duties (read: fired) by the Vichy government for allegedly having failed to resist the British/Free French landings on Madagascar during WWII. Uncle and his wife were held under "house arrest" in Morocco until after the liberation of France. The youngest brother spent a number of years in Senegal running a peanut plantation. When their father died, the latter returned to France in the 1930's to look after the family estate, was mayor of the local town for decades, and was decorated for his WWII service leading the local underground Resistance to the Germans. During my childhood I heard much about Madagascar from Uncle Henri during our visits to the Perigord homestead. He promised me introductions to many friends he still had there.

But this was not to be. In the summer of 1952, pursuant to orders, I shipped to Madagascar household effects from Germany, and an automobile and two-year supply of food staples from the U.S. The German shipment was intercepted in time. The car and staples (and a kerosene powered refrigerator) were not, and were Madagascar-bound via South Africa. The PER assignments office informed me that the Department's Medical Director, Dr. Virgil T. DeVault, canceled the assignment on "medical grounds." He had recently returned from a visit to Tananarive (now Antananarivo), where he had found a serious malaria problem. He would not allow an officer with a family to go there. He was not impressed by my argument that my uncle had not contracted malaria.

Q: He nixed the assignment so what happened?

SACKSTEDER: I was on home leave at my in-laws in New York state, when I asked to come down to Washington "because we had to go back to the drawing board." I pleaded to be allowed to go, and was told that this was impossible because they could not overrule the Medical Director. I was offered a couple of assignments, including the post of senior vice consul at the American Consulate in Lyon, France, then a four-officer post. I chose the Lyon assignment, where I was to report in September 1952.

Q: You were in Lyon from when to when?

SACKSTEDER: From September of 1952 to September of 1955. Exactly three years. The principal officer was Claude Haines Hall, a formidable bridge player, as I was soon to learn. He was a very good boss, in the sense that he gave me a lot of responsibility. He also knew the ins and outs of consular work and post administration. And, insecure about his command of the French language and, by nature, not out-going, he gave me responsibility for the Consulate's "out-reach" work, i.e. traveling the district, public speaking, representation. I usually represented the Consulate at ribbon-cuttings, fair openings, and similar events which normally ended with a banquet (known locally as a "gueuleton"). These types of events attracted prominent national figures from Paris. It was quite normal for French politicians to hold both national and local offices simultaneously. I like to tell the story of my initial call on the Mayor of Lyon, Edouard Herriot, a man well up in years, since he was a contemporary and political colleague of my grandfather. Herriot had held numerous high offices, which included Prime Minister,

and was at the time President of the National Assembly, the approximate equivalent of our Speaker. I said to him Mr. President (you always use the highest title an individual has held), I am the grandson of Alexandre Dorin. Poor Herriot simply shook his head. How could his friend Dorin's grandson be the American Vice Consul in Lyon? Eventually, he got the idea, but he was puzzled, whenever we met. Another example of this dual office-holding: One Saturday morning I was at the Consulate going through the mail when the phone rang. A very soft voice on the other end said, "Mr. Consul?" "Yes, sir." "Mr. Consul, this is the Mayor of Saint Chamond. Could I ask you a favor?" The Mayor of Saint Chamond happened to be the Prime Minister of France, Antoine Pinay, doing a service to a constituent.

Q: What was the political situation in your area of France and what district did Lyon cover at that time?

SACKSTEDER: The Lyon consular district included between one fourth and one fifth of France. It extended, north to south, from north of Dijon to south of Valence on the Rhone river, and east to west from the Massif Central (the mountainous region in south-central France) to the Swiss and Italian borders, a lot of territory. Because very few American citizens lived in our district, we had a very light citizen services (registration, passport, notarial, protection) work load. With one exception, which was a U.S. Army depot and maintenance base at Moulins, in the Allier Department and about half-way between Lyon and Paris. We trained an American civilian employee at the base to supervise the preparation of passport applications and similar forms, and could provide services there largely by mail.

Antoine Pinay, who, incidentally, died recently at the age of 101, was not the only Prime Minister from the Lyon area while I was there. Rene Mayer was another, and a very prominent politician. I got to know him through a daughter of his who was married to a Lyonnais. We became good social friends of the couple, and got to know the Prime Minister on his visits to his daughter. George Bidault was Foreign Minister during those years, and was also from the region. The American Vice Consul, representing the United States, was thus given the opportunity to talk at length with national figures at the receptions and banquets that invariable accompanied official events.

Q: This was the fourth republic?

SACKSTEDER: Yes, and a period of frequent changes of government but basically, political stability with the center of power hovering between left-of-center to right-of-center. A French saying of the time which translates as "The more it changes, the more it remains the same," is appropriate.

Q: What was the political situation in France in general and then in your particular area, and what were our concerns?

SACKSTEDER: The industrial centers in our area, which included Lyon and its surroundings, Clermont Ferrand, and a couple of smaller cities such as Grenoble, had

fairly large communist minorities. The rest of the district was generally conservative or “middle of the road.” The majority was markedly pro-American. People remembered the “liberation” by the U.S. Seventh Army, back in 1944. French organizations and authorities often staged events to commemorate wartime actions involving Americans, such as an annual ceremony at a memorial near Lyon recalling the death of an American air corps plane crew that crashed while flying supplies to the French underground forces. Let me add, at this point, that the Philip Chadbourn who served with me at Lyon in 1952-53 had been with the OSS and had parachuted into occupied France not far from Lyon, to help organize the “Resistance.” For this, he had been decorated in person by General De Gaulle.

A good example of the pro-American attitude in Lyon was the celebration of our national holiday. On July 4th, the French authorities, military and civilian, would gather in front of our Consulate. A detachment of soldiers would “present arms” as our flag was raised, while the military band played a pretty good version of our National Anthem, followed by the “Marseillaise,” and by a march-past of the troops. The reception, or “Vin d’honneur” which followed, was the occasion for speeches which always included mention that the Fourth of July was also a French Holiday! I have never had such an experience at another post or country, and it was symptomatic of the attitude of the French in Lyon at the time.

On the other hand, I remember the Communist-inspired protest in front of the consulate after the execution of the Rosenbergs...

Q: This was for espionage in the United States.

SACKSTEDER: Yes. The French Communist Party staged demonstrations, including a big one in front of our Consulate. The police turned out in force to make sure that nothing untoward happened, but the local authorities told us, “Let them vent their supposed anger- everyone knows that these people were executed for wartime espionage for the Soviets.” This, for me, was yet another unique experience.

Q: What was the Consulate’s main activity?

SACKSTEDER: Commercial work. This included regular reports on certain commodities and manufactured goods, i.e. briar pipes (for smokers); textiles; walnuts (grown in quantity in the Isere river valley near Grenoble). Because shipments to the U.S. were still covered by consular invoices, I had to sign hundreds every week. The fees collected from this activity would have been sufficient to pay the cost of operating the Consulate. But, of course, these were remitted to the U.S. Treasury.

Political reporting, for which we were well placed because of the opportunity to meet with major political figures when they “came home” from Paris was through Embassy. Largely by means of informal correspondence with the officer covering internal political affairs in the political section, Martin Hertz. Occasionally he would ask us to look into a specific topic, which we would do by contacting local politicians, the officials in various

Prefectures with whom we were in regular touch, or friends and acquaintances in the business world. The Prefet in each department is the top-ranked authority, and is a member of career service. He (they were all male then) represents “The Government,” although administratively he is under the Ministry of the Interior. Each Prefet has a Secretary General and a Chief of Cabinet, themselves aspiring prefets, and it was with the latter that I, as Vice Consul, had the closest contact. As they and their families lived in the Prefecture palace (and some were indeed palaces), I could reach them, in case of need, day or night. I made some fine friends among them. Indeed, for many years I was in touch with one whom I met shortly after arriving in Lyon. Jean Taulelle was a little older than I, had been an officer in the Army taken prisoner in 1940. He was a POW for five years. When he was assigned to Villefranche, in the Beaujolais wine region in 1953, he was the best friend the U.S. could have. He later had a brilliant career in his chosen field ending in Paris as, first, Prefect of Police, then Prefet of the Seine (Paris) and simultaneously Mayor of Greater Paris. This post became an elected post only later when Jacques Chirac was elected Mayor.

Q: Did you run across in Lyon the French intellectual establishment, so well known in Paris, and recognized as having great influence, and, also, well, known as left-leaning in thought and looking down on the U.S.

SACKSTEDER: There was virtually none of that in Lyon. Perhaps because Parisians, and other French, looked down upon the Lyonnais. They said Lyon society was “closed” and “unfriendly,” and I found that this was the case with respect to the French from other parts of the country. It was far from the case for us or other’s in the Consular corps. And the Lyonnais did not apologize for their lack of intellectual pretensions.

I mentioned that I had the opportunity to take on a good deal of responsibility while at Lyon. This came about for the following reason: at this time the U.S. had a small one-officer post at Nice, where the work load was light and, and the official residences very comfortable. The supervising Consul General at Paris, who at that time, was Frederick B. Lyon, a very senior officer, asked Consul Hall to take over the post at Nice when the incumbent had to be away, sometimes for many weeks at a time. This left me in charge at Lyon. Although still an FSO-6, I was the senior among the juniors. And in due course I was entitled to draw “Charge pay,” which was half of the difference between my modest salary and that of my Consul, a senior FSO-3; a very welcome, if well-earned, bonus. During these extended periods in charge at Lyon I could tailor my agenda to what I was most interested in, namely reporting, representation, and outreach. A friend of good friends was a senator by the name of Michel Debre, a strong supporter of De Gaulle, who was later Prime Minister. A hotly debated issue at the time was the formation of a European Army, which might include a German contribution. The Gaullists were strongly opposed. I believed that this would be good for Europe and a step in the direction of European integration. My friends asked me to debate the issue with Senator Debre before an invited audience. I cannot say that I made too many points against this very skilled debater, but I did convince some of the audience of the advantages of such a move. And, of course, history eventually proved me right.

These three years at Lyon were not only most pleasant, but also very instructive. It was my first real foreign service post, following the unusual and far from routine assignment

as a Kreis Resident Officer in Germany. Let us close this chapter on a gastronomic note. The year 1953 proved to be one of France's finest wine years of the century; Lyon and its surrounding area was host to numerous great three-star restaurants, including the so-called "Field Marshal of French gastronomy" Ferdinand Point, of "La Pyramide" in Vienne. The annual Lyon International Fair was usually the occasion for a U.S. Department of Commerce official exhibit, and an influx of American visitors. One such was "Punch" Sulzberger of the N.Y. Times publishing family, and then attached to the paper's Paris bureau. He seemed more interested in Lyon's restaurants than in the trade fair pavilion, so we had some pretty memorable meals. On his last day with us, we had a three-star lunch "Chez La Mere Brazier" and a dinner at Vienne at "La Pyramide." Not long after, I was among the many mourners at Point's funeral. He had "given his liver for his country."

In August 1955, I was again in charge. A new Principal Officer had arrived, and was enjoying his first detached duty at Nice. Lyon was hit by a violent thunder/hail storm, an unusual occurrence in the city itself. The worst hit area was a section called "Croix-Rousse" just upstream from the point where the Rhone and Saone rivers joined, and the site of some of Lyon's most renowned silk mills. Acres and acres of glass sky-lights were smashed by the hail, exposing extremely valuable machinery to the elements. The Prefet called, told me there was urgent need of tarpaulins, and asked if the U.S. military could supplement what the French had on hand. Several phone calls to the Embassy and to the depot at Moulins, and the first of several plane loads were being loaded and flown to the Lyon airport where the French Army had trucks waiting. This prompt response doubtless saved millions in potential damage. Prefet Massenet asked me to accompany him to meet the arriving U.S. Air Force transports, insuring voluminous press coverage of the event. As this was taking place, my household effects were packed in lift-vans that were at the railroad freight terminal on a platform and not covered by tarps. When these finally reached Washington and were unpacked several months later, we found humidity and mold had damaged most of the contents beyond repair. I was not as fortunate as the Lyon silk mills.

Q: In 1955 you were assigned to Washington?

SACKSTEDER: For the first time, and for a four-year tour of duty, 1955-59. First, to the Department's press office, the News Division, where I was to be an assistant press officer. Initially, the "Spokesman" was Henry Suydam, who was soon followed by Lincoln White. It turned out that Mrs. White had worked for the I. T. & T. Washington office during the war years, and she remembered my father very well from his numerous wartime trips to D.C. when he was managing the high-frequency direction finder manufacturing plant. Having come from assignments in Europe, I was given the job of dealing with the correspondents from Europe accredited to the Department, and working with the Bureau of European Affairs. I was joined by three other junior officers, Richard Boehm, Alan Lukens, and Robert Smith, who worked with other geographic bureaus. Joe Reap, senior to us, was the spokesman's deputy

Q: You were in the press office for about two years or so?

SACKSTEDER: It was more like just under a year-and-a-half.

Q: Where did you go your second part?

SACKSTEDER: Because of my experience with Western Europe and a vacancy that arose in the Spanish-Portuguese, the so-called Iberian desk, I became assistant desk officer for Iberian affairs.

Q: Let's talk about the press office from '55 to '57. This was doing European affairs?

SACKSTEDER: Yes. It was actually until late '56, early '57. My job involved "handling" the European correspondents. Handling is an exaggeration because these were prominent people. Scotty Reston was among my clients, for example. Scotty didn't need to talk to me. If he wanted something he would call the secretary or the assistant secretary.

Q: Scotty Reston being the preeminent correspondent for The New York Times.

SACKSTEDER: Yes. I kept abreast of developments within the European Bureau and would, for example, arrange for briefings between bureau officials and individual correspondents. These were primarily American correspondents although there were a few European involved. Eddie Marco, the head of Agence France Presse, whom I knew quite well, covered the whole of Washington, he didn't just concentrate on the State Department. It was an interesting assignment and an interesting year.

There were, of course, the Eisenhower years, and John Foster Dulles was Secretary of State. The Cold War was "warming up;" Bulganin and Khrushchev were traveling the world as salesmen for Soviet socialism, when they were not cracking down on dissidents in territories under their control. We junior press officers rotated an early-morning duty, the preparation of a brief (not over two pages) summary of the morning's international news. This had to be personally handed to the Secretary, before copies were delivered to the Executive Secretariat for the other seventh floor denizens, the principals. One morning, the summary drafter for a lark reported that "Bulgy and Kruschy have now taken their act to Beijing, where they have met a cool reception." What followed showed that Dulles did have a sense of humor. He opened his morning staff meeting, which was attended by Linc White, by reading this paragraph, with, Linc later reported, "a smile and a twinkle in his eye." But Linc admonished us not to get carried away in the direction of levity!

From time to time, we would be told to arrange background briefings for the principals of the Assistant Secretaries. I was asked to set up one such briefing for Undersecretary Hoover.

Q: Herbert Hoover Junior.

SACKSTEDER: Yes. I was told in advance what the Undersecretary was going to “leak” and it took some pressuring to get the top press people, Americans only on this occasion, to agree to hear Hoover who was not a scintillating conversationalist. I did round up people like Scotty Reston (*New York Times*), Ted Weinthal (*Newsweek*), Pete Lisagor and John Scali (the resident Associated Press man, who was later Ambassador to the UN—much later). We trooped up to the Executive Suite and into a small conference room. Hoover came in, and dropped his “bombshell:” the U.S. would not further consider Egypt’s request for assistance in building the Aswan High Dam on the Nile. Why? Because the U.S. was concerned by recent indications that Nasser had turned to the Soviets for military assistance, after he had been turned down by the U.S.

It was a personal shock for me. After his Korean adventure, my father had been designated the first Director of the economic aid program called “Point Four” in Egypt. He and the Ambassador, then Jefferson Caffery, had strongly endorsed U.S. assistance. My dad’s project had been shot down.

Q: Did you get any of the feeling that I’ve gotten from some interviews about the almost relief that Foster Dulles had about being able to do this? There seemed to be tremendous antipathy on the part of Dulles towards Nasser and probably it was reciprocated. Did you get any of that feeling?

SACKSTEDER: I did sense this and I always had a feeling that Foster Dulles’ moral attitude and his legal interpretation of things dominated his feeling about what was going on in the world. If it didn’t meet his strict Presbyterian concept of the honorable and the moral, it was immoral and therefore, he couldn’t comprehend it. I think this question of morality influenced far too many of his decisions.

Q: This is a very controversial one because it set the stage for a course in the Middle East that really didn’t stop until the end of the Cold War. Maybe it would have happened anyway, and there is some doubt about the wisdom of the high dam even at the time, but it seemed to be a personal thing.

SACKSTEDER: It was. It had nothing to do with the technical or other aspects of it in the case of Foster Dulles.

Q: You were there, I’m thinking particularly on the European side, between one of the really major events of the time and that was the Hungarian revolt which was in October of ‘56. How did that play out from your point of view? What were you seeing and doing at that time?

SACKSTEDER: Actually by the time of the revolt, I was starting the job at the Iberian desk. I was very much concerned with mastering all of the intricacies of our relationships with these two countries, with Portugal in the context of NATO, and with Spain in the context of our base agreements of 1953 and the implementation of these agreements. We were drafting at the time the Status of Forces Agreements for the U.S. Air and Naval Bases in Spain, in cooperation with the Defense Department, so my contact with the

Hungarian situation was very peripheral. As it happens, and I think my memory is correct, my friend Allen Lukens was dispatched to, I believe, Austria to monitor the situation from the point of view of the arrival of vast numbers of Hungarian refugees, not as a refugee relief officer but I think he was still connected with the news office and handling the press there.

Another very major event that occurred at that time, and I think by that time I was in Spanish and Portuguese affairs, was the Suez incident.

Q: They happened at the same time.

SACKSTEDER: During that first year I was involved with Spain and Portugal, it was very much nuts and bolts, drafting of instructions, getting to know the way of clearing things, operating in the context of the Operations Coordination Board, the O.C.B. That was an Eisenhower staffing idea that of course has not endured but it created another level of bureaucracy working out of the Old Executive Office Building.

Q: Before we move to the Spanish Portuguese desk, in the press office again we are talking about the '55 to '56 period, what was your impression of the press corps, their access, their knowledge, their approach to matters that you were observing there?

SACKSTEDER: I'm talking about the correspondents assigned to the Department on a regular basis, those who had the foreign affairs beat, attended the daily press briefing and that sort of thing. One thing I learned very quickly was that there were those who bore careful watching and there were those who you could indeed trust. This was one of the things that you were enjoined to caution principal officers and other substantive officers about, very privately of course, that so-and-so was prejudiced, hasn't always been a reliable conveyor of what he was told, he has breached the confidential nature of background briefings. I would mention names, of course.

Q: You could mention names because time has gone on.

SACKSTEDER: That's true. On the other hand, there were some who enjoyed, you might say, privileged and well deserved confidence. Among them for example was *Newsweek's* diplomatic correspondent, Teddy Weintal. I'm sure that people in a decision-making position shared highly classified information with him because they knew he could be relied upon, he would never betray a confidence of that nature. Based on what he learned that way, he became a better interpreter of the events, which was of course, in our interest.

Q: On the Iberian desk, you were learning the nuts and bolts but at the same time what in this '57 to '59 period were our relations? First let's talk about Spain and then we'll talk about Portugal.

SACKSTEDER: Our relations with Spain were of course very good. We had concluded in 1953 the famous bases agreements and were implementing these agreements, finishing

the construction of the bases. Our relationship with Spain was not met with undisguised enthusiasm by all our European friends. Paul Henri Spaak was at that time the secretary general of NATO and he represented the diehard opponents of any rapprochement with Franco. Quite frankly we made every effort we could to open Spain up to Europe, and Europe to Spain. It was somewhat ironic that on an individual personal plane, the Europeans entertained close relations with Spain such as in terms of trade, or tourism. Spain was a wonderful place for Northern Europeans to go find sun and sand. Yet their governments were still hands-off as far as they were concerned. Spain of course was kept out of the UN for a long time. We advocated even then a closer relationship, because of the presence of our bases, between Spain and NATO. The way things turn and change, of course now it is a totally different world because the most recent secretary general of NATO was a Spaniard.

Q: Were we finding it difficult living with Franco at this time from the desk point of view?

SACKSTEDER: Not at all. There were many reasons why this was not the case. First of all we had a very major economic and military assistance program in Spain. At the time I was on the desk, we had as ambassador John Davis Lodge, who probably was the most popular politician in Spain. Incidentally it is probably well known that his daughter married a young Spanish diplomat and that she and her husband are now the ambassadors of Spain in Washington. That's another story. Because of his popularity, Lodge could say things that others could not have said, truths about the real world. The Spanish press might well have been controlled but they didn't control John Lodge and what he said got published. It was one of many ways to get through to the Spanish people.

We didn't advocate the overthrow of Franco, we advocated democratic reforms and closer ties between Spain and Europe. The ties between Spain and the United States were already very close. All of this in the belief that this was going to be in the end the way to change. We perceived the change in Spain, in that indeterminate day after Franco, as being a return to the monarchy, but to a constitutional monarchy, and indeed that's what happened. Another one is that it was a constitutional monarchy but it has at one time and for a long time until recently had a socialist prime minister. I think we can claim substantial credit for having helped Spain recover from the consequences of, first, the civil war, and almost immediately after that, five or six years of World War II. During this time they were not only isolated but they were in rather desperate straits economically.

Q: What about our relationship with Portugal which is sort of a rather peculiar thing? You had Salazar there but Portugal was in NATO at that time.

SACKSTEDER: Yes indeed, it's a founding member of NATO.

Q: Again from the perspective of being on the Iberian desk, what were the problems and how were our relations with Portugal at that time?

SACKSTEDER: Portugal of course is a small country and most of its concerns at that

time were still with its overseas territories. It was during the time I was on the Iberian desk that Portugal lost its city-state colonies in India, Goa and others. Of course now as we speak all that is left is Macau and that's about to go back to China. Their big concerns were of course with Angola and Mozambique which were totally out of the orbit of NATO. There was no NATO obligation to defend Mozambique or Angola. The role of Portugal in NATO was primarily as the gatekeeper to the Mediterranean. After all, Portugal's military were largely based in Angola and Mozambique anyway. Portugal had a very small navy which was under NATO command and that was about it, but it was a member of NATO. We could see Spain having being brought into NATO under sort of parallel conditions because, after all, dictator or not a dictator, realities are realities and we were building and maintaining very important, I thought, strategic bases in Spain that it was in our interests to continue.

Our relations with the Portuguese were low level, stable, and for a young desk officer it was a very agreeable assignment because of the close relationship with the ambassador. I didn't have the relationship with the Spanish ambassador I had with the Portuguese ambassador simply because he considered that his relationship should be with the assistant secretary and not with the desk officer. The Portuguese were undemanding clients, agreeable. Much of what was important was not being done in Washington anyway, but in Lisbon through our embassy, so it made for a fairly easy operation.

Q: Were you beginning to feel the heat of what was happening in Africa, I am talking about internally within the State Department? Ghana had been de-colonized as had other places and by '59 things were really beginning to pick up. It was pretty well agreed that most of the French and British territories in Africa were going to be made independent, leaving Portugal to be sort of the sole real colonial power there. There was a great deal of enthusiasm in the United States for the de-colonization of Africa and this must have impacted on the desk and all.

SACKSTEDER: It did. Strangely enough the impact was more perceptible with respect to Spain's remaining African possession, Spanish Morocco, where during my time on the desk there was an odd sort of little war between Spain and Morocco over Spanish Morocco and Ifni. We had a recently created African Bureau and some of my now good friends were serving as desk officers in that African Bureau. We obviously had very different approaches to the events taking place there, I refer primarily in this case to Spain. My good friend Don Norland, for example, was on the other side of the Spanish Moroccan conflict.

Q: The European African battle in the State Department was particularly strong over Algeria but I assume that on the Iberian desk, every time somebody raised the banner of liberation you would say "Oh, yes but our NATO bases." Was this how the battle went?

SACKSTEDER: Somewhat. Of course we didn't say our NATO bases because they were not yet NATO, they were our bases. We have to be careful because they were our bases. That was always sort of the bottom line of the European Bureau's position. Others who dealt more closely with those aspects of European African relations would be better qualified to comment but from my perspective, yes that was a definite factor.

Q: How about the Azores? Were you there during any of the base negotiations? These seem to go on forever.

SACKSTEDER: Yes. During my time on the desk, we re-negotiated the Azores base agreement. By the way at that time Jamie Bonbright was our ambassador in Lisbon and the bulk of the negotiations were conducted in Lisbon. The Portuguese wanted some quid pro quo and we consequently gave them some. On political issues such as our attitude toward future developments in Angola and Mozambique, my recollection is we stayed away from that pretty much.

Q: That later became much more on the front burner but in those days it was not.

SACKSTEDER: The Portuguese have the talent for knowing how to drag their feet, taking a long time to respond to things, sort of hoping that, we being impatient by nature and they have all the time in the world, we would perhaps soften our position and come closer to their point of view. I don't retain any very sharp memories of startling developments in that area. I do recall that at times it was a little difficult to keep things straight because, for instance, we negotiated agreements with both Spain and Portugal simultaneously on the installation of long-range navigation structures in the two countries.

On one occasion late on some afternoon I was drafting instructions that were supposed to go to Lisbon which inadvertently were sent to Madrid. Madrid rather sarcastically came back and said that we didn't appear to know what we were doing because this had nothing to do with the Spanish negotiations. The following morning my boss, Bob McBride, was teased at the morning staff meeting in the European Bureau and he was not pleased, not pleased at all. How could I let that silly mistake be made? It was embarrassing. Actually it was a silly mistake. My secretary told me to go home and she would take care of typing up and sending out the telegram. That was a mistake. I shouldn't have gone home.

Q: You left there in 1959.

SACKSTEDER: For Madrid.

Q: You were in Madrid from when to when?

SACKSTEDER: I was in Madrid from '59 to '61, for two years, then I went back to Barcelona, Spain, six months later after the mid-career course.

Q: Let's stick to the '59 to '61 period first. What was your job in Madrid?

SACKSTEDER: I went to Madrid as the aide to the ambassador.

Q: The ambassador was?

SACKSTEDER: John Davis Lodge.

Q: Could you talk about Ambassador Lodge? What was his background and how did he operate from your perspective?

SACKSTEDER: John Lodge is a man who, over his 80 odd years, has had something like six careers. He was educated as a lawyer at Harvard, first undergraduate then law school. After practicing law for a time he became a movie actor and had significant roles in Hollywood where he lived for a number of years. Then he served in the navy during World War II in liaison and staff type jobs in England, North Africa and Europe. He then went into politics and served in Congress for I believe two terms from Connecticut, then he became governor of Connecticut. When he failed to gain reelection as governor in 1954, he was appointed ambassador to Spain and this began another career. He served as ambassador to Spain for five years from '55 to '60. Next, he ran "Junior Achievement" from New York City. He later served as ambassador to Argentina for about five years and he was a delegate to a UN General Assembly before finally serving as ambassador to Switzerland for a couple of years. It could be said that his ambassadorial service took up the larger part of his multifaceted career.

Q: He had been there for about four years by the time you arrived and you mentioned before that he was very popular. What made him popular? How did he operate in Spain from your perspective?

SACKSTEDER: He was a master at public relations and he had a personality that appealed to Spaniards. He was a linguist and was fluent in French and Spanish. Not too many of our ambassadors are that fluent. He had the kind of outgoing personality which is admired among Spaniards. There is no other word for it, he was very popular, and he took advantage of this because his popularity made it very difficult to keep him under covers. My job was really essentially running his office. From the point of view of a Second Secretary, it was not for me a good career assignment. I had been assigned as head of the political section in Nicaragua in Central America and my assignment there was broken on orders of Undersecretary Loy Henderson because John Lodge asked for me. John Lodge had a way of being persuasive when he wanted somebody. He was intensely loyal to people he knew and trusted. For instance he attempted to reconstitute his Madrid team in Buenos Aires, and he did largely do so. He wanted me to go to Buenos Aires but for family reasons I couldn't.

The reason I think it made it a difficult assignment for me was that I had been the desk officer and willy-nilly the ambassador began relying on me on matters which were really the concern of other officers, section chiefs. As I said, he had asked for me because he knew me as the desk officer, knew me well enough that he wanted me. I was named secretary of the "country team." In country team meetings he'd say after something was discussed "Fred, what about that, What do you say?" I could only say "When we drafted that instruction this is what we had in mind."

Q: How well connected was our embassy, other than Lodge, with the Franco regime?

SACKSTEDER: I would have to say that the relations were close at all levels of the government because, for instance, of the fact that we had this important base and military assistance program the head of which was an air force general, Stanley Donovan, known widely as “Moose,” since his West Point days.

Q: I've interviewed him.

SACKSTEDER: I thought you might have. “Moose” is my neighbor at the Westchester and a friend. Moose was an integral part of the mission. The country team was really fully a country team. I would have to say that all the way from our political section to our consul general, they had excellent relations with all levels of the Spanish government. Our military staff within the embassy were sort of a fifth wheel because the bulk of the military interest was in the bases and in the military assistance program which was not run by the attachés. The attachés were somewhat frustrated I think.

Q: Did you find that say within the political or economic section, there was a division because after all this was a dictatorship, sort of the classic dictatorship with various Spanish manifestations and we are moving into a period of rising concern, especially on the part of young people, with more democracy, Africa is being freed up and all. Did you find that there were sort of young Turks in the political or economic section wondering why don't we do more about Spain, or not?

SACKSTEDER: I can't say that I perceived this at all. No I didn't. If there had been I wonder how effective it might have been, but there wasn't. There were occasional disagreements. To take an example, our relationship with the Ministry of Commerce was quite close because among other things the sister of the minister of Commerce was married to an American, a one time I. T. & T. colleague of my father. At the same time the Minister of Commerce at that time was considered perhaps the most corrupt member of the Franco government in that he had the opportunity, controlling as he did the import licenses that were required to import things like luxury automobiles, to please people to his own benefit. Our administrative officer on the other had, an upright and very moral individual, thought that this was utterly scandalous and that we ought not to do any business with that corrupt ministry. The commercial attaché was between the two. The rest of us said live and let live. After all this is not a really important issue and what is important is our base rights and the basing of our nuclear capable long-range bombers. But really there was very little of this. Lodge, of course, I don't think would have been very tolerant of it were it to come to his attention.

Q: What about the social life there? One thinks of the Spanish as being rather formal and that at the higher societies they would not have welcomed the Americans or not. How did you find this?

SACKSTEDER: Quite the contrary, depending upon the individual of course. In fact one accusation which might have had some grain of truth to it was that John Lodge and his wife were overly solicitous of the nobility. The nobility, now the monarchy in Spain, was

and is still a factor, and you can't ignore the dukes, the princes and the counts, simply because we were a democracy and Spain wasn't. Yes, they had a lot of friends in the nobility. As Embassy protocol officer, I quickly learned not to invite a cabinet minister and a duke to the same dinner. Why? Because dukes out-ranked ministers! Have you ever served in a Latin American country?

Q: No, I never have.

SACKSTEDER: The Spaniards are a very proud people at all levels of their society. It is said with some truth that every Spaniard is a king. The way they show their respect for you, the way they show their friendship, is to put you on their plane. In Spanish you have the "tu," the familiar form, and the "usted," or you, the formal form. It startles Americans who are not accustomed to this to be immediately greeted by a Spaniard in the familiar form. Some may feel offended, but on the contrary, the highest form of respect that a Spaniard can show you is that he puts you on his plane, you become his friend and equal. This attitude permeates the society there. They really normally only speak formally to their servants and those who otherwise serve you. With those whom you consider your friends, you always use the familiar the way I have always, for example, with the present ambassador here in Washington.

Q: Were there any difficult spots in the American Spanish relationships during this '59 to '61 period?

SACKSTEDER: No, I don't think so.

Q: You then went back for mid-career training for six months.

SACKSTEDER: It was three months and then home leave, the combination. I was back in the States about six months with orders to go back to Spain to Barcelona. I was assigned there as executive officer, at the consulate general.

Q: What constituted mid-career training and what was your impression of it?

SACKSTEDER: It was a boiled down version of the one year senior course. In other words you got a little bit of this, and a little bit of that, from a range of subjects that you would have gotten more of in the senior course.

Q: You're talking about the senior seminar?

SACKSTEDER: Yes. It had one unfortunate consequence, to the best of my knowledge, in that Personnel refused to assign anybody who had been in that mid-career course to the senior seminar. It was argued by some Personnel officers that the mid-career course was the equivalent, which was manifestly not the case. The year-long senior seminar had a clear purpose, which was to prepare mid-level officers for entry into the senior service and for assignment to such positions as Deputy Chief of Mission. On the other hand, my thirteen week long "mid-career" course class numbered many still junior officers with as

little as two or three previous assignments. With almost twelve years of prior service at four posts in three countries and two tours in the Department, I was about the most senior member of that class. The varied course material and the fine speakers who presented it were interesting, but not particularly helpful, I thought, to my career.

Q: You came back and you were in Barcelona from '61 to '63?

SACKSTEDER: No, from March '62 to March '65.

Q: What was the political situation in Barcelona then?

SACKSTEDER: Barcelona is not Madrid and you might say it's a different world. Barcelona is the capital of a portion of Spain that considers itself a country, Catalonia, with its history, its tradition, its language. At that time, it could not be denied that Catalonia was repressed by Madrid. Catalan was not taught when I was there. It was not used officially. It was not used in published papers; they were all published in Spanish. The Catalans felt put upon by Madrid but then they had always been put upon by Madrid. Their history with respect to Madrid was that Madrid had colonized this industrious, smart, hard working people of Catalonia to the benefit of Madrid. It was inevitable that eventually they would assert their differences with Madrid, and, for example, change all street names to Catalan, and publish the newspapers only in Catalan.

My colleagues who followed me there, some of them, have told me that it became essential for them to learn Catalan, to speak Catalan. Although even in my time Catalans used their language, whether it was officially allowed or not, anybody with an ear for Romance languages could learn enough Catalan. It's close enough to French, Italian, Spanish that you can understand what they are saying but, of course, I didn't have to speak it.

Q: Were we reporting on regional differences back to Washington?

SACKSTEDER: Yes, we were.

Q: Was there anything from the embassy saying they didn't like that type of report to come out?

SACKSTEDER: No, not at all.

Q: Because sometimes this happens. Sometimes an embassy sits at the middle and doesn't want to have people from the periphery reporting on discontent or anything else like that, but you didn't find that?

SACKSTEDER: No, we didn't find that.

Q: Who was our ambassador during this time?

SACKSTEDER: Lodge left before I did, and for several months I worked for Anthony J. Drexel Biddle Jr., Tony Biddle, who unfortunately was already a sick man when he came to Madrid. He had to return to the States and died of cancer within a year. He was followed by Robert Woodward, a career officer, who was ambassador for a good part of the time I was in Barcelona. Of course he brought to the embassy a different approach. Bob Woodward was not a John Lodge. His mode of operation was much lower keyed. He knew how to run the embassy and did so, not just the embassy but he ran the whole operation very well. He was not the kind to have his speeches published in the newspapers. In fact, he was not the kind to give many speeches. Since he is still living I would defer to him.

Q: I have interviewed Bob. What were the issues that sort of engaged the consulate general?

SACKSTEDER: In many ways Barcelona was a larger scale version of Lyon. The economic center of the country, it was the site of its textile industry. As Executive Officer, I supervised a three-officer economic section as well as devoting a good deal of time to economic and commercial work. I served ex-officio as a Director of the American Chamber of Commerce in Spain, which was located in Barcelona, and much of the American business presence in Spain was there. And Barcelona's annual International Trade Fair, like that at Lyon, was well patronized by American business.

Being a port city and a very popular port of call for the Sixth Fleet, we did a good deal of work with the Sixth Fleet accommodating their needs for facilities and frequent visits, both there and in Majorca which was in our district. Incidentally, I had served in the Navy in World War II and I was a naval reserve officer for a number of years. I also had temporary active duty with the Sixth Fleet. Encouraged by the commanders of the Sixth Fleet, I made it a practice to speak to Sixth Fleet personnel when they visited Barcelona. I developed a briefing about Spain, its history and its prospects for the future.

Q: Were we at all watching for any signs of democratic movement at that point or was the situation not one in which we felt there would be much change?

SACKSTEDER: For example, when I concluded my briefings to the officers of these Navy groups coming into Barcelona, I always ended with an explanation that Spain was not a democracy but would eventually become a democracy. How come? Because I said they had no alternatives. Dictators can't name successors. Certainly Franco could not have named a successor. His successor was already named because his successor was going to be the king, but it was a king who was going to be a constitutional monarch. To be a constitutional monarch, you have to operate in a more democratic context, and I think that's really what we all felt at that time would happen.

Q: On the economic side, what were our interests in Spain particularly from the Barcelona perspective?

SACKSTEDER: Spain was neither an important market nor an important source of

imports for us. It really wasn't. Spain was still the same Spain that we were dealing with when I was on the desk and the same Spain I was dealing with when I was in Madrid, i.e. it was a country where we had major base rights and military interests. One of our major bases was in Zaragoza which was part of my district. Occasionally situations would arise there that required some intervention on the part of the consulate general. Not the least of which was mending local relations in Zaragoza after the occasional faux-pas by someone at the base, due to inadvertence, or lack of appreciation, or lack of knowledge. In other words, it was a bit of hand holding.

Q: It wouldn't be of our concern but I recall around this time there was much looking at Spain as being the bad example of what you should do for tourism. It seemed like the whole coast was being bought up by German tourists who were to the equivalent of bringing in their own wurst and salami with them and having enclaves so that the Spanish and others were being almost preempted from the coast. Was this happening at that time?

SACKSTEDER: It was just beginning at that time. It really became a serious problem, certainly it became a massive presence, in the early '70s.

Q: I was in Greece at the time and the Greeks were looking at Spain and saying we are not going to let that happen here.

SACKSTEDER: It's true that they have in a sense spoiled large sections of the southern coast of Spain by building their, you could almost call them, tenements. They are not very attractive, they are cheap. But they brought a degree of economic prosperity to portions of the country that were really very poor because there were no other resources except, perhaps, almond trees.

Q: Were you in Barcelona when President Kennedy was assassinated?

SACKSTEDER: Yes.

Q: I was in Yugoslavia and I was really astounded at the reaction there of the Yugoslavs, both the government and the people, the empathy and all. What happened in Barcelona at that point?

SACKSTEDER: It was the same thing. I recall this as though it happened yesterday. Around 11:00 at night the telephone rang and it was the Captain General of Catalonia who was on the phone. I had not heard the news, the word hadn't gotten through to me. He began by expressing his condolences and I almost had to say "about what?" then I got the context of it and realized that he was saying that the President was dead. He asked me to call on him first thing the next morning because he wanted to coordinate with us what he said should be a proper expression of national sentiment about this. After clearing with the embassy, we opened a condolence book. I don't recall how many thousands signed, but it was thousands and thousands. We held a memorial mass with all the pomp and circumstance which the Spaniards know how to give to such an event with everybody

who was anybody there. The press and media just couldn't stop talking about it, writing about it. I do think that this extended down to what you might call the "little people." Kennedy was immensely popular.

Q: He represented at that time I think both the new world and the younger generation coming up. I think certainly in Europe and in other places, I think he represented a younger, very competent, and attractive reflection of the United States as compared to what appeared to looked to be an older and almost tired type of leadership that was elsewhere.

How about Soviet influence? Obviously Spain came out of a right-wing political system which had fought the Soviets. Did the Russians have any presence there at all?

SACKSTEDER: No, they did not at that time, and the Spanish Communist Party was a party in exile. The Spanish police authorities were very much on top of any type of subversive activity which was primarily in the former labor unions. The former unions were not operating but the former membership was known and it was kept under surveillance. Some of the Spanish authorities were almost paranoid about it and they thought that if one communist were allowed to come in, he would subvert the entire country.

This may be too long a story to go into in any detail, but we had an episode involving an American citizen who was mistaken by the Spanish authorities as an envoy of Spanish republican exiles to the so-called internal opposition in Spain. The way this came about was that during a week when I was duty officer, I got a telephone call late at night from a very agitated woman who said that her husband had been arrested by the Spanish police. He was being charged with being a communist agent and could I come help, which I did. At one or two in the morning I went down to the police headquarters and they indeed had this American in a holding tank. They brought him out to speak with me, and this became quite a story. This individual was a friend of a number of people in New York who were publicly identified with the exiles from the Spanish Republic, people like Victoria Kent, Mary McCarthy, prominent liberals. Their names were in his pocket address book. The individual in question was a man by the name of Gabriel Javsicas, who was, by profession, an importer of rare woods in New York and who traveled extensively in connection with his business. The lady who identified herself as his wife and was traveling as such was actually his friend and a practicing physician in New York. Mr. Javsicas gave me his story of what happened, and I then promised that we would make arrangements to get him out of the police headquarters the next day. As it turned out, it didn't prove to be the case because the commanding general of the Guardia Civil in Catalonia was utterly convinced that he had caught a real bad one who was probably not only an agent of the communists, a courier for the communists, but maybe even a terrorist. He was moved to the modern prison, and we lined up a defense attorney.

This began an episode that lasted several months. It turned out that Mr. Javsicas had a family relationship with Erskine Childers, the former president of Ireland; his daughter was married to the son of Erskine Childers. The Irish ambassador at Madrid was under

instructions to intervene at “highest levels,” even a higher level than our embassy was willing to go on behalf of Mr. Javicas. This dragged on, and dragged on. Meanwhile, we visited Gabriel regularly, about every day. We took him his mail and arranged for his meals to be brought in from a restaurant across the street from the calaboase. As he admitted later he said he had a wonderful time because of the people he met there. He was of that nature. He met such interesting people that he said he had material for several books. He had been a writer for *Fortune* in an earlier life and it appears that some of his writings were anti-Franco during the civil war period. But that was in the records and that identified him with the “wrong people.”

As I say ultimately the Spanish had to admit that they really didn't have anything on him. They said he was a very foolish man to have done the things he did, but they let him go. I put him on a plane to Paris, where he was to stay with Mary McCarthy! Afterwards we kept in touch until his death some years later. He never wrote the books he talked about.

Q: In '65, you left Barcelona. Whither?

SACKSTEDER: I spent three years at the consulate general of which I was very fortunate because I was in charge of the post almost one full year of the three. Between principal officers being called back for Promotion Board duty, or transfer of a principal officer and the late arrival of his successor, I ran a rather sizable post for a good part of a year. I was then assigned to the Department's Secretariat where I headed one of the teams in the Op Center for over a year and a half. Junior Officers were not assigned for over twelve months.

Q: So that would be from about '65 to '66?

SACKSTEDER: Yes.

Q: What type of work were you doing in the secretariat from '65 to '66?

SACKSTEDER: There were several major functions of the watch team which also tended to vary by the time of day because it was a 24 hour operation. We worked shifts of two nights, two days, and two evenings, in rotation and then had three days off. My team, Team “A,” consisted of a junior Watch Officer, one of whom became one of our women ambassadors in Africa, and a so-called Editor, one of whom, incidentally, was the first editor of *Foreign Policy* magazine. He went from my team to serve as assistant to the undersecretary, George Ball, and then later left the service and became head of *Foreign Policy*. The editor's job, with the advice and under the direction of the team leader, was to prepare the two very limited circulation highly classified cable summaries, the LIMDIS and EXDIS summaries that were circulated to the White House, the Secretary of Defense and the seventh floor.

The other major function of the Op Center of course was to alert the appropriate people on breaking events of major importance. It became more important during the night when nobody else was in the building because the watch officer was the first person to see the flash telegrams coming in from, say, Lagos, that civil war had broken out.

Q: The Biafran War.

SACKSTEDER: The Biafran War took place at that time and broke out “on my watch.” We didn’t normally wake the secretary up in the middle of the night but we regularly would call Ben Read, who ran the Executive Secretariat, and brief him. On rare occasions he would tell us to call Ball right away, another principal officer. We had all the private numbers of all the people who needed to be alerted. As necessary we would set up a small operating task force within the Operations Center to handle a particular crisis, some of which might last a day or two, some might last weeks. The nicest thing about that particular job was that when you left your desk, it was clean. You never came back to held over work or things that you hadn’t gotten around to before.

Q: There was the Biafran War, but also the war in Vietnam was heating up.

SACKSTEDER: The war in Vietnam was going on at the time.

Q: Lyndon Johnson kind of liked to be up to date on things, did you have...?

SACKSTEDER: In that respect our job was to make sure that if anything was breaking, word of it got to Dean Rusk as quickly as possible because the president and the secretary had sort of a little game going on. The president loved to catch the secretary unprepared. He was a maniac about watching the tickers. He had all three of them going in his office.

Q: We are talking about the news tickers.

SACKSTEDER: Yes, the news tickers. Of course the Situation Room apparently could call the President any time of the night to pass information on to him. A detail in that connection: One morning, this was late in the night watch which ended at 8:00 am, the telephone rang and the operator at the White House said “the President wants to speak to you.” I realized that the president had just discovered we had an operations center, because the day before he had lunched with Dean Rusk, who took him to visit the Operations Center. The president was on the line at 6:30 in the morning and, in his rather gruff way of speaking, said “What does Ball say?” Fortunately I knew that Ball was on one of those hush hush contact meetings in Paris with the Vietnamese and that as EXDIS telegram had just come in. We had flashed it to the White House Situation Room thinking the president might be calling. I got my assistant and said “Call the Situation Room and tell them to take the President the telegram, right away, ‘he is on the phone and he wants it.’” I stalled the president a couple of minutes and the president kept saying “What did he say, what did he say?” This was on an unclassified line, but he didn’t know that. I couldn’t tell him what was in this EXDIS, Top Secret, Eyes Only telegram. Fortunately, the Situation Room was used to this happening and he was still on the phone when the guy walks in and gives it to him. Then he hung up.

Q: Were there any other particular things that hit during this particular time?

SACKSTEDER: One time, for example, we had a problem with one of our aircraft in Spain carrying two nuclear weapons. It had an accident, it crashed. It was refueling from a tanker and during the operation something happened that caused the plane to go down. There we had two nuclear weapons off the coast of Spain in the Mediterranean.

Q: I think one landed on the shore and one went into the water off a fancy bathing beach, right?

SACKSTEDER: Right. Of course everything broke loose. The Pentagon was going crazy. They had what they called a "Broken Arrow" emergency at SAC and they alarmed and alerted everybody on the possibility of imminent missile attack and so on. It was a hairy few hours.

Q: Later we had our ambassador, his aides and others all swimming in the water just to show that it was all right. I've interviewed one of the aides who had to endure that. I thought this would be a good place to close for today. You left the secretariat in '66, where were you assigned then and we'll pick it up from there?

SACKSTEDER: Then I took over the Tunisian desk in the office of North African Affairs.

Q: You were on the Tunisian desk from when to when?

SACKSTEDER: It was from September to December '67. In December, after a few weeks on the desk, I made a trip to Tunisia and North Africa to familiarize myself with the situation.

Q: We'll pick it up during this Tunisian desk period. Today is August 25th, 1997. Fred let's talk about the Tunisian desk. As you saw it when got on there, what was the situation in Tunisia in '66?

SACKSTEDER: It was the Destourian Socialist Republic, and by that I mean it was a one party, very benevolent, dictatorship. President Bourguiba was, in effect, president for life. He had all of the right instincts that appealed to us so that he was always well received in Washington and so were his representatives. In fact, an earlier ambassador to Washington had been his own son, better known as Bibi, then Foreign Minister, who was very popular with the administration and who left to his successor a network of firm friends of Tunisia said to exist even today. Not unlike other country relationships, there is an organization in Washington called the American Tunisian Association which consists largely of veterans of service and admirers of Tunisia and what Tunisia stands for. What Bourguiba stood for was moderation, education and toleration. In keeping with this he was the first Arab chief of state who advocated rapprochement with Israel and the recognition of the presence of Israel, that it was going to be there, and the Arabs would have to learn to live with it. In other words, politically, our relations were excellent.

Our concerns with respect to Tunisia were mainly with its neighbors, both Algeria and

Libya. They already presented certain problems with respect to stability and as they say poor Tunisia happened to have picked to be between the two of them, the nut in the nutcracker.

Q: What was the situation in Algeria at that time?

SACKSTEDER: Algeria was still getting over the trauma of achieving independence, which had not been the case in Tunisia. Tunisia's had gone very smoothly and the French had graciously vacated Tunisia with the installation of Bourguiba. But that had not been the case in Algeria. Of course on the other side, we're talking now about post-monarchy Libya and a good deal of uncertainty about where Qadhafi was going to go. There was no great confidence that he was going to imitate Tunisia, he'd seek other models in his pursuit of power.

Our principal efforts in Tunisia were in the field of development. In fact it was during my tenure on that desk that we came to the conclusion that we had to help Tunisia with a minimum of what you might call self defense. One of my projects, I won't call it an achievement, which came to fruition during my tenure on that desk for that year was the conclusion of an agreement to establish a U.S. military liaison office in Tunisia (USLOT) with the mission to provide a very, very low level training for the very small Tunisian armed forces.

As I mentioned earlier, Bourguiba's main concern was the education of his people. In this respect he really was in a way continuing what had already started before independence, the redevelopment of an educated middle class. There was a high level of literacy in the country which in turn was part of Tunisia's problems because of limited natural resources. Tunisia was faced with the problem of placing educated individuals in the labor force. One way that Tunisia did practice this was exporting some of its brain power mainly to Europe, and especially to France. We had a large economic aid mission in Tunis at that time and a very sizable, very active, Peace Corps contingent that was highly welcomed by the Tunisian government and people.

Q: I would think with the large Peace Corps and other elements there, you would be running afoul of the French.

SACKSTEDER: As a matter of fact, in a way, we were. Let me preface this by giving you a little background on the situation in our embassy in Tunis. Our ambassador, who had been there for a long time, was Francis Russell. Francis Russell had been primarily a departmental officer. He served as head of Intelligence and Research, and had had one prior Embassy in Africa, but that was Ghana, English speaking. Ambassador Russell didn't speak much French and was very dependent upon interpreters. My principal job turned out to be that, in addition to running the political section.

There was, let's say, a lack of genuine sympathy between Ambassador Russell who, because of his long tenure, had ended up being the Vice Dean of the diplomatic corps, and the French ambassador, who was the Dean of the diplomatic corps. Ambassador

Sauvagnargues was most anxious to take another post but the French refused to let him leave until it was certain that the diplomatic corps deanship wouldn't pass to the American ambassador. He was kept on there, somewhat against his will (*contre son gré*), and he had very little to do with the American ambassador with whom he could hardly communicate. He finally achieved his reward after Ambassador Russell left when he in turn was transferred to Bonn as the French ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany and after that tour became foreign minister. So the Quai d'Orsay paid him back for his extended stay in Tunis.

Q: What was your impression of the reporting from Tunis at this particular time? Did it reflect the ambassador? How did the ambassador fit into this?

SACKSTEDER: When we talk about reporting, I'm trying to figure out how best to answer that question. My Washington recollection is that we were receiving only limited reporting primarily in the form of the week-q.

Q: That's the weekly roundup.

SACKSTEDER: The weekly roundup was like the Outlook section of the *Washington Post* on Sundays. That was the principal source of our reporting. The principal reporting officers at the time that I was on the desk turned out to be the DCM, Ed Mulcahy, who later served as ambassador to Tunisia, and my predecessor in the political section who actually did not do very much reporting. He tended to rely on his second secretary, Stephen M. Block, a fine writer who was primarily interested in labor issues, so that there was good contact between the embassy and the Tunisian labor unions. Really, there was not that much more. The embassy was always responsive to requests for specific opinions, about either developments or personalities, but not terribly forthcoming other than that.

Q: Did we see any meddling or attempts at meddling with Tunisia by its two neighbors, Algeria or Libya, or with the Palestine Liberation Organization?

SACKSTEDER: The PLO was still a long way from Tunis at that time. It was only much later that they made their headquarters there. Yes, there were evidences of attempted meddling as you call it on both sides and considerable concern on the part of the Tunisians that some of the more extremist elements might want to upset the stability and the calm in Tunisia which was very much the first concern of Bourguiba. Which again takes us back to the question of why we felt that Tunisia needed to improve its defenses, and it took some convincing the Tunisians to accept it, for Bourguiba was not very favorably inclined toward his military. The military, of course, had no power in the country. When we urged him, for example, to agree to having a very small U.S. military liaison team, I think he thought about it for a long time before agreeing, perhaps encouraged by his son the foreign minister to say yes.

I might mention that during my initial orientation visit to Tunisia in the fall of 1966, in addition to the opportunity to travel around the country with one of the young embassy officers as an escort, I had the occasion to meet President Bourguiba because my visit

coincided with a visit, the first, to Tunisia by the Commander of the Sixth Fleet. Alluding as I had earlier to the problems of our ambassador with the French language, I was roped in as both the ambassador's and the admiral's interpreter for calls on high authorities including a long visit with President Bourguiba. Over time, I ended up forming something of a friendship with him. My brief tenure on the Tunisian desk was otherwise mainly dedicated to keeping the paperwork flowing, coordinating the aid and other programs with the various agencies involved, i.e. Defense, AID, Agriculture, Peace Corps.

Q: The aid program being?

SACKSTEDER: The aid program consisted of the traditional aid components: technical assistance, PL480 food exports which generated the counterpart funds that were always so useful to us abroad. The substantial accounts in counterpart funds enabled the Department to route considerable travel to Africa through Tunis in order to take advantage of those funds for the purchase of transportation.

Q: One further question and we will be following through on this, but what about Nasser who was still riding high in Egypt at the time. How did we consider Nasser vis-à-vis Tunisia?

SACKSTEDER: Let's consider how Tunisia looked at Nasser, and Nasser at Tunisia. There was virtually no contact at that time because Nasser had taken unkindly to Bourguiba's suggestion that he ought to put his head back on properly, be realistic and understand that the only hope for the Arab world was to reach an accommodation with Israel. Bourguiba flatly told him that however much you beat your chest and beat the drums, you are not going to part the United States from its support of Israel, and the United States is still our most important outside contact. Nasser obviously didn't like that. I don't recall whether the two countries maintained real diplomatic relations or whether they had left it down to a sort of interest section in some other embassy, but there was no real contact between the two.

Q: You're on the Tunisian desk. In '67 you left. Where did you go?

SACKSTEDER: I went to Tunis as Political Section chief. A situation arose at the embassy which created some problems for us. This was at the outbreak of the 1967 war...

Q: We're talking about the war between Egypt, Syria and Israel.

SACKSTEDER: Correct. There was a "manifestation" outside the American embassy in Tunis and the Tunisians were faced with one of those decision making situations which most governments like to try to avoid. In other words, were they going to follow the line of the majority of the Arab states which chose to break relations with the United States, or were they not? In our view there was very little likelihood they would.

Parenthetically just at the time of this outbreak, this '67 war, we were staging in

Washington, in cooperation with the Smithsonian, a very major exhibition of the mosaics from the Bardo Museum in Tunis. This had all been geared up and planned and the mosaics were in place. The question arose, given circumstances, do we open it or do we quietly pull the rug on this? The Tunisians flatly said no, we are going through with it. On the eve of the scheduled opening the foreign minister, Bourguiba Junior, arrived accompanied by some Tunisian cultural people and press, and personally presided at the opening. Ambassador Russell was already in Washington on consultation.

As the officer in charge of Tunisian affairs, I accompanied the Tunisian ambassador to meet his foreign minister at National Airport, and as we were leaving the airport to escort him to the embassy, the Minister took me aside and said "We have a problem and you're going to have to take care of this problem." I said, "What is the problem?" He said, "I'm afraid one of your senior officers in Tunis has so upset our vice premier that he has asked me to PNG this officer." We already had some indications from the embassy that there had been a little set-to. The Vice Premier had called at the embassy to express concern and to apologize for the manifestation by that small mob. The Foreign Minister continued, "This particular officer had seen fit to express very strong views about this event, saying that this was inexcusable, etc., etc."

We can understand that in a moment of emotion somebody might lose their cool and say things that they shouldn't have said and that they probably regret saying. At the same time, obviously, we have to placate the Vice Premier. "You've got to remove this individual." He was in fact re-assigned to Embassy Paris to work on African affairs.

Q: Rather than going through the declaring persona non grata which means headlines and all of that.

SACKSTEDER: Exactly. So there was never a word in the press about it and it was all done as you might say between gentlemen, very quietly. This put the Department in the situation where we had to find a new political officer. To make a long story short, after trying a number of people who we thought highly qualified but none of whom were either available or interested, it turned out that I was asked to take the job.

Q: You were in Tunis from '67 until when?

SACKSTEDER: '69.

Q: How did you find the atmosphere at the embassy? You had been looking at it from the perspective of Washington, but what was it like in Tunis?

SACKSTEDER: Let me preface this by saying again, here was a desk officer going to the country for which he had been a desk officer. As I said, in the case of Madrid it posed some problems because of my relatively low rank and the fact that the ambassador had me dealing with the heads of all the sections of a very large embassy on an equal level. In the case of Tunis it was different. First, the DCM, whom I had known before he was assigned to Tunis, was extremely supportive and cooperative. If I had any bureaucratic

jurisdictional problems with any of my colleagues, it was only with one or two of them, who were perhaps somewhat resentful of the fact that both the ambassador and the deputy chief of mission relied very heavily on my advice. It was a small, but harmonious embassy. In truth the only officer at the embassy with whom I had a few problems was the administrative officer, who was somewhat impatient at my impatience because he was not doing a thing to get me housing. In effect, he told me if you want housing, you go look for it. I thought it was supposed to be his job and so we had a little bit of friction there. And my first days in Tunis were taken up with a visit by Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey, for whom I served as interpreter, from French to English and vice versa.

Q: You were there in the aftermath of the '67 war which was a real shocker there as well because the Israelis really ripped the Egyptian army and the Syrian army apart and they took over the West Bank including all of Jerusalem. There were accusations flying around that the Americans had joined in the attack. Mainly because it was almost a matter of disbelief that the Israelis could do so much damage to particularly the Egyptians. How did we approach this saying, one, we weren't involved and, two, sort of repairing relations?

SACKSTEDER: It may be hard to believe for those who were serving in other Arab countries but we saw no evidence of any feeling on the part of the Tunisians that we were "the bad guys" in any way. The incident that had taken place at the embassy, the little manifestation; you can't dignify it as a riot because no damage was done, just a little bit of arm waving and shouting.

Q: Not an unusual thing for any of us who served in a troubled part of the world.

SACKSTEDER: For example, to be quite frank about it, the Tunisian government made sure, through their control of the press, that there was no agitation. As already mentioned, the relationship between Tunisia and Nasser, in particular, but some of the other Arab countries as well, were far from cordial. Tunisia had, in a sense, put its eggs in the American basket and kept insisting on being a reasonable country at a time when so many of its neighbors were far from reasonable. Later on we will come across events that took place some years later in connection with the Mauritanian decision at that time to break relations with the United States. Mind you, Morocco did not, of course, but Mauritania wanted to be more Arab than the Arabs and break relations with the United States. You could sense that there was a wave of anti-Americanism prevalent in much of that part of the world. Tunisia was not at all of that bend.

Q: You say you were often the interpreter for the ambassador, Francis Russell. When he saw Bourguiba did you sense how relations were between the two men?

SACKSTEDER: They were good. Had they possessed the ability to command a common language, they would have been very, very close. They were close but separated by the bridge of language which it became my job to provide. During my time in Tunis Bourguiba made a state visit to the United States, not his first incidentally, but of course he was president for a long time. He was making his second state visit which went very

well. All of this of course was covered in the press profusely and very positively.

During that time, now that we had a military liaison office, we began to stage short visits by units of the Sixth Fleet into Tunisian ports. It happened that on one such occasion we had a Division of destroyers go into the port of Sousse where Bourguiba was at that time in residence. The ambassador asked me to go down there to represent the embassy, and to make arrangements; we didn't have a naval attaché who would have normally done that. When the ships came in I called on the Division commander and captains of the ships and briefed them on the situation and on the program that had been set up. To their great surprise they, and I escorting them, were a major feature at an event involving the president. It was his birthday. All of this by the way was in Arabic which none of us could understand, but it was praising Bourguiba in song and in dance, etc. As it turned out this group of Americans including these senior officers in uniform and I, were seated in the next row directly behind the president and in his official party. It was all over the newspapers that these American officers were celebrating Bourguiba's birthday.

Q: During this '67 to '69 period, any problems with Algeria, Libya, or Egypt?

SACKSTEDER: No. With Egypt, as I indicated, relations were so bad that there were virtually no relations between Tunisia and Egypt. Obviously there was a diplomatic intercourse with both Algeria and Libya. My recollection is that at one point the Tunisians, as an expression of their discontent with Libyan attitudes, closed the border with Libya. It was only a gesture, but it conveyed to Libyans that Tunisians were not happy with what Libya was saying. In a sense, it was unfortunate for Tunisia because Libyans were among the major sources of tourist income, particularly in southern Tunisia and the island of Djerba. I really can't recall anything very significant happening during that period. Now on the other hand, this was the time when in another part of the world a lot was happening. For example, in Vietnam we had Tet.

Q: The Tet offensive was in January of '68. We also had the takeover of Czechoslovakia by the Soviets in the summer of '68. Did any of those have any impact?

SACKSTEDER: In a way they did, because the Tunisian position with respect to Vietnam was supportive of the United States. There was in Tunis a quite active South Vietnamese embassy. The ambassador was "Little Min" as opposed to "Big Min" who was also a general and a leading figure in South Vietnam.

Q: They were both generals and I think he was probably put out there to pasture.

SACKSTEDER: Yes, put out to pasture. He cultivated the Tunisians extensively. This brings us around to the question of communism. The Tunisians were firmly anti-communist and they were very sympathetic of the efforts of the South Vietnamese. Those were the major events that took place during that year but the echoes in Tunisia were I think overwhelming pro-Western in orientation. China, for example, had a small embassy in Tunis but no ambassador. As it happens, the Chinese embassy was virtually across the street from our embassy.

Q: In those days it was the People's Republic of China.

SACKSTEDER: Yes, the People's Republic and it was during the time of the Red Guards and the Cultural Revolution, the coverage of which in the Tunisia press was very negative. Our security people pointed out to me that the political section, where I had my office, happened to have windows facing the Chinese embassy. They insisted, to the regret of my secretary who had to work by artificial light, on covering the windows on that side so the Chinese couldn't look in. But the Chinese embassy had no role in the community, they were tolerated but not really given any significance. I think the only thing the Chinese did during my time there was send some Ping-Pong players to put on an exhibition.

Q: You left Tunis in '69, where did you go?

SACKSTEDER: In January of '69, after only fourteen months, I transferred to New York to the mission to the UN. The reason for the early transfer was my wife's medical condition which concerned the Department's Medical Director and the doctor stationed at Tunis.

Q: You were with the U.S.-UN from when to when?

SACKSTEDER: From March '69 to July '72.

Q: What was your particular function within this U.S.-UN?

SACKSTEDER: All American officers at the mission carried the title of advisor as opposed to diplomatic ranks like counselor or first secretary. I was advisor for political and security affairs, and the second ranking of ten officers in that section.

Q: This was '69 to '72, the early Nixon period.

SACKSTEDER: The early Nixon period and during the ambassadorships of Charlie Yost and George Bush.

Q: Let's talk about Charles Yost, he was a Foreign Service officer.

SACKSTEDER: Charlie Yost was a Foreign Service officer and Career Ambassador. At that point I think he was probably the senior career officer in our Foreign Service and an officer with extensive experience in Europe and the Far East, including several ambassadorships. It was not always the case, but he was a member of the Cabinet in his capacity as ambassador to the United Nations.

Q: In this '69 to '72 period, I suppose Vietnam was probably a major issue.

SACKSTEDER: Yes, but Vietnam never became an issue at the UN, by our choice and

by preference of the majority of members of the United Nations. This was the period when, among other things, and some of these I was involved in, we were finishing up the business of de-colonization. It was also the time which eventually in 1971 led to the big change, when the representation of China at the UN changed from the Republic of China to the People's Republic.

Q: You got there shortly after the Nixon administration came in. Being sort of the new boy as professional officer in the delegation, did you sense a change in attitude towards the United Nations? Were you getting reflections of a change in attitude between the Johnson administration and the new Nixon administration?

SACKSTEDER: Yes. Nixon's first address to the United Nations was at the time of the General Assembly, September of '69. He met with our delegation, including the permanent Mission staff, before he went to address the General Assembly. He began laying out his theory of the bi-polar world, the United States and the Soviet Union. His address to the General Assembly was, to put it mildly, not well received. He virtually dismissed the rest of the world as insignificant, unimportant, and almost irrelevant; there were only two interlocutors of any significance left, and they were the United States and the Soviet Union. We had a lot of fence mending to do in the following weeks and months to restore a little bit of the collegial attitude which had prevailed here before in New York. That was the most striking development the first year I was there.

Q: How did we handle that? Here we have a very powerful president, one who took great pride in his foreign affairs authority with a very strong White House and a policy which from the United Nations point of view didn't make much sense. After all you are in the heart of an organization in which everybody has a vote and all of that, and you have to deal with it however you feel about it and sort of an announced policy. How did Ambassador Yost and you all deal with this both in your internal discussions among yourselves and then as you went out and dealt with these other powers?

SACKSTEDER: It was a problem, to put it mildly. You could tell your colleagues that the president was simplifying the situation. Of course the rest of the world counted and was very important. But everybody recognized that there were two superpowers and only two superpowers, notwithstanding the three other vetoes in the Security Council. Obviously we depended on good cooperation and understanding from all of our friends. It wasn't an easy role to play.

Q: What was your impression of the Soviet delegation there?

SACKSTEDER: I would say about one quarter of them were excellent, highly qualified, and three quarters were charlatans and hangers-on who were just happy to be out of Russia and to be living a very comfortable life in New York. One committee I served on was the committee on de-colonization. I was the deputy to one of our ambassadors who was responsible for that area, Max Finger. Have you ever met him? You ought to try and interview him. I can give you an address and phone number. Max Finger served for many years at the mission to the UN and worked his way up to an ambassadorship there. He

wasn't a career FSO.

On this particular committee, the Soviet representative was practically an idiot. He hadn't an original thought in his head. He had memorized and used some phrases repeatedly, with the expectation that his hearers were going to be convinced by this, but instead, he was making a fool of himself. On the other hand, there were some officers in their mission who were both broad minded and highly intelligent. I recall one in particular, who worked on some of the things that I did. He was almost too good to be a Soviet. And he was Ukrainian!

Q: What were the issues with the de-colonization?

SACKSTEDER: De-colonization had really ended, by that time, but the Sixth Committee, the committee on de-colonization, was a platform for some of the more extreme Third World countries to lambaste colonialism as an institution and as the precursor of all the problems that developed in Africa and in other parts of the world. Max Finger and I finally concluded that we had to convince the Department that we should resign from this committee, which served only as a platform for vituperation on the part of certain elements that were trying to make a name for themselves. As you know, everything that is said in the United Nations is transcribed and then made available. While it may never appear anywhere in the United States, it gets banner headlines in certain third world countries. This is where these individuals start their political careers.

Q: What about Puerto Rico, did that come up there?

SACKSTEDER: Puerto Rico would come up. It came up as an issue because Cuba made a point of raising it as a colonial issue. Let me go back a little bit and explain how the work was divided in the political section in the mission. Our political counselor, the head of the section, was Michael Newlin during the time that I was there. Michael Newlin was later Consul General at Jerusalem and Ambassador in Algeria. While not formally his deputy, I acted in his absence because I was the next ranking. My specific responsibilities in addition to de-colonization and the trusteeship council, were liaison with the Latin American missions and the Francophone African missions. That part of the work was what you might call a hand-holding operation. They knew that if they needed to talk to somebody at our mission, they first came to me. I made it a practice to keep in touch with the chiefs of mission of the Latin American republics, either directly or indirectly. By indirectly I mean that out of deference to their high rank as ambassadors or ministers, etc., a mere advisor wasn't going to presume to be the contact for a chief of a permanent mission. On the other hand, the ambassador in question knew perfectly well that I was the one to contact if he wanted to see Yost or Bush, or one of our other top people.

We were talking about the de-colonization committee. After about a year-and-a-half of going along with the committee's calling meetings in order to lambaste the United States on its colonial past or colonialism including domestic colonialism, for example, how we had exterminated the native Indians and so on and so forth. We recommended, and the Department finally agreed, that we resign from the committee. Some of our Western

allies were quite ready to do the same thing and did. I don't remember exactly who did and who didn't, but that took the wind out of the sails of these representatives who used it as a platform, because they no longer had anybody to beat on. It didn't in any way affect the work at the UN because the world had already been de-colonized.

Coming to the question of Puerto Rico, probably the most important issue for the Cubans was to introduce a resolution on American colonialism in Puerto Rico. Having responsibility for the Latin American area, I was asked to work closely with the government of Puerto Rico in attempting to defuse this Cuban effort. Sometimes we were successful, sometimes not quite. The governor of Puerto Rico at that time was Luis Ferré, who was the leading member of the party favoring statehood. I was asked on several occasions to travel to San Juan to meet with the governor and his friends and to encourage these friends to become lobbyists for the Puerto Rican position that this was no business of the United Nations.

I do recall at one point during George Bush's service as Permanent Representative, Ambassador Bush and I had made a trip to Puerto Rico in connection with this issue. At the urging of the Puerto Rican government, we had invited a number of Latin American Permanent Representatives to be guests of the government of Puerto Rico for several days. Among these we tried to invite was the gentleman who later became secretary general of the United Nations, Javier Perez de Cuellar, of Peru, who flatly refused. We realized later that he refused because he didn't want to be identified with any particular group or position that might antagonize that vast group of developing countries in the Third World. He told us that he did not see any harm in inscribing the item because, after all, it would please some people and nobody was going to pay any attention to it anyway. It may have contributed to his finally achieving his aim of becoming the Secretary General.

Q: On the trustee side, was Namibia an issue?

SACKSTEDER: No, Namibia was not a trust territory. The trust territories then were only two: Australia had a trust over Papua New Guinea, and the United States over Micronesia.

Q: Did you get involved in either of those?

SACKSTEDER: Yes, I was either the representative or the deputy representative to the Trusteeship Council. The year I was representative and headed our delegation, 1972, was the year that the rotating Presidency of the Council was the U.S.'s turn. This was Ambassador Tapley Bennett who was also the deputy U.S. Permanent Representative. What it amounted to really was giving the Soviets a platform to lambaste the United States on quasi or pseudo colonialism in Micronesia and our bringing in leaders of the various indigenous communities in Micronesia and the U.S. High Commission to Micronesia to demonstrate that this was not the case.

The trusteeship council was a very small group after all, and it only included the

permanent members of the security council, i.e. the Soviets, China, the U.S., Britain, and France, and Australia because it was an administering power. Nevertheless, we went through a formal annual meeting of the council every year. The U.S. high commissioner would head the indigenous group while on the Australian side they would bring some exotic people from Papua New Guinea and “parade” them around New York. You met some fascinating people working with the Council.

Q: Both of those areas you ended up with the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands had their own, and Papua New Guinea both gained their independence. Was that pretty much in the offing when you were doing that so negotiations were going on?

SACKSTEDER: That’s right, they were. This was an issue of lesser interest to State and more interest of Interior because it was the Interior Department that administered the trust territory until independence.

Q: Can you compare and contrast how Charles Yost and George Bush managed the UN, how they operated as ambassadors?

SACKSTEDER: Let me see if I can find a way to say this. Charles Yost was a much more private person. George Bush, after all, had been in Congress. While it was before his meteoric rise, he had and has an outgoing personality. Charlie Yost seemed to prefer, and did indeed prefer, to work quietly, “dans les coulisses,” as they say in French, “in the wings.” That would be the main difference as I recall. I only worked for Yost the first year I was there and it was during that time that I was feeling my way around. By the time George Bush took over I had my feet firmly on the ground and I found that Bush, perhaps because he realized that he relied on us career people to a greater extent, was much more willing to delegate responsibility to his staff. It was not uncommon, for example, for Bush to tell one of his officers, after a particular meeting with another chief of mission or a visiting minister, to go ahead and report this to Washington on our own authority. He gave us authority, for example, to send limited distribution reporting telegrams to the Department which he had not seen.

Q: While you were there, how did you find relations with the Department’s IO, International Organizations? Was there any sort of tension or not?

SACKSTEDER: No. We understood, of course, that any statement which might constitute policy had to be cleared with them. That was a given. Since we worked very closely, even on a daily basis, with UNP (UN Political Affairs), at the level of the office director or deputy assistant secretary, we understood and knew what their positions were. They recognized that if we advised something different it was because of our knowledge of the situation on the ground, the likelihood of running into problems, the concerns we might have about how this would impact certain of the other missions whose support we needed on other issues. We had a very close cooperation.

Q: Did you have any feeling during this time about the role of the National Security

Council and Henry Kissinger?

SACKSTEDER: I'm interested that you brought that out. Let me record a little story about this. We were debating the issue of Chinese representation at the UN. The United States had come up with a formula that we tried to convince other countries to accept of the two Chinas. This was during George Bush's time and Ambassador Bush worked on that issue as though he were a desk action officer. He tried to sell this position to all and sundry. I accompanied him on many calls, including one to a first secretary of a small African nation, let us say Malawi, who was the chargé of that mission, in order to explain the U.S.-China policy to that individual. Some of these people, of course, have never had an ambassador call on them, much less The Representative of the United States.

Eventually of course the annual so-called Albanian resolution, recognizing only the People's Republic as the legitimate representative of China, was introduced in the General Assembly and it came to a vote. During the debate prior to the vote I was in our General Assembly seats with Bush and we were called to a telephone. I went to answer the call, and it was from UNP in the Department informing us that National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger was meeting in Beijing (I think we still called it Peking) with the Chinese and that an announcement would be made that the United States has recognized the People's Republic of China as the government of China. This spread like wildfire and all of us action officers went scurrying around to our clients, as we called them, to say that while this is coming up, we still feel that it is very important that we preserve the rights of the people of Taiwan to call themselves Chinese and to be represented. They are, after all, a nation of 28 million, etc, etc. I was at a pay telephone in the General Assembly lobby when I saw my friend the ambassador of Tunisia on the telephone.

We had been assured of Tunisia's support. The ambassador, using mostly French, was on the telephone to Tunis pleading for authority to change Tunisia's position on the grounds, he said, that if everybody else is abandoning ship, and if we don't, we'll be isolated. I didn't hear the answer but I rushed back in to the General Assembly and pulled up a chair behind George Bush and said, "We've lost one more. Tunisia I think is going over." He knew the Tunisians and knew their position. I think this was the first he knew about Kissinger being in China, at least so he led me to believe.

Q: What was the attitude I mean with sort of getting off by yourselves and feeling you had been really undercut?

SACKSTEDER: Oh yes, it was. It was a feeling that we had been undercut not by the Department perhaps because I don't know to what extent even the Department knew. This was at the time when William Rogers was Secretary and I've sensed from occasional meetings with him, that he and Henry were not exactly on the closest of terms.

Q: Yes, I've heard that to be said.

SACKSTEDER: That session led to the vote. It went on way into the night. It was one or

two in the morning before the vote finally took place and of course we saw one “friend” after another vote in favor of the Albanian resolution which concluded with the withdrawal of our Chinese friends, those we had been working so closely with for years, walking in total silence out of the room. Once they had withdrawn the unseemly outbreak took place when some of the strongest supporters of the Albanian resolution, i.e. the People’s Republic, jumped up and down with joy, clapped, and cheered. It was very, very widely reported.

Q: Were you there much longer after this?

SACKSTEDER: I left New York in July of ‘72. The Chinese had been there since the previous fall.

Q: Was it difficult for people like yourself to go around and to deal with this new reality? Part of our whole thrust in the United Nations was almost based on keeping Red China out and all of a sudden we reversed this. How did our officers operate?

SACKSTEDER: To begin with I think the People’s Republic were very, very astute in the way they took over. They did so without fanfare, without pretensions, in a very low key way. They sent as permanent representative a man who they couldn’t have picked better (Ambassador Huang Hua) because he came without the slightest trace of a winner. He went out of his way to be not just polite, I guess the Chinese are always polite, but to be understanding of what had been the position of many of the countries represented. He seemed to say that we are here now and we are here to learn how all of this works because we are new and we are interested in being a positive and cooperative element of the United Nations. We are not here to destroy the United Nations because of what it has done to us in the past. This was reflected by all of the people who worked for him in the Chinese mission. In their quiet ways they began to make contacts not only with people who had supported them but with everybody else.

Q: Did you sense any change or reaction from the Soviets at this particular time?

SACKSTEDER: Yes, it was very interesting. The Soviets changed their tune completely. Up to that time, of course, they had been beating on us at every possible occasion on whatever issue. Suddenly they became our buddies. They were all smiles, from top to bottom. You never heard a nasty word out of a Soviet. They kept feeling their way around. They were the most uncomfortable for having the People’s Republic of China there. It bothered them a lot more than anybody else, I think. They had been comfortable with the previous situation.

Q: They didn’t like.

SACKSTEDER: Not particularly and they were, I think, scared in many ways.

Q: Were there any other issues that you were dealing with or were those sort of the major ones?

SACKSTEDER: During my third year there we had to elect a new secretary general. U Thant had had his two terms and was retiring. A certain gentleman from Vienna who had been an ambassador at the UN at one point and who was at that time foreign minister, was one of the more outspoken candidates.

Q: We're talking about Kurt Waldheim?

SACKSTEDER: We're talking about Kurt Waldheim who was not the United States candidate by any means. On the grounds first of all that it would be time for Latin America to have the job, we supported the permanent representative of Argentina, Carlos Ortiz de Rosas rather openly. As a fallback position we were not unwilling to see a candidacy by the then foreign minister of Guyana, his name was Rampal (known as Sonny). We were not, as I say, supporting Waldheim but Waldheim was conducting a campaign. You might think he was running for county commissioner or the like. He was spending a lot of time around the UN headquarters and he was acting the buddy of everybody.

I recall having invited a friend to lunch at the delegates dining room. Waldheim came in accompanied by two or three of the Austrians and they were being directed to a table not far from mine. He saw me and came over. Now why should the foreign minister of Austria come to Fred Sacksteder of the United States mission? He had seen me someplace with my ambassador so it wouldn't hurt to shake hands. He came and shook hands, was introduced to my guest, and shook hands. He was politicking at every level. As we all know it was a rather bitter election that went on through many ballots and eventually the Soviets made it clear: It had to be Waldheim.

Q: What was the analysis of why the Soviets wanted Waldheim?

SACKSTEDER: We speculated that they thought that they had something on him. Maybe it is true, maybe they did. Maybe they were aware of his wartime record or that he hadn't always told the truth about it. We are talking about the time when he served with the German Army in the Balkans, specifically in Croatia, and the allegations that though he was a very junior officer at the time, he should have been aware of some of the human rights violations and atrocities that were committed there by both the Germans and the Croats under German control.

Because I was working with the, then, deputy permanent representative of Guyana, a charming young lady who later became foreign minister, Bush asked me to talk to her and explain why we couldn't support Sonny Rampal even though we thought he was a first class chap. It was one of those unhappy things that we are asked to do sometimes but of course she understood perfectly well. She was very bright and knew that their chances were minimal. I hoped that, if unable to get Ortiz de Rosas, we might fall back on her foreign minister.

I might say the UN was something of a world apart, not the real world. You are dealing

with all kinds of people on all kinds of issues. The fact of being a member of a permanent mission, especially an important one, gives you the impression you are a mover and a shaker of some kind. The downside of it, of course, particularly for us Americans, was that living in New York or working in New York was financially a calamity. The cost of living in New York was substantially higher than in Washington and I think the typical mid-level officer like myself could only do it if they had private income or savings. I wiped out my small savings just to be able to pay rent and live there.

Q: When you left there in 1972 where did you go?

SACKSTEDER: First I should say, and I haven't mentioned this before, that my wife had medical problems which made it apparent that the Department would not clear us for an overseas assignment. I had been working with the Latin American Bureau, ARA, because I handled the Latin American missions, and the possibility came up of a job that would put me in a foreign affairs setting but still in the United States. It was with the International Boundary and Water Commission U.S. and Mexico, known as IBWC, in El Paso, Texas. We had been encouraged to take annual leave in winter, after the General Assembly, and we went to the Southwest where we had family and friends. During the winter of 1972, I was asked if I would stop at El Paso and meet the American Commissioner of IBWC who was looking for an officer to take over the job of secretary of the U.S. section of the Boundary Commission, which was an FSO assignment. On our way to Arizona we stopped in El Paso for a couple of days and I met him and some of his staff. He told me about the work and it sounded interesting. It was an opportunity to get back into contact with foreign affairs but on that border basis, so I accepted the assignment. In July of the same year, 1972, after the session of the Trusteeship Council had ended, I moved to El Paso.

Q: So you did this from '72 until when?

SACKSTEDER: Until '75, for three years.

Q: What were the issues that you dealt with? In the first place could you tell me how this IBWC was constituted?

SACKSTEDER: It was established by a series of treaties with Mexico and was primarily responsible for two functions. The first was the maintenance of the international boundary. The other was the distribution of the waters of the rivers that flow to or across the U.S.-Mexican border and include the Colorado and the Rio Grande and some of its tributaries. Given the fact, of course, that it's essentially an arid and desert area, water there is a very, very important issue. While I was still discussing this assignment with the Department, specifically with ARA and the Mexican desk, Mexico was clamoring for a resolution of a problem, of the salinity of the water of the Colorado River delivered to Mexico under treaty obligations.

During my very last weeks at the mission, the then president-elect of Mexico Luis Echeverria came to Washington for a traditional get acquainted visit and then came to

New York. I had the opportunity to meet the president there. My assignment was by then firm so I informed him that I would be going to the Boundary and Water Commission to work with his representatives on the Commission on this issue.

Indeed, the minute I reached El Paso I was working full-time plus on the drafting of an agreement to resolve this problem. This ultimately involved working with a special commission set up by President Nixon and headed by Herbert Brownell, the former Attorney General, to conclude an agreement with Mexico that would be acceptable to both sides. Like all of these things, it involved much to and fro, drafts, further drafts, revisions to drafts and so on. The best part of the first year that I was there was devoted to drawing up this agreement. We went to Mexico City to sign it in 1973.

Q: As you were dealing with this, in the first place did you find that indeed there was a problem? If there was a problem it would seem that it would require something to be done in the United States since the water flows into Mexico.

SACKSTEDER: Correct, especially the waters of the Colorado River.

Q: And hence whatever had to be done had to be done by Americans. As you know Americans, particularly American business farming people, are not an easy people to deal with. How did that work out?

SACKSTEDER: Everything you said is absolutely true. They were not easy to deal with and they had strong congressional support for their position. The essence of the story, the basis of the problem was the following. First the waters of the Colorado River are the waters of *the* one major U.S. river that actually never reach the sea. Every drop of that water is used somewhere on the way to the sea and there is no flow into the Gulf of California, or as the Mexicans call it the Sea of Cortez, from the Colorado River. The apportionment of these waters of course has been an issue within the United States for generations. A large proportion of the waters go to California even though the Colorado River doesn't flow through California but without which Los Angeles would have been a desert.

When we talk about salinity, we mean the number of parts per million of dissolved salts in the water. It is considered that water more saline than 900 to 1,000 parts per million is not usable for irrigation or for agriculture. The salinity of these waters from the Colorado River, was aggravated by the discharge of pumped waters out of an irrigation project in southern Arizona called the Welton Mohawk district which consisted almost exclusively of citrus orchards. Citrus in that hot, dry climate requires a tremendous amount of water to produce a crop, 12 to 15 feet of water per year. This water was then pumped out of that district through a canal which discharged into the Colorado River just about at Yuma, Arizona, so fresh water could replace it. The pumped water raised the salinity of the existing water in the Colorado River to a point where sometimes it reached 1,200 to 1,300 parts per million and it was this water which was delivered to Mexico for irrigation purposes and which the Mexicans complained about.

The whole issue then was what do we do about it? Do we try to improve the quality of

the water somehow rather than cut down consumption of it? This was very difficult to do because all of these people using the water had rights, as they were called, and you don't take their rights away easily. I proposed, and it was laughed at by my commissioner and others, that we close the Welton Mohawk district, and buy out the 30 or 40 farm operations there and "make them all rich." Of course that was pure naivete. We had to deal, among others, with Senator Carl Hayden who was the dean of the Senate at the time and who was a staunch defender of his constituents.

It was decided that technically the only thing to be done was to build and operate a massive de-salting plant that would treat the waters that came out of the Welton Mohawk district by a process called reverse osmosis. Reverse osmosis requires vast amounts of electric power, but there are generating facilities in that part of the country operated by, among others, the Bureau of Reclamation, which is basically responsible for that sort of work, and which can produce electricity at very low cost. So a multi, multi-million dollar plant was designed and built and has been operating since to reduce the salinity of the Welton-Mohawk discharges to the point where the water that passes after that to Mexico in the Colorado River is acceptable.

The long range future of the southwest of course is totally another question which is how much more demand can you put on the limited supply sources, namely the water of the Colorado, by the continuing growth of population and its demands for water. The amount of water used for irrigation of course is umpteen times greater than that needed to support human life in terms of domestic consumption.

The U.S. Section on the International Boundary and Water Commission is essentially a group of civil and hydraulic engineers. I was principally responsible for liaison with the Mexican counterparts of that commission and with the drafting of all kinds of agreements, called "Minutes" of the Commission, to resolve problems under the jurisdiction of the International Boundary and Water Commission over the entire border from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean. I had the opportunity to cover virtually every mile of it more than once and be acquainted with all the various problems that the engineers were working on, so that I could convert what the engineers agreed to into treaty language.

Q: How did you find your Mexican counterparts? Was this pretty much a group of professional people both on the American side and the Mexican side?

SACKSTEDER: Absolutely, yes. Very, very professional. Both commissioners by Treaty definition had to be civil engineers. This was not a position opened to a diplomat. I, the diplomat, was the secretary, but the commissioner, the chief engineer, and the heads of the various engineering branches, were professional engineers. In the case of the United States, they were civil service employees and in the case of Mexico they were the Mexican equivalent, but professionals.

Q: When it got to work, did you find that politics intruded? Obviously they intruded on both sides but as far as the commission went, did politics play a part?

SACKSTEDER: No, really not. Politics on a national basis did intrude of course on that big issue of the Colorado River water but on such questions as the distribution of the waters on the boundary, these were strictly engineering decisions. The Boundary and Water Commission operates two major dams, Falcon and Amistad, on the Rio Grande, or, as the Mexicans call it, the Rio Bravo, which forms the boundary between the U.S. and Mexico from El Paso east to the Gulf of Mexico. The administration of the storage, discharge, and use of the waters of these two big reservoirs is determined by the Boundary and Water Commission in accordance with the percentages of those waters which are allocated to each country. Those are, as I say, purely technical decisions. They don't become political, except on rare occasions where there may be complaints that the other side is getting more than its share.

Q: What about you were mentioning on the other side the maintenance of the boundary?

SACKSTEDER: That again brings up all kinds of interesting possibilities. Let me just cite one or two examples. The land boundary, which is established by Treaty and marked by boundary monuments, begins at El Paso and goes all the way to the Pacific. It separates west Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California from the corresponding Mexican states. One section of that boundary is traversed by the San Andreas fault, the tectonic plate fault, in the area near Mexicali and Calexico in southeastern California. An earthquake caused a movement of the plates that distorted the boundary line and its markers and the question arose, how do we rectify the boundary which has moved? In this particular case it was to the primary advantage of Mexico. We're talking here about square feet, not about square miles or acres, but nevertheless we had this boundary question. We finally concluded that the best way to solve this problem was to ignore it. We'd just leave the boundary markers where they were and even if they were distorted a little bit, the line between boundary markers would continue to be the boundary.

Another problem that arose and this arose repeatedly in what we call the river boundary, the Rio Grande river boundary. The Rio Grande flows from west to east in a roughly northwest to southeast direction. It's a hydraulic fact of life that in the northern hemisphere waters of a river flowing from west to east will tend to abrade the southern bank, yet the treaties stated that the center of the main channel of the river will be the international boundary. Mexico would complain that after a flood, a little bit more Mexican soil ended up on the northern bank meaning the channel had moved southward. That was another problem we had to study, correct our maps and determine where the actual boundary was. It could involve all kinds of factors including land titles. Also, for example, in the case of a drug smuggler arrested in that area, was he on Mexican soil or was he on U.S. soil?

Q: What was your connection to the State Department during this?

SACKSTEDER: I reported not only daily but virtually multiple times a day with the Mexican desk. The Mexican desk had an officer working full-time on the boundary issues. During my time it was a fine gentleman, a civil servant, by the name of T.R.

Martin who had held that position for a long time and who was the Boundary Commission “desk officer” under the director for Mexican Affairs. I was on the phone hours on end taking down long hand text of drafts, or sending the same to the Mexican desk. I mentioned my problem to the El Paso head of Mountain Bell. He had an early and slow model of a fax machine installed at both ends. It saved us hours of tedious work.

Q: During this period from '72 to '75 you are really talking about a system that worked aren't you?

SACKSTEDER: Yes, it worked well.

Q: Why don't we stop at this point and we will pick this up again in '75 when you left the International Boundary and Water Commission for what?

SACKSTEDER: For the consul generalship in Hermosillo in northern Mexico.

Q: Today is the 27th of August, 1997. Fred, how did this consul generalship come about?

SACKSTEDER: It came about primarily through the efforts of then ambassador to Mexico, John Jova. He wanted a political officer to be on the scene because of developments that had occurred there over the preceding several years. He had happened to have been my boss once before. When I was on the Spanish Portuguese desk he was officer in charge of French Iberian affairs. We remained in close contact over the years. He had visited us in El Paso on a number of occasions because his elder son was at the university there. When he became aware of the situation he convinced the Department that they should waive the medical restrictions on my wife, and assign me to Hermosillo where I replaced a consular officer whose almost entire career had been devoted to visa work.

Q: Who was that?

SACKSTEDER: His name was Edward Stellmacher. Ironically he had recommended, and the Department with alacrity accepted, that the post cease issuing immigration visas because, he argued, having come from the visa mill in Manila, there wasn't enough volume to justify having a staff handling immigration visas. The Department had agreed and they were able that way to cut two officer positions. Almost simultaneously USIA abolished the branch PAO so when I arrived there I found myself with two officers instead of five.

Q: You were in Hermosillo from when to when?

SACKSTEDER: From July of '75 until about March of '79.

Q: What was the situation in Sonora? It's Sonora isn't it?

SACKSTEDER: Yes, Sonora.

Q: What was the situation there particularly the one that Ambassador Jova wanted a political officer there for?

SACKSTEDER: Sonora occupies a fairly significant place in the recent history of Mexico.

Q: All those generals.

SACKSTEDER: All those generals.

Q: I know about this only because I am in the middle of a book called Mexico, a Biography of Power by Enrique Krauze. For those who haven't read the book you might explain why...

SACKSTEDER: Very much in brief, Sonora together with Chihuahua, the two large semi-desert northern states of Mexico, were the real cradle of the Mexican Revolution of 1910. There were still currents of political activity in that area that our embassy considered worth following closely. At the time that I reported for duty, the state of Sonora was governed by a young man, a very loyal member of PRI, Partido Revolucionario Institucional, the official revolutionary party of Mexico which of course continued to rule Mexico many years later and had been in power since about 1928. His name was Carlos Biebrich, a good German name. Incidentally there were quite a few Mexicans of German extraction in the area who had come there as early settlers and had acquired ranches, which was one of the principal activities.

Carlos Biebrich was at that point in deep, deep trouble with President Echeverria, because he had permitted a situation to develop where some campesinos who worked communal farms (they called those communal farms "ejido") south of Hermosillo and near Ciudad Obregon were protesting over land ownership. He had permitted excessive force to be used to break up this protest movement by some of these "ejidatarios," as the workers on the ejidos were known, which had led to a number of deaths. President Echeverria, while professing of course to respect the results of free and open elections such as they were held in those days in Mexico, felt it necessary to summarily remove the governor. There was what you might call a turmoil in the society at the time when I arrived there. As a matter of fact the president chose not to hold elections, but to appoint a successor governor. An unusual step but occasionally resorted to when the political situation was considered by Mexico City to be unstable or risky. The appointed governor, Alejandro Carrillo Marcor, was totally different person from the man he replaced.

Q: What was the spark for both the demonstrations and the repression?

SACKSTEDER: There were several basic reasons but the principal one was the access to land. In this particular instance, as in other occasions of the like nature, the campesinos were demanding more land for their ejido. It should be kept in mind that in Sonora there were still vast estates held privately by among others the family of the former president,

Alvaro Obregon. By the way Obregon's son, young Alvaro Obregon, who had been governor of Sonora, was a resident of Hermosillo although he had his estates further south in the area around Ciudad Obregon, a city named after his father.

Another reason that the embassy had wanted a change in principal officer at that time was because of problems that had arisen with respect to the American citizen prison population in Sonora, almost all of them detained for various violations of narcotics laws. At the time I arrived we had approximately 120 Americans in the prisons in Sonora, which, I believe, was the largest number in any consular district in the world. The vast majority had been arrested by the Mexicans for attempting to smuggle marijuana across Sonora and into the United States. Some, however, were involved in the cocaine and heroin traffic.

Q: What were your border crossing points there?

SACKSTEDER: The principal border crossing point was Nogales because that's where the main highway to Tucson crossed but there was a string of border crossing points. Agua Prieta and Douglas, Arizona was one. At the opposite end was San Luis Rio Colorado with Yuma, and there were several other small ones but all of them available for the passage of contraband from one side to the other. I mean from one side to the other because of course smuggling went on in both directions however the smuggling northward was almost entirely narcotics, and chiefly marijuana.

Q: I take it just as an old consular officer myself that you did not have the equivalent to the Tijuana and the flesh pot problem of people coming down, getting drunk, and chasing girls, that sort of problem. That wasn't your problem?

SACKSTEDER: No, that wasn't our problem at all. Building on this question of the prisoners I might add that at the principal prison in Hermosillo, an old prison which was later replaced by a modern penitentiary, there had been a riot. In the process of suppressing this riot the Mexican authorities had used very strong measures and although nobody was killed, there were a number of prisoners injured among them a few Americans. Of course the embassy and the consulate had to take a very strong position that they were incensed that this was allowed to happen. It appears that the Mexicans, while they didn't ask for anybody's removal, were upset by the tone of the reaction when they argued that they were merely trying to maintain order. They did admit that conditions in this particular prison were such that a riot of this nature was not entirely unexpected.

Another problem was that some months before I went to Hermosillo a young vice consul on his first assignment, his name was Patterson, had been murdered under conditions which were very confusing. It turned out after a thorough investigation that he was the victim of an American, a sort of adventurer whose reasons for committing the crime were never explained. He had befriended the young vice consul, then lured him into the countryside and beat him to death with a tire iron.

Q: Wasn't there some thought that it was a kidnaping at one point?

SACKSTEDER: Initially the assailant made it out to be a kidnaping. He sent ransom notes and set a time for the delivery of a ransom did not appear. It turned out that the young man was dead long before this took place.

Q: I might for the record, if anyone is interested in more of the details on this they might want to look at the oral history that was done with Charles Gillespie who was the security officer in Mexico and was intimately involved in this case. Anyway this had happened before your time.

SACKSTEDER: This had happened a few months before I got there but there were still investigations going on. There were all of these little problems which the ambassador told me he didn't feel were being followed or covered as well as he would like them to be covered. That led to the retirement of my predecessor and my assignment there.

Q: When you arrived there, first before we move to the American Services problem and problems with American citizens, how did you find the political situation in Sonora? I have heard that in Mexico there is a tremendous difference between the northern tier states, Chihuahua, Sonora, Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas, where they are much more closely associated in a way with the United States as opposed to when you get to central and southern Mexico where there is quite a different perspective, attitude, and all of that.

SACKSTEDER: Indeed there is and it is one of the concerns of the Mexican government of course that the orientation of the northern tier states is much more toward the United States than toward Mexico. History having taught Mexicans over the preceding centuries that Mexican territory had a way of wandering across the border into the United States, this was, without question, a concern of the central government. While there was not very much they could do about it, they certainly made an effort to keep an eye on things up there and while not flatly discouraging across border relations, trying to keep them low key.

I'd mention one example, and that is the so-called Arizona-Sonora and Sonora-Arizona commission which was a joint commission of largely private individuals in various fields of activity, ranching, business, etc. It functioned as a chamber of commerce in a way, as a goodwill organization between the two states, of Arizona and Sonora. While the governor of Sonora naturally paid more than lip service to this organization and to his fellow governor in Arizona, on behalf of Mexico City he kept a sharp eye on what it was doing and how far it was trying to go. When a situation might arise at the joint meeting of, let's say, the ranching committee about changes in import and export regulations and things like that, the governor wanted to be sure that this was going to be agreeable to Mexico City. The reason the ranching aspect of it became important is because much of the cattle raised in Sonora was raised for shipment for export to feedlots in Arizona and New Mexico, and into the pipeline of the American beef industry.

Q: I was wondering, the normal role of the American consul general is to promote as

close and good relations with the country where he is stationed as possible, yet here in a way this was sort of countering what was Mexican policy. I would imagine that at a certain point it would make our embassy feel a little uncomfortable if things got too close because they would probably have the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Mexican ministry sort of making it known that you're overdoing it or something. Did you find that during this time?

SACKSTEDER: Not in any very manifest way, no. Let me bring up another aspect of our work and this is tourism, both just cross border tourism and tourism in the sense of American citizens owning second homes in Sonora and on the Gulf of California. We calculated that at any given time there were in Sonora, depending on seasons, not less than between 5,000-10,000 Americans residing in my state. Many of them as investors had purchased properties. To protect their interests took quite a bit of the consulate's time. By protecting their interests, I mean cautioning them when we realized that they were beginning to get involved with Mexicans whose credentials, probity, and honesty were either slightly or highly questionable and whose record had warranted warnings about doing business with them. These development outfits advertised heavily across the border to lure, to encourage Americans to come down and invest.

The conditions under which American investments could be made were somewhat different than it might be in other parts of the world because of Mexican law that prohibited foreign ownership within certain distances of the inter-national border, the border with the United States, or the sea coast. And these were primarily the areas where Americans were interested in investing. To do so, they had to do it through a "prest-nombre," or borrowed name, usually of a Mexican notary or attorney, the property being in that attorney's name not in the name of the American owner. This could give rise, and did give rise sometimes, to rather tricky situations.

Q: Oh, yes. I would think anybody would be ten times cautious before doing this. How did you work in this situation?

SACKSTEDER: By every means available to caution people about what they were getting into. Many Americans are quite naive. They assume that everybody else, because they are nice to them are "Oh, that's a good fellow. I trust him fully." We had to caution them that no you shouldn't trust them fully. You should be certain about this person before you put your property in his name even though of course you have a separate agreement between the two of you that it is your property and he's only holding it in trust for you.

Q: What did you do? Did you do the equivalent of commercial checks on people and have a list?

SACKSTEDER: To tell you the truth, the Mexican authorities were the best support we had because they did not want situations to arise which would cast unfavorable publicity on Mexico. In addition to the governor, I worked very closely with the secretary general of the state, (kind of like the lieutenant governor), especially with the director of tourism,

who also represented the Tourism Ministry of Mexico City. These people had the power to enforce the laws and if necessary to take drastic measure against unscrupulous individuals. This was not always well received by the Mexican parties in questions.

As I did on more than one occasion, I went to one of these places where there was a concentration of Americans. Specifically, in the Guaymas/San Carlos area on the Gulf of California where there were quite a number of Americans holding property under this arrangement. I got them together for a talk. I explained what the legal situation was, what their situation was, what we could do to help them, and what they should do to help themselves. The chief culprit in this case, who happened to be somebody I knew quite well, let it be known through the grapevine that it wasn't healthy for me to talk like that in his territory. I didn't stop.

Q: Did you hold sort of interviews with people who might make note of this in American papers and all. In other words sort of make yourself available to anybody who came by the consulate general and all?

SACKSTEDER: Yes, definitely as far as that was concerned and a good many Americans would drop by as you say, before they made a decision. We would advise them as to the risks they were running, the conditions under which they had to operate. I also took every occasion I had when in the U.S., Arizona primarily, to speak to the press. I had several televised interviews about the situation in Mexico during which I always brought up that aspect of it.

Q: At that time could a person invest in property in Sonora, if they took the proper safeguards, with relative security?

SACKSTEDER: Yes, they could. For example, one of the American colonies in Sonora was in a little old silver mining village called Alamos. It is a little town of a couple of thousand which was established long before Hermosillo and the more modern cities, probably some 250 years earlier. Sometime around the '60s and early '70s Hollywood people discovered Alamos and they began to buy these semi-ruined colonial houses and restoring them. Alamos was not in the zone where they had to have an intermediary, so they could buy property outright. A little colony of some 200 or 300 Americans, mostly full-time residents, developed there. For their convenience and in order to keep in touch with them, I went down there periodically. My predecessors had not done that with one exception. One of them had property in this same little town so he was one of them when he was down there and they kept in touch with him that way. I made it a point to go down three or four times a year for a day or two and gather the colony together and discuss their problems, talk about the situation, and provide certain consular services. As you can understand they were some 250 miles south of Hermosillo so they were more than happy to have the consulate come to them rather than they have to come to the consulate.

Q: The Americans who resided there, other than the property disputes, for the most part were they much of a problem with consular problems and all of that?

SACKSTEDER: No, they were not at all. Actually the majority were older; I won't say elderly, but older. Most of them of course were retired, young retirees and even old retirees, and their demands were very few. They often needed advice about things such as satisfying Mexican law requirements concerning the importation of automobiles on which we could advise them. Otherwise it was basically a question of registration of citizens so we knew who they were and where they were, and the matter of occasional consular services like notaries or passports, although a passport was not essential. You could reside in Mexico with just an extended tourist permit which was renewable provided of course that you were there as a tourist and not earning a living. There were very strict restrictions on working in Mexico.

Q: While we are on the American subject, with prisoners during this '75 to '79 period had the prisoner exchange business developed at that time or did it develop while you were there?

SACKSTEDER: It developed while I was there and the first prisoner exchange, which actually turned out to be a one way exchange, took place just shortly before I left Hermosillo. We were able thereby to relieve my successor at the consulate of a real headache, because we were required by regulation to visit every prisoner not less than twice a year, and if anything arose, more often. When I say if anything arose, if a family got a congressman to write the Department, then that meant another visit. We spent an awful lot of our time on the roads going to the prisons to visit the prisoners.

Something somewhat ironic had developed during this period and that was the institution of the Privacy Act. When we had to interview a prisoner at the behest of the family or through their congressman, it was often because the family were not getting regular letters from the individual, and they were concerned. Of course all parents would be concerned about their children being in a Mexican jail. We would be obliged to go there and say, "Your mom and dad are very worried that you haven't been writing them. Have you? Now I have to write your mom and dad through their congressman." By the way, Pete Stark of California was the congressman for 25 or 30 percent of our prisoners so we had reams of correspondence from his office in these types of situations. Then we would add: "But now there is a new law that says that we can't say anything to anybody about what you said to us unless you sign this form which is a Privacy Act release. You have the right to refuse to have any information passed on." You'd be surprised at how many of them availed themselves of that. They'd say, "No, I don't want to sign it. I won't sign it." Whether they mistakenly thought that this might later constitute some kind of evidence for legal pursuit in the United States I don't know. It was remarkable how many of them refused. Many of these young people, and most of them were males, came from family backgrounds where they were probably not close to their parents. They had wandered off and they had gotten into this drug business.

Q: What was your impression, outside of when you had a riot or something, of how the American prisoners were treated?

SACKSTEDER: I don't know how many of them told me that they were sure glad that

they were in the Mexican prison and not in the penitentiary in the States. The attitude of the Mexican authorities was quite benevolent, particularly with respect to the Americans. They knew that the Americans had recourse to the consul, and the consul meant the American government. I won't say they babied them, but the bulk of our prisoners were in what they called "reformatorios," reform centers. There, living conditions were quite acceptable.

They had virtually complete freedom within the walls to circulate. In some instances they'd find one of them was a teacher so they established classes and occupied their time in somewhat more useful ways than they would have otherwise. The Mexican attitude is you cannot deprive a prisoner of conjugal rights. By conjugal I mean even girlfriends were considered conjugal rights so they could be visited and satisfied that particular problem. The American prisoners, by and large, received money from family or friends which went a long way in the prison canteens to supplement the basic rations. With the exception of that riot in the Hermosillo prison which led to the closing of that prison even before I got there, you couldn't say conditions were bad. As I say, a number of them expressed themselves very openly in saying they were sure glad they were there rather than in the States.

The reason that they welcomed the exchange was because it had been made well known, and the Mexicans were aware of it, was that this exchange which was supposed to lead to their sentences being completed in American prisons, wasn't going to work. The minute they crossed the border they were free. That's why of course when the transfer took place, our prisons in Mexico were virtually emptied. There were a few who refused to go back perhaps because they had something in their record or some charges pending in the States which of course they would be picked up for. Almost all of them went back and that was it.

Q: Did you and your officers have to attend a lot of trials?

SACKSTEDER: No. You don't attend trials in Mexico, that is something that Americans cannot seem to understand. There isn't an open trial, there is no jury system there. It is based on a Napoleonic code and it's a question of first of all an official investigation into the circumstances and then a judgment by a judge based on that evidence. There is no confrontation between the defense and the prosecution, there is no trial in court.

Q: What about criminal activities other than.... At that time this was drug smuggling, we're not talking about something that developed later with big drug lords and all of that?

SACKSTEDER: No, this is petty drug smuggling. There were other cases. We had at least two or three cases of homicide, one of them involved a woman. I don't recall but there must have been some cases of assault, robbery, or burglary but the vast majority of the cases were indeed narcotics.

Q: What about car theft, was this a big problem?

SACKSTEDER: As a matter of fact it was the principal occupation of the FBI agent assigned to my office as legal attaché. It was the pursuit of and the attempt to recover automobiles stolen in the United States and driven into Mexico.

Q: Were you just a way point or were the cars being stolen and then ending up in Sonora?

SACKSTEDER: No, it was really a way point. Most of these either ended up in the Mexico City area, or they went into what they called chop shops where they were broken up and used for parts, or they went on further south into Central America. I don't know that many would have gone all the way to South America.

Q: What was your impression of the Mexican bureaucracy in Sonora where you had to deal with it as far as efficiency, corruption, approachability, that sort of thing?

SACKSTEDER: At the top, at the level of the governor and his immediate associates, I think that they were absolutely honest, capable, intelligent. As you went down the line you became aware of the possibility of corruption, though not because you were approached. They were well aware who the American consulate people were and they wouldn't dream of approaching us because they knew they would be denounced right away to the governor and that would be the end of their job. The "mordida," as they call it in Mexico, the bite, lived say at the level of the policeman, if he could get away with it, or the customs officer. Prisoners would occasionally tell us during our visits with them that such and such a guard, "but don't say I said it because if he finds out he might try to beat me up, insists on bribes to distribute our mail" or things like that. In most cases if we felt that we were comfortable enough with the prison director, we'd tell the prison director without saying who had said it, "We have learned that such and such an individual had become a tax collector for distributing mail," or whatever it was. Generally speaking they would take measures, the thing would stop.

Q: While you were there, on the political situation, we're talking now it's 1997 where they have just had really the first almost open election since the revolution, so this was well before that. What were the politics of the area and what were you sort of reporting?

SACKSTEDER: We were reporting of course to the extent that we were aware of it. There was a beginning of the Partido de Accion Nacional, the PAN, which is generally referred to as the conservative or business party. It included some of the people that we knew personally, who, in confidence, would say "it's a beginning, we're not strong and obviously we can't compete with the PRI but there is interest in developing an opposition." This was not of course welcomed by the governor's palace.

I better say a word or two about the governor, about Alejandro Carrillo Marcor, the appointed governor to fill out the term of the elected governor. He had been a member of the Senate. As you know, Mexico had and still has so-called "no re-election," or one term, a real term limit law. During his service as a senator for six years he had been the

equivalent of chairman of their Foreign Relations Committee. My governor and I couldn't get together without his talking about his great friend Senator Mike Mansfield, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. They had become quite good friends. Every year, or two, the foreign relations committees of both countries, both House and Senate, held a joint meeting. One such joint meeting took place in Hermosillo at the insistence and at the encouragement of Alejandro Carrillo Marcor. Although by then Mansfield was no longer chairing the Foreign Relations Committee, we had quite a delegation from Washington. They went through the professions of good friendship, mutual understanding and so on, and appropriate outings and entertainments. It was just an excuse for an outing but Don Alejandro took great pride in the fact that he had brought this about in Hermosillo.

Q: You were there during a significant part of the Carter administration. Was there increased interest in the problem of sort of a one party system in Mexico, in human rights, and all that, than there had been previously, or concern about it?

SACKSTEDER: Yes, I think you could say there was although we have to remember that the United States government had been living quite comfortably with the Mexican system for a good many years. Let me tell you what happened on the occasion of the election of President Lopez Portillo, who had been designated to be the PRI candidate by Luis Echeverria. Of course there was no contest for the presidential seat but at the same election we had a contest for the mayor of Hermosillo, they call him Presidente de Municipal. It is a significant office in Mexico; the mayor has a lot of power. As I said, we had a contested election there and on election day my colleagues and I toured around the town to get a feel for how the electorate was turning out. We were startled by the low turnout, given the fact that there was a contested election for mayor, yet when the results were announced, the votes for the uncontested PRI presidential candidacy for Lopez Portillo, were about three times as many as all the votes cast for the contested mayoralty by the same voters. It was a clear indication that the ballot boxes were full of votes even before anybody cast a ballot.

Q: You didn't feel the Carter administration was making any particular emphasis on Mexico?

SACKSTEDER: Certainly they weren't making waves. As a matter of fact, perhaps the best remembered incident involving President Carter was when visiting Mexico he recalled his first visit to Mexico and having suffered from Montezuma's revenge.

Q: We're referring to a diarrhea condition.

SACKSTEDER: Yes.

Q: What about economic conditions during that time, from your perspective, in Sonora and connections with the United States?

SACKSTEDER: It was during my time in Hermosillo that the first devaluation of the

peso took place, the first official one. The peso had of course gradually over the years eroded in purchasing value in terms of dollars. After many years where you got eight pesos to the dollar, it had dropped to 12-and-a-half, and then it went to 25 or 26. This had a drastic effect on the buying habits of the Mexican middle class. The Mexican middle class in that part of Mexico considered the malls in the United States to be their shopping malls and they were a tremendous source of income to communities such as the border towns, as well as Tucson and Phoenix. With the devaluation and a loss of that purchasing power, business in the U.S. dropped drastically and was of course felt throughout the Arizona economy. That's one thing.

The economy in Sonora was generally speaking far healthier than it was in most of the rest of Mexico. I think it tended to be the case across the northern tier. This was in part due to the so-called twin plants, or the "mquiladoras" in Spanish. The twin plants being primarily assembly operations in Mexico by American companies. They were called twin plants because part of the operation would be in the United States, generally along the border. The other half of it, or perhaps more than half of it, was in Mexico where the assembly took place.

I think, for example, of companies that were manufacturing safety belts for the American automobile industry. The raw material was produced in the United States, shipped across the border as temporary import into Mexico, assembled into safety belts in Mexico, and then re-imported to the United States. Paying only the value added, namely the cost of the labor to assemble it, enabled the American companies to compete with other low cost suppliers mainly in the Far East and other parts of the Third World.

Q: It is also designed to create a manufacturing base in Mexico which would attract Mexican workers so they would not put as much pressure on our migration.

SACKSTEDER: Exactly. Of course that didn't always work because when the majority of these twin plants were established on the border, they attracted people from central and southern Mexico in large numbers to those jobs. As soon as those people got settled there they began to look across the border to where things were much better notwithstanding. It gave them a taste of what living in the American paradise was like which they wouldn't have had if they didn't come that far.

As a matter of fact that led to the starting of what you might call economic enterprise zones within Mexico and one was established in Hermosillo. The first industry to move there was an American company from the mid-west, I forget now from exactly what state, called Collins Radio. Collins Radio was the principal supplier for the U.S. army of portable radio equipment, but they also did some avionics and other manufacturing. They decided to establish their plant in Hermosillo itself where there was an adequate labor base available. After my departure one of our auto manufacturers, I think it was Ford, established an assembly plant in Hermosillo in this same enterprise zone. Of course these people were still some distance from the border but they were getting good jobs in Mexico, settling in their own culture. They were less prone than those right on the border to think, "well I'm so close, why not go across and instead of earning five dollars a day, which in Mexico was not bad wages, I could earn five dollars an hour."

Q: You were there mainly during the presidency of Echeverria....

SACKSTEDER: Echeverria and Lopez Portillo.

Q: If I recall Echeverria had a reputation of a certain antipathy toward the United States. One, is that true and did you feel that in the government atmosphere?

SACKSTEDER: I think his antipathy was purely internal political. Every Mexican has a little bit of resentment of the colossus in the north, every Mexican has it. Although in most cases it is either well hidden or only latent, for a politician it is a good horse to ride. I don't know if I mentioned this earlier but Mexicans, jokingly of course, love to say about the United States and its territorial expansion at the expense of Mexico, that the United States had not only taken half of Mexico, (which we did at one time, about half of the Mexican territory became U.S. after the Mexican War) but we had taken the best half with all the good roads, and all the clean cities!

Q: Fred is there anything else we should discuss during your time in Hermosillo?

SACKSTEDER: I don't know if this is of great interest but we might just make a mention of an alleged kidnap attempt of the American consul general. I am still not convinced that it was true because I never saw any evidence that would support it. I happened to be in Alamos speaking to our American community when my deputy in Hermosillo telephoned. I was told it was urgent so I left my audience and went to the telephone. He said the security officer at the embassy had just called to advise me that they had information from the Mexican security people with whom they worked closely that a terrorist group, possibly the same one that kidnapped Terry Leonhardy in Guadalajara in '73, was going to attempt to kidnap me. The target date for this was two days hence.

Mind you I was there in Alamos alone and I hadn't even taken the official car, I had driven my own car. I felt perfectly safe of course in Mexico. My deputy told me that the embassy had found out that I was there alone and they said for me to stay with a lot of people, not to go out alone anyplace. They would send down my official car with the driver and a security man, what we called there a "pistolero." I was not to attempt to return to Hermosillo until they arrived, a good half day's travel.

The governor had been informed so when I got back he wanted to see me. He said that the Ministry of the Interior had insisted that he provide additional security. I did have a bodyguard, in normal times an employee of the consulate, mainly a chauffeur who legally could carry a weapon, which he did. They insisted on much stricter security both at the residence and in and out of the office. This happened about a year-and-a-half before I left Mexico and for the remaining time there I couldn't go anyplace without a chase car, in the bullet-proof consulate official car, and with between four and six bodyguards.

Q: That's no fun at all.

SACKSTEDER: No, it wasn't. Our life became very circumscribed. My wife and I

eventually ended up buying a small house south of Tucson so we could go at least one or two weekends a month and get away from the security. When I crossed the border they stayed behind and when I was coming back they would meet me and accompany me. My wife couldn't go to the hairdresser without being followed by two pistol-packing burly guys.

And yet, as I say, I am not convinced that there really was something. Perhaps the increased security deterred whoever might have had an idea. It was supposed to be one of these terrorist groups like the one that had done the thing in Guadalajara. Terry Leonhardy was kidnapped and held for several days. U.S. policy was "we don't pay ransom." The Mexican government did. They released some prisoners to Cuba and they paid several million pesos.

Q: You left there in '79 after about a four year tour.

SACKSTEDER: Not quite, a good three-and-a-half years.

Q: Then where did you go?

SACKSTEDER: I came back to Washington.

Q: What were you doing?

SACKSTEDER: I was assigned to the Board of Examiners, a well known holding ground for senior Foreign Service officers. I was promoted to the S.F.S. in 1977.

Q: Oh, yes, I spent my time there, too.

SACKSTEDER: I was actually assigned there to replace an old friend who was the senior political officer, the chairman of the political cone. After a few months there the staff director, at that time Leonardo Neher, decided he wanted me to become deputy staff director but still in the political section, so that was the administrative side of the job. The substantive side of course was being a deputy examiner. I did that for a little over a year-and-a-half until I retired at the end of 1980.

Q: How did you find the recruitment process while you were there? What was your impression?

SACKSTEDER: Well of course the recruitment process was directed to women and minorities. I don't like to say women are minorities because they aren't but that was the emphasis. One of the things I was responsible for, working for the office director, was the annual recruitment campaign where we send officers, as often as possible minorities themselves, to colleges and universities to encourage interest in and applications to the Foreign Service by students of women's colleges, black colleges and so on.

Q: Did you find that the process was tilted towards recruiting particularly women and

minorities?

SACKSTEDER: Certainly it was. This was very much affirmative action, I mean affirmative action with a heavy accent upon affirmative. We even came to the point where we began to accept for the assessment, or the second part of the examination process, what we called “near passes” who were minorities. It was very controversial of course but the whole issue still is controversial.

Q: Was this difficult to administer for you? I mean within the officers, including minorities, who were doing the testing did they feel sort of put upon that they had better produce results? Was this a problem?

SACKSTEDER: I would say it was a problem in this sense, the strongest opposition to this process came from minority officers who were serving with us as our colleagues who themselves had not been advantaged in any way but who had come in through the regular way, both men and women. I am talking here primarily about the assessment.

Q: What’s known as the oral exam but it’s more than that. I wonder, as you were with the Board of Examiners I’m sure you mentioned the resentment of the women and minority officers who felt by god I did it and I don’t like this. I mean it was devaluing the currency. It made people wonder how did they get in and all, and I don’t blame them. Did you with your group and others, sit there and look at it and say why is it that we are not getting as many qualified minorities, we’re really talking about African Americans, into the service as we want and also for women? What was the feeling?

SACKSTEDER: In the case of the African Americans we were at a disadvantage competing with all parts of our society and economy. The brilliant, capable, college educated African American could write their ticket and they were being chased by industry, business, professionals with offers that we couldn’t meet. This is not to say that we didn’t get some very good ones, and we did, but they were few and far between. That’s one of the reasons we had to kind of lower the barriers in order to diversify.

Q: Somebody told me, and maybe this was after your time but it was with the Board of Examiners, that they were getting a lot of heat because they weren’t getting as many women in passing sort of the oral part of the examination. They had tilted the written exam because they found that women did better on things dealing with equivalent to English language things which is an important part of our business. But when they got into the oral part they found that the problem was many of the women who qualified had really been the equivalent to English majors and that, and did not have the same interests as a comparable number of men in foreign affairs and all of that. Did that show up?

SACKSTEDER: If you’d asked me to say it, I would have said it exactly the same way, yes it definitely did. I was criticized on some occasions by people who said this is not politically correct anymore, you can’t talk about women being different from men. But women are different from men. For example if they are in a coed institution the chances are that they will defer to the more dominant male students who may not be any brighter

than they are, but who are more assertive. This will manifest itself during the so-called assessment, particularly when we had these group discussions. I encouraged my fellow examiners in judging a woman candidate during such discussions, to take into consideration the attitude of the males in that group. If males were trying to dominate the discussion, (and many did and some of them were not subtle about it at all) give credit to the women who couldn't break through but who were nevertheless highly intelligent and whose contribution was perhaps as valued as that of the male but not so aggressive.

Q: You then left the Board of Examiners and retired?

SACKSTEDER: That's right.

Q: Where did you retire to?

SACKSTEDER: I retired in Washington. We still owned our little house in Green Valley, Arizona where we endeavored to spend part of our winters.

Q: My brother lives in Green Valley.

SACKSTEDER: It's a nice little place. However when I did retire, Clint Lauderdale, who had been our office director and then became a deputy assistant secretary, arranged for me to have what they call a WAE appointment. The Board of Examiners still relied on some of our early retirees to help out, primarily to help out on the traveling teams. This was very nice because about two to three months a year I was able to work for the Board and travel at government expense to places like San Francisco, Los Angeles. My wife, since 1977 a retired FSIO, went with me at our expense. That eased me into full retirement.

End of interview