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

BROOKS WRAMPELMEIER

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is March 22, 2000. This is an interview with Brooks Wrampelmeier being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. Brooks, can we start at the beginning. When and where were you born?

WRAMPELMEIER: I was born in Cincinnati, Ohio on September 27, 1934.

Q: Can you tell me a little about your family?

WRAMPELMEIER: My father's family was of partly German descent. His grandfather had come over in 1848 and settled in Cincinnati. His mother's family was of Irish and New England stock. My mother's family was primarily of New England, New York City, and Kentucky origins. They had come to Cincinnati in the mid-19th century.

Q: Hence the Brooks.

WRAMPELMEIER: Yes, my mother's maiden name is Brooks. In fact, her Grandfather Brooks had come to Cincinnati from Kentucky. My father was a third-generation painting contractor. He owned a business founded by his grandfather back in the early 1850s. My mother's father was a naval officer, a 1902 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, who then left the Navy to marry his childhood sweetheart in 1907. They settled in the little suburb of Cincinnati called Wyoming where they were born. My parents lived a few years in Cincinnati and when I was three they also moved to Wyoming. That is where I grew up and went through the Wyoming public school system. I should mention that Wyoming in the decade between 1945-55 produced five senior Foreign Service Officers - Steve Low, Tom Boyatt, Kempton Jenkins, Gunther Rosinus of USIS, and myself. Other graduates of Wyoming High School during this time included a future president of Princeton University, a vice admiral in the Navy and a well known journalist, Bill Greider.

Q: Now that you are here I think we have interviewed all the people in the Foreign Service that you mentioned. Why Wyoming?

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, Wyoming is a little town I would compare to Chevy Chase, Maryland. It is basically middle to upper middle class - a town full of people who worked as middle managers at places like Proctor and Gamble or had their own business like my father. It had no industry and very little commerce. Basically it is a bedroom suburb that has a very good public school system. It still apparently has quite a good school system. There may be other people in the Foreign Service who came from Wyoming.

Q: What was your father's educational background?

WRAMPELMEIER: My father went through the Cincinnati public schools and graduated from Cornell University in 1929. He was not the first in his family to have a college degree - his uncle had graduated from the University of Cincinnati - but most of my father's family had been painters and decorators, not college graduates.

Q: How about your mother?

WRAMPELMEIER: My mother went to a private girls' school in Cincinnati and then graduated from Wells College, a small school for women in Aurora, New York.
Q: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

WRAMPELMEIER: I have a brother and a sister who also went through the Wyoming

public school system. My sister Holly graduated in 1959 from what was then the Connecticut College for Women in New London. She immediately married Floyd White, a U.S. Coast Guard officer and maritime lawyer. They are now both retired and live in Bodega Bay, California. My brother is a graduate of the College of Wooster, in Wooster, Ohio. He is about 14 years younger than I and lives with his family outside of Cincinnati.

I have three children. My eldest, Susan, was born in Beirut in 1959. She graduated from Pomona College in 1981, spending her junior year abroad at St. Andrews University, Scotland. She then went to Christ Church, Oxford for two years to study Arabic at the Oriental Institute there. She is married and has a little girl born in 1996. She and her husband work for a U.S. Government agency. Both of my sons were born in Amman, Jordan. The elder, Peter, born in 1963, lives in the Chicago area where he has worked as a financial analyst for Hewitt Associates. He was an Army officer for a while after he graduated from Pomona College in 1985 and participated in Desert Storm with the 101st Airborne. The younger son, Christopher, born in 1964, majored in Arabic at Princeton on an Army ROTC scholarship. He served about three and a half years in Germany as an air defense officer. When he left the army he went to the University of Texas, acquired a law degree and is now a family law associate with a law firm in Amarillo, Texas. He is married and has a teenage stepson and a little girl born in 1997.

Q: Back to your youth, were there discussions at the dinner table about what was going on, such as World War II, etc.?

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, I followed it with interest. I don't remember a great deal of discussion of public affairs at the dinner table. As my wife has commented, my family were fast eaters. But, I certainly remember being very interested in the war. When I was in 4th grade somebody gave me a little Rand McNally atlas and I would carry that book everywhere and look through it when I didn't have anything else to do. I became acquainted fairly early on with what the world looked like. I don't recall public affairs being particularly discussed although my father did take an active role in the civic life of our little community. He served on the city council for 33 years, the last 13 of which he was mayor. He did not have any larger political interests than that.

Q: In elementary school in Wyoming, do you recall any of your teachers or favorite subjects?

WRAMPELMEIER: Oh, in high school I always liked history and English. Math and science were not my forte, I'm afraid. In the elementary school I can't pick out anybody that I thought of very highly, although they were good teachers. In the high school we had some very good teachers. One was a former Navy officer named Ferol Betz, whom I think is still alive in Washington State. He was our teacher for American history and government and also our debate and public speaking coach. He certainly was a very dynamic person and probably contributed to some extent to those of us like Boyatt and myself who entered public service. He didn't have any particular interest in the Foreign Service but simply helped to open our minds to what was going on in the world. Another important teacher was the late Mary Lou Culp, who taught English and Spanish and

served as our school guidance counselor.

Q: How about extracurricular activities in high school?

WRAMPELMEIER: My chief extracurricular activity was the debate club. We had a pretty good program and always did quite well in state interschool competitions, often placing first or second. I should mention that in those days the Wyoming high school was not very large. My graduating class had fewer than 50 students but by the time my brother came along 14 years later the classes had grown to 150. Still, we were quite competitive with a relatively small number of students.

Q: Did you have jobs during the summer?

WRAMPELMEIER: When I was in elementary school my parents usually packed me off to camp, either locally or one year it was a military camp up in Wisconsin and another year it was a camp on an island near Bath, Maine. My mother's family has owned for many years a cottage at Kennebunk Beach, Maine and after the war we would go up there every summer. For two summers, after my junior and senior years, I held a job as a bellboy and relief desk clerk in a summer hotel there. This was my first real employment. I had to learn how to deal with people, some of whom were not always pleasant. One summer I worked at the University of Cincinnati as a mimeograph operator for the Night School.

Q: No temptation to go into your father's business?

WRAMPELMEIER: Not really. My father never really encouraged it. I think by the time I was old enough to think about it he felt it was a dying business. In fact, he retired from business and from the Wyoming City Council about the same time. I think he was putting more money into the business than he was actually getting out of it. He couldn't even find anybody who wanted to buy it. His old office in downtown Cincinnati is now a parking lot for the Proctor and Gamble headquarters.

Q: *When you were in high school were you pointed towards anything?*

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, initially I thought about teaching. Then somewhere around my senior year I thought that being in the Foreign Service might be interesting. I remember there was a Foreign Service recruiter who came to town and a friend and I went down to his hotel and talked to him. Obviously we were not thinking about it immediately but it became something in the back of my mind. When I graduated from Wyoming I went to Princeton.

Q: Why Princeton?

WRAMPELMEIER: They had courses in Arabic. I would probably have gone to Middlebury, but at some point along the way I conceived this idea that the Middle East sounded interesting. I probably was reading too much T.E. Lawrence - Lawrence of

Arabia - and P.C. Wren. So I decided on Princeton as my first choice, got in and majored in Arabic and Middle Eastern studies.

Q: It was about the only school that you could do that.

WRAMPELMEIER: There weren't many. Georgetown, I think, was starting an Arabic program. Michigan at Ann Arbor and Harvard had programs. But there weren't many Arab studies programs in the U.S. at that time. Unfortunately the program at Princeton was very much focused on the early Muslim period rather than on the contemporary Middle East. I think this was the influence of the then chairman of the department, Philip Hitti, a well-known Lebanese-American historian. The joke always was that Hitti felt Arab history ended with the fall of Baghdad to the Mongols in 1254 and it was only with great effort that he was finally persuaded to at least bring his History of the Arabs up to 1516 and the Ottoman conquest of Egypt. There were no contemporary Arab history courses for undergraduates. In the Arabic language program we were introduced in the first year by Hitti's son-in-law, the late Bailey Winder, to the Arabic grammar and alphabet. The second year we were handed a Koran and told to start reading. That would be like coming to English for the first time and being handed Shakespeare, Chaucer or even the King James Bible, and asked to try to make sense of it. The Koran had marvelous vocabulary like the word that described the reek of the black smoke that ascends from Hell. I have always tried to figure out how to use that word in conversation and I haven't yet found a way.

We also had a Palestinian teacher who was working part time at the Voice of America, Farhat Ziadeh, who taught us colloquial Arabic for two hours a week in the evening. Princeton used for that an old Army textbook that had been done up during World War II. We had a page of Arabic words that were not translated and it took us two years to find a teacher who was willing to tell us what the words meant. They were words that taxi drivers used when somebody cuts them off. We were told never to used them in polite conversation, but that we should know what such people were saying. Later, I took a course in Islamic law from Ziadeh.

During my second year, Bailey Winder suggested that if I was really interested in learning Arabic I should go to the American University of Beirut (AUB) in Lebanon. I was there the academic year 1954-55. I found the experience valuable but it did not improve my Arabic.

Q: What happened?

WRAMPELMEIER: The campus was not a place where Arabic was primarily spoken. The students at AUB are required to speak English and my Syrian roommate was so concerned about making sure his English was up to snuff that he was not all that much interested in speaking Arabic with me. Consequently, after I left Beirut that summer I was speaking English with a Syrian accent. It took me a couple of weeks to get rid of that.

It was a very interesting time. It was before the first Lebanese civil war and many of the students were highly politicized. They were very much opposed to the Baghdad Pact, for example, and the student body went on strike at one point in the spring of 1955 to protest Sir Gerald Templer's visit to Jordan and the efforts to get Jordan into the Baghdad Pact. Over the years I occasionally have run into people who were students there at that time. One was the number two in the Kuwait Foreign Ministry who had been a classmate of mine but was expelled for demonstrating. I was able to take a few trips around the area. I got to Damascus, Egypt and Jerusalem.

Q: Had Nasser taken power or was it Naguib and the generals at that time?

WRAMPELMEIER: Nasser pushed Naguib aside sometime in 1954. Certainly Nasser was pretty much in power in Egypt by late 1954. My trip down to Egypt was for tourism. Beirut at that time had a small Polish community whose members all carried passports from the London government. Lebanon did not recognize the communist government in Warsaw. This one Polish student and I flew to Cairo over Christmas vacation and then went down to Luxor and also up to Alexandria for a day. Later, a Bahraini student and I went to Jerusalem at spring break.

Q: *Did you go to Israel?*

WRAMPELMEIER: No, not then. That would have been too difficult because I would not have been allowed back into an Arab country with an Israeli visa in my passport. When I left Lebanon in June 1955 I went first to Turkey largely because I had taken a class in Ottoman history and wanted to see Istanbul and Izmir. I also visited Athens, Rome, Florence, Venice, Innsbruck, Zurich, Lucerne, Bern, Mainz, Cologne, Paris, and London before returning to the States that August.

Q: Did you get any introduction to the Foreign Service at that time?

WRAMPELMEIER: Not really. I went by the Beirut consulate to register. I did not find the local employee who received me terribly friendly, but that didn't put me off. I then went back to Princeton for my senior year. I was beginning to think about what I was going to do with my Arabic. The Foreign Service seemed to be the most likely occupation, so I took the exam and passed it. I also talked to a couple of banks.

Q: How about Aramco?

WRAMPELMEIER: I didn't think I had anything particular for Aramco (Arabian-American Oil Company). I don't think I realized at the time that they had as large a government relations department as they turned out to have. I had no particular interest in the oil industry. Fortuitously, the Foreign Service accepted me the summer after I graduated. I showed up in September 1956 to be sworn in two days before my 22nd birthday.

Q: Do you recall anything about your oral exam?

WRAMPELMEIER: I recall that I almost didn't take it. I was scheduled for an oral exam in New York City at something like two in the afternoon and I decided to take a particular train up. When I got to the Princeton station I realized I had misread the schedule and the train would not get me to New York City in time. I went back to my room and thought about what I was going to do. My roommate urged me to go out on the highway and hitchhike, which I did. I was dropped off in Newark. It was by then getting late so I called the examiners and they said to come on anyway. It was an interesting oral interview, very different from how the orals are conducted today. There were three gentlemen, one of whom may have been retired. They asked me some general questions about my education and background. They were interested in why I had gone to Beirut and what I had learned there. Somebody asked about the role of the Yemeni Jews in Israel. I knew very little about them, but I came up with some answer that satisfied them.

One thing I always thought very strange was that an examiner asked suddenly, "Did you ever have a fight?" I assumed the purpose was to find out how I reacted to an unexpected and personal question. I think my answer was something like, "Yes, as a kid." The exam went on for about three quarters of an hour. I was quite surprised at the end when they said I had passed.

Q: You came in in September 1956.

WRAMPELMEIER: September 1956 I signed on, yes.

Q: What was your class like?

WRAMPELMEIER: There were close to fifty of us. Four were women, the rest were all men. I was the second youngest in the class. There were some who had had military service or gone to graduate school. A number of my class did go on to higher things such as serving as ambassadors. I think of people like Harry Thayer, Terry McNamara, Everett Briggs, and Frank McNeil. It was a varied group. Of the four women, three left within four or five years to be married; only one stayed in until retirement. Several of the men also dropped out along the way as time went on. I roomed for a time with an A100 classmate named Ted Osgood. We had a basement apartment on 21st street near Dupont Circle. Later he had a child who developed a serious chronic disease while in Guyana and had to be medevaced to Panama. Ted left the Foreign Service shortly thereafter. Another A100 classmate with whom I roomed was Marty Ewenstein. He also left the Service early and returned to New York where he worked as an economist for CBS. Every once in a while I still encounter people who came into the Foreign Service at the same time I did.

Q: How did you find the training?

WRAMPELMEIER: I always thought I could do better but having since held a training job at FSI (Foreign Service Institute) I don't think I could have. Our instructor was Jan Nadelman, a very nice guy.

Q: His father was a very well known sculptor of the 1920s. You can still see his things at the Museum of Modern Art. Jan was also my instructor. I came in in July, 1955. We went up to his place in New York which was filled with these very distinctive statues that his father had made.

WRAMPELMEIER: If I recall the FSI program then, it was mostly lectures on how to use the Foreign Service Manual, etc. There was almost a full week of how to find things there. The week of briefings at the Department of Commerce put some of us to sleep.

Q: Did you get up to New York to see the ships and things like that? We went to the UN.

WRAMPELMEIER: No, probably because we had so many people.

Q: Well, my class was number one and we only had about 25 in our class. Then it started to pick up because it was after the McCarthy period.

WRAMPELMEIER: Yes, this was when they were picking up officers and I think the next several classes after me probably had the same number of people coming in. I don't remember much more about the A100 course, except thinking that there were things that might have made it a little more interesting.

When we finished the A100 course I was going to have to stay in Washington because at that point those who had not completed their military service were kept here until their draft boards decided their status. I was assigned as staff aide to Howard Sollenberger, the then Dean of Language Training at FSI. Well, Howard needed a staff aide like he needed a hole in the head. He needed a deputy and finally got one. Meantime, his secretary and I would go into his office where he had a tremendous pile of documents on his desk. We would hold it up each one and ask what he wanted to do with it. We would get the pile down from five feet to maybe four feet, 11 inches. That was about the best we could do because he didn't feel that he could dispense with handling it personally.

There really wasn't a lot for me to do. I voluntarily compiled a list of languages and area graduates of the FSI program, charting their subsequent assignments to see what happened to people who had studied Serbo-Croat, Arabic or Turkish. That kept me busy for a while. Other than that my job included escorting people and being responsible for odd language and area programs like one for Air Force personnel going to Latin America or Haiti.

In early 1957 my roommate, Ted Osgood, went back to Yale to pick up his Ph.D. in economics and on the plane returning to Washington he sat next to a WAC from the Pentagon. She told him about a new program that the Army had begun whereby people could join the Army Reserves and serve on active duty for six months and then be in the active reserves for two years. Ted, who also hadn't served in the military, thought this might be a good idea. Three or four men from my A100 class joined the reserves program. At that time there was a military intelligence battalion over at Fort Myers. It

was a peculiar outfit when I joined. The colonel commanding was born in Andorra and raised sheep somewhere in Virginia. The executive officer, who later replaced him as commander, was a man whose father that been a Scot in the Czarist Russian service. His name was Duncan but he spoke English with a Russian accent. The administrative officer was a Greek-American. We had a Korean captain. We had Poles, Romanians, Hungarians, a Czech, a Russian Tartar, several FSOs (Foreign Service Officers) and a couple of CIA types. It was a real mixed bag of people. One of the sergeants worked at FSI. There were evening training sessions about once a month over at Fort Myer.

In May, 1957 I went off to Fort Knox for basic training. My last job for Howard Sollenberger was to make up the room assignments for language teachers in the new FSI building at Arlington Towers. The reason I was chosen for that job was that none of the rooms would have windows. When the teachers reported for work the following Monday and discovered this, the room assignments would all be blamed on me and I would be safely ensconced in the hills of Kentucky. That was the end of my first FSI assignment.

I was at Fort Knox for two months and then was assigned to Fort Holabird in Baltimore where the Army then trained its intelligence and counterintelligence personnel. There I ran into some of my Princeton classmates who were going into counterintelligence in Korea. I spent four months at Fort Holabird learning the basics of how to interrogate prisoners of war and to maintain order of battle maps, among other things. When my training ended in November 1957, I came back to Washington and was assigned to the Executive Secretariat of what was then ICA (International Cooperation Administration). I replaced Bob Keeley, who later became ambassador to Greece and President of the Middle East Institute. I was working for John MacDonald, who was the Executive Secretary, having come over from State. I handled Congressional correspondence. My job was to make sure that Congressional letters went to the right office for response and were answered in a timely fashion. I did that for about a year.

One case that I remember was a letter from a constituent who had written to the only Republican Congressman from Texas. His letter, forwarded to us by the Congressman's office for reply, said, “Dear Congressman, I read about a $300 million loan to Red China. I wrote you about this some time ago and in response I received copies of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. Many thanks. But now will you please answer my question about a loan to Red China.” This gave me an insight into how some Congressional offices operate.

Then I went down to another ICA Executive Secretariat office where I compiled a daily summary of important cables for senior ICA staff. From there I went off to Beirut in June 1959 to study Arabic. First we had the Middle East Summer Seminar with the famous Ed Wright. We took some classes at AUB and did some local travel and then we took the...

Q: We met in Dhahran.

WRAMPELMEIER: That’s right. You were in Dhahran then. The ambassador had come over from Jeddah to talk to us there. Of course, the airbase is still there. The trip also took

us to Turkey, Iran, Kuwait, Egypt, Cyprus, Israel (my first visit to Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem), and then back up to Beirut where we got started on the language training. The school at that time was headed by Ernest McCarus, who later returned to the University of Michigan, and then by Fritz Frauchiger. I did one year of Arabic, primarily learning the colloquial idiom of Lebanon and Jerusalem.

Q: This would be what, 1959-60?

WRAMPELMEIER: Yes. I was given only one year because they said I had had three years of classical Arabic and didn't need any more. This may have been a mistake.

Q: In 1959 we had gone through the July 1958 overthrow in Baghdad, etc. Our troops had landed in Lebanon.

WRAMPELMEIER: Yes, the troops had landed in Beirut in the summer of 1958. By the time I got there they were gone and Beirut was getting back more or less to normal although you still had the residue of the civil war. I remember one Lebanese politician who was unwise enough to drive up into the Druze area and was assassinated. We had an upholsterer do some work for us. He was very difficult to contact because he had been a Charmounist gunman and was hiding out. One had to call a number and leave a message and he might get back to you. It took us three months to get some chairs recovered and drapes made.

Q: When you talk about chairs recovered and curtains, that sounds like there was a wife involved.

WRAMPELMEIER: Yes, let's go back. In 1957, when I was living near Dupont Circle, a young Foreign Service secretary was assigned to Sollenberger's office for training before going overseas. I tried to make a date with her. She wasn't interested but said, "Well, come along, I have somebody who lives in my boarding house and you can join us some evening at Scholl's cafeteria," which I did. Ann Dartsch was a first-year graduate student at SAIS (School of Advanced International Studies). She was rooming in a house which happened to be owned by FSO Dayton Mak's mother-in-law and adjoined the old SAIS building on Florida Avenue. Ann's father had been a career naval officer, serving primarily as a meteorologist. After the war he retired and settled in the Chicago area where he worked for the city as a civil engineer designing sewer systems. We used to joke that he got his mind out of the clouds and down into the gutter. Ann's mother's parents were Polish-speaking Kashubs from Pomerania. They had settled in Winona, Minnesota, on the Mississippi River. Ann's mother trained as a pediatric nurse in Boston where she met her husband while he was studying meteorology at MIT. They married and Ann was their only child.

Unlike me, who had this very parochial Midwestern background, Ann grew up on naval air stations on both coasts and also in Panama before returning to Chicago for her high school years. She graduated from Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota, in 1956 and was a student at SAIS in 1956-57. She also, incidentally, took her junior year abroad at

St. Andrews University in Scotland. After attending SAIS for a year she got her appointment to the Foreign Service. While she was in SAIS we had dated a few times and when I went into the Army I left with her a bunch of books to keep during my absence. When I came back she was already in the Foreign Service and living in Arlington with an aunt and uncle. Her aunt's husband was FSO William Arthur Wieland.

Uncle Art's mother married a Cuban after his father's death and Art had grown up in Cuba. Joining the Foreign Service during World War II he served in Brazil (twice), Colombia, El Salvador, and Ecuador. At this time he headed the Office for Mexican, Central American and Caribbean Affairs in the Bureau of American Republics Affairs. He became controversial after he was accused by some Republican hardliners of having helped facilitate the 1959 Castro takeover in Cuba. Art spent several years sitting around the Department until the Senate's Internal Security Subcommittee finally decided that he really wasn't a security threat. His last tour was as consul general in Melbourne, Australia, which he and Aunt Lee just loved, never having served outside of Latin America. They retired in 1968 to St. Mary's County, Maryland. They are both dead now.

Ann had completed the A100 course at which point I proposed and we agreed to be married. In the meantime, the Foreign Service had decided that they needed to help out the Passport Office, so after her A100 and French training, she was sent on temporary duty to Chicago, where she lived at home and worked in the Chicago passport office. She had to resign to be married. We were married in May, 1958, at the U.S. Naval Academy Chapel in Annapolis, her father's alma mater. In June 1959 we went to Beirut where we had our first child, our daughter Susan. After my year of Arabic we went to Amman, Jordan.

Q: I want to go back to the Arabic time. At the time you were going there there was the accusation often by friends of Israel that anybody who took Arabic was a red hot anti-Semitic practically. At the time, how did people treat Israel? You were getting ready for the Arab world and their weren't relations, there was a very sharp cut between them.

WRAMPELMEIER: I think there was a general feeling that if you were going to study Arabic it was not going to be in your career interests to serve in Israel. At the time, it was well known that Arab governments were very reluctant to allow anybody to work in their countries if he had served in Israel. The feeling was that if you served in Israel it would be very difficult to later serve in an Arab country. That attitude subsequently changed starting with FSOs like Gene Bovis who successfully served both in Israel and in Arab countries.

This reminds me of Robert Kaplan, who wrote The Arabists, and his assumption that so many of the State Department's Arabists were people with a background in the AUB missionary community This was not correct. There were a few, like Talcott Seelye, Bill Stoltzus, and the Close brothers at CIA, who did come from an AUB or missionary background, but hardly any of my Arabic language classmates at FSI Beirut came from families with any links to the region.

Q: You know there weren't many. Sometimes it was a career move in the hopes of promotion which wasn't going to happen in Europe.

WRAMPELMEIER: In those days people did tend to become area specialists and never serve anywhere else. One thinks of the Latin American specialists and the Soviet specialists, etc. We certainly felt we were going to be the Middle East specialists. But most of the people in my group had nothing to do with the Middle East before they had come into the Foreign Service. Obviously we were living in an atmosphere where there was no love for Israel.

Q: Let's take Ed Wright.

WRAMPELMEIER: He was a very controversial character.

Q: Could you talk a bit about your impression because he was running this thing for a long time.

WRAMPELMEIER: Ed was very controversial. He was quirky. W did not have him lecture at FSI when I was there, but my wife had him lecture to her A100 course three days in a row on the history of the world. She said that at the end of the first day he had alienated all of the Jews in the course. The second day he offended all of the Catholics and by the end of the third day he had even turned off the Protestants. Ed was a very interesting character. His father had been a Presbyterian missionary in Tabriz, having gone there in the 1850s. His first wife, an American woman, had died, and he then married an Armenian woman by whom he had a couple of children. After his second wife was murdered by some fanatic, Ed's father returned to Oberlin College to do some more studies. There he married a third time. I think the third wife was Ed's mother. Ed was born in Iran. He became a Presbyterian minister and returned to Iran a couple of times. At some point, I guess in the late 1930s, Ed and the Presbyterian Church allegedly reached an agreement that Ed would not preach and the church would not try him for heresy.

During World War II Ed became a colonel, or something, in the OSS and was often in and out of Iran. He said that it had always produced a big joke because the Iranian border guards would say, "Ah, you were born in Iran, have you done your military service?" Then he got a job at FSI. He got himself in trouble with Israel's supporters because his views on Israel were pretty strong. When we went on this Middle East Summer Seminar to Jerusalem we had a session with then Prime Minister David Ben Gurion. Because Ed, as the leader of our group, was well known to the Israelis they had brought in a stenotypist to record everything. Ed asked the first question and said, "Mr. Prime Minister. we have been here in Israel several days and we have been reading and hearing a lot about this dispute about who is a Jew." (The issue was that an Israeli woman, who was not Jewish but had a Jewish husband, died but was refused burial in a Jewish cemetery.) Ben Gurion looked at Ed for about a half minute and finally said, laying on the accent, "Vat's da matter, don't you know vun ven you see vun?" This shut Ed right up. Ben Gurion then went on to try to give a politic answer to a clearly controversial question.

I would say that most of my classmates went into Arabic studies with a fairly neutral view of the Arab-Israeli dispute. However, since most of us stayed within the Arabic-speaking area for most of our careers, we more than likely tended to lean a little bit towards the Arabs in the sense that we always felt somebody is going to have to make the case for our relationship with the Arabs because there were people in the United States who were opposed to closer U.S.-Arab ties.

Q: Correct me if I am wrong. You had in the British foreign service the Middle Eastern officers often going native. In my two and a half years in Dhahran to know them is not to love them. At least that was my experience in the Eastern Province. You can understand their point of view but this is a group that is not particularly appealing to Americans.

WRAMPELMEIER: We didn't have a bunch of people who wanted to go out camel riding like some of the British. Again, maybe this had something to do with the way we were being trained in Arabic. The British went up to the so-called "spy school" in Shemlan where they probably got somewhat more intensive exposure to Arabic. My exposure to Arabic in Beirut was pretty much like my first visit. You really didn't use your Arabic very much outside of the classroom unless you made a major effort. This was sort of a pattern of my assignments that I usually ended up in countries where so many of the people with whom I regularly dealt spoke better English than I spoke Arabic. It was difficult to engage anybody in a serious conversation in Arabic. So I never really attained the colloquial Arabic capability that I wish I had.

Q: While you were in Beirut, 1959-'60, was it a hot bed of Nasserism?

WRAMPELMEIER: There were lots of Nasserist groups as well as anti-Nasserist groups. It was sort of the high tide of Nasserism. One of the things that the Embassy did was to arrange for us to go around and have interviews with people like Pierre Jumayyil, head of the Phalange party which was a very anti-Nasserist movement; ex-President Camille Chamoun; and others who were in the anti-Nasser camp as well as talking to Ba'athists and to Druze chieftain Kamil Jumblatt. We got a variety of views from the Lebanese side of things. Nasserism was an issue, but for the moment, under Lebanese President Chehab, the situation was being kept under control and remained so until the '70s.

Q: Did the embassy call upon you at all?

WRAMPELMEIER: Not much. I served as weekend duty officer work once or twice during the year I was there. The Sixth Fleet came to town and we were expected to go with our wives and help out in the sort of USO the Embassy organized. But, other than that, no, we were not expected to do much. I think some of the older students there, those who had been in the school during the troubles of 1958, had been very actively involved in doing political officer-type work, much to the concern of the guy who was trying to run the language school while his students were constantly running off to play political officer. We really didn't have much working contact with people at the embassy although we were physically in the same building.

We did get involved in various things. I remember one of our USIS (United States Information Service) language students, the late George Thompson, started a little theater group that put on a couple of plays. I had a small part in *The Tender Trap.* That took us out of our studying mode. It brought us together with other people in the embassy and in the wider American community, including the brother of Telly Savalas (a well-known TV star) who worked for USIS and took part in some of the theatrical offerings.

Beirut was a very nice place. My wife had never been to the Middle East and she found the first few days there quite trying. We were living in a hotel, but once we got into an apartment she began to like Beirut. And, of course, once we left Beirut, it was a nice place to go back to for rest and relaxation, shopping, or medical treatment.

The ambassador then was Robert McClintock. He was a character. At one point we were invited to come up to his office and read his 10 or 20 page dispatch on the events of June 1958 and his role in it. I remember most of his report reappeared almost word for word in the first several chapters of Charles Thayer's book, Diplomat. I don't remember if much was edited out, but obviously Thayer, who knew McClintock, had been given the same access to McClintock's report.

Q: McClintock was known for his poodle.

WRAMPELMEIER: That dog went everywhere. One famous incident that occurred some time after I had left Beirut, McClintock attended the Lebanese National Day parade with his dog. The dog got loose, leaped out of the stands, and stopped the parade. It was down there barking at the tanks and had to be rescued. The Lebanese press had a field day over that incident.

McClintock had a kawas, or dragoman, named Tewfik, a solidly built older Lebanese with magnificent upturned mustaches. Tewfik wore a traditional Lebanese Turkish-style costume of tarbush, baggy pants and shirt with a cummerbund and a highly embroidered jacket. I was told by somebody who worked in the General Services section that the vest alone cost something like $300. Tewfik would always ride in the front seat of the ambassador's car.

Q: He swam every day. I remember he jumped into the Persian Gulf when it was really very cold.

WRAMPELMEIER: Yes, he and the poodle would be swimming off the coast of Beirut on what I would call a stormy day and there was Tewfik sitting there with a little towel folded over his arm waiting for the ambassador to come out of the water.

In September 1960 we left Beirut for Amman, Jordan, where I was to be the junior political officer.

Q: You were in Amman from 1960 to when?

WRAMPELMEIER: To the summer of 1964. I was there almost four years.

Q: A good solid tour.

WRAMPELMEIER: I replaced Bob Keeley once again. I was working directly for Andy Kilgore. The late Eric Kocher was the DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission) and initially Sheldon Mills was ambassador. Bill Macomber came out early in 1961 to replace Mills. The way this was handled by the new Kennedy Administration was unfortunate. Mills was a career officer who had held several ambassadorships. (Ann's Uncle Art has been his DCM when Mills was ambassador in Ecuador.) When the Kennedy Administration came in, Mill's *pro forma* resignation was accepted with no other explanation. There wasn't any "we have something else in mind for you." It was just "please go in and get *agrément* for this fellow Macomber," who had been the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Affair in the Eisenhower Administration. President Kennedy apparently liked Macomber but wanted to replace him with a congressman from Arkansas who had lost his seat. Mills was later offered the embassy in Uruguay but he declined and retired from the Foreign Service.

Q: Well, Macomber had also been a favorite of Rooney's and Rooney was the appropriations man for the department of state.

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, Macomber was brought into State by John Foster Dulles. His family and the Dulles family came from Rochester. Macomber came out in January 1961, a bachelor just 40 years old. Mills was in his sixties. I think the idea was that having an ambassador in Amman closer in age to King Hussein would be an advantage. The British also sent a relatively young ambassador named John Henniker-Major. So you had two relatively young ambassadors with a king who was at that time in his late 20s or early 30s.

I arrived in Amman a few days after the Prime Minister, Hazza al-Majali, had been blown up in his office. So Jordan was tense at that point. The embassy was very much concerned about what was going on in terms of the popular reaction to that. Things quieted down after a bit. It was a very interesting period in a sense because Macomber was willing to try new things. I was, *inter alia*, post labor reporting officer. I wasn't getting anywhere with local labor until Harold Snell, our regional labor attaché in Beirut, came to visit. Harold grew up in Dayton, Ohio and had worked initially as a cook and a waiter on Pullman dining cars. Then he got into the labor movement and had been an organizer of red caps, skycaps and Pullman workers other than the Pullman porters. He had moved up in the old CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations). The AID (Agency for International Development) sent him out to Nigeria to do some things and then he became labor attaché in Beirut. He was very, very effective. He would go in and talk with these guys in the Jordanian labor movement. Most of them didn't speak English and Harold didn't speak Arabic, but he would say, "I know the problems you are facing. Look, I got this scar organizing workers in Tennessee in the 1930s." These men thought he was tough, a real labor man. From then on I had entrée into the Jordanian labor

movement.

Q: I'm surprised there was an equivalent to a labor movement in an absolute monarchy.

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, there was a labor movement. It was legal. There were really two federations. One was full of communists, Nasserists, and Arab nationalists. This was the main labor federation. And then there was another smaller federation that included drivers and petroleum workers. It was headed by a man who had been a chauffeur for King Abdullah. It was regarded as the government's trade union movement. It was never very strong. But I would visit both groups. Finally, I was able to get USIS to send five labor leaders to the States. We sent three from the larger group and two from the smaller one. I don't know if this trip had any long-term impact on the Jordanian labor movement but it was something. Macomber took an interest. I once got him to hold a Labor Day reception at his residence for labor union leaders and government labor officials.

One unusual thing about the Jordanian labor movement was that many of the union leaders were really frustrated entrepreneurs. Almost every union has its own little business. The idea was that if a member lost his job he could come to work in the union's business. The tailors' union had a tailor shop. I once had a suit made there because the tailors' union at that time was regarded as communist-linked and it gave me an excuse to go by to see who was there. The tile workers had a little tile factory. The customs clearance workers had a customs clearance brokerage down in Aqaba. They all had their little enterprises. But it was not a strong labor movement. The government tolerated it but also, I think, kept a firm handle on it. The movement didn't do very much. They were always complaining about the fact that they had very little leverage with employers.

Q: Were these people in the labor movement Palestinian?

WRAMPELMEIER: Mostly Palestinian, although some were Jordanians.

Q: *The Palestinians were essentially the entrepreneurs and workers at that point.*

WRAMPELMEIER: Yes. Many East Jordanians, except for the elite, were still pretty much tribal types and lived in their villages. This was changing. A lot of them, of course, were now in the army and the police. I would say that a great number of people in and out of the government whom I knew were Palestinians. One thing that always struck me about Jordan, and I didn't see it in Saudi Arabia, was that most of these people were not shy about inviting me to their homes. My cook, my gardener, my maid would invite us to have coffee in their homes. There wasn't a feeling that their homes were too humble for the likes of us. It was very nice. Some of the union people would invite me over for a dinner in their home. My wife got to know a Circassian family around the block the same way. (Circassians, Muslims who had fled the 19th century Russian advance into the Caucasus, had been resettled by the Ottomans in Amman and other towns along the desert frontier.)

Most of my work in Amman was doing routine political reporting. The labor reporting

was something I got into because nobody else was interested.

Q: What was your impression of King Hussein before you arrived in Amman?

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, he was always "the brave young king", even when he reached middle age like the rest of us. He was a year younger than I was. I think that there was a good deal of respect for him as an individual. Certainly, he had successfully overcome a threat to his regime. He had avoided attempts to assassinate him. He was very much an activist. When I was there he was in his go-cart period. In fact, Bob Keeley had owned a go-cart and, with the king, was a member of the Amman go-cart club. Every Friday they would go out and have these go-cart races at the airport. Hussein was still a very young man, athletic and daring but somehow managing to keep things stable in Jordan. On the Arab-Israeli problem we didn't see much progress. There was the Paul Clapp mission and Eric Johnston's visit, but nothing really came of these efforts. The king, I think, was not very astute in allowing people to mess up the Jewish cemetery on the Mt. of Olives and to build hotels there. That did not help his reputation in the U.S. with the Jewish community. But, essentially it was a period of relative quiet in Jordan.

I should note that at this time Jordan, like most Arab states, usually refused to admit visitors of the Jewish faith. The argument was that Jews might be spies for Israel and/or that the authorities might not be able to protect them from harassment or injury by Palestinians. Once, while I was on home leave in Wyoming, Ohio, Steve Low's father asked me about obtaining a visa to visit the Old City of Jerusalem. I explained, with regret, that the Jordanians demanded that visa applications from Americans also include a certificate of Christian baptism, which Mr. Low acknowledged he could not produce. There were a few exceptions. Alfred Lilienthal, a well-known American Jewish critic of Israel, was not only allowed to visit Jordan but was invited to attend an opening session of the National Assembly. By pulling strings at the highest levels, Bill Macomber was once able to obtain permission for Senator Jacob Javits (Republican - New York) and his wife to cross through the Mandelbaum Gate from West to East Jerusalem. Unfortunately, a Palestinian activist found out the Javits were there and began to follow them around. This made Mrs. Javits nervous and they abbreviated their visit to the Old City.

Here I should point out that because Jordan controlled the Old City of Jerusalem and its Holy Places, we tended to get a number of official and semi-official visitors who passed through Amman en route to Jerusalem and then cross at the Mandelbaum Gate into Israel. I recall in particular a Congressman, a member of the House Judiciary Committee, who had arranged with two boyhood friends, dubbed "consultants" to the Committee, to visit the area, ostensibly to "study" foreign judicial systems. We perceived this as a real boondoggle but I persuaded the ambassador that we should at least make them do a little work. The evening of their visit to Amman the ambassador held a dinner for them to which he also invited four prominent Jordanian lawyers and judicial officials. The Jordanians were encouraged to discuss their judicial system with the American visitors. The following morning, as the Congressman got into his car en route to Jerusalem, he turned to me and said, "That talk last night was very interesting. Please write up for me a paper on the Jordanian legal system to include in my report to the Committee." Hoist on

my own petard, I had to spend the next week researching and writing up a description of the Jordanian legal system which was pouched to the Congressman. I have no idea what use he ever made of it, if any.

Q: Were we monitoring the Palestinian influence there? Was this a concern?

WRAMPELMEIER: Yes, through Jerusalem. Because our policy was to recognize Jerusalem as a "corpus separatum", i.e., territory not officially under the sovereignty of either Jodan or Israel, Consulate General Jerusalem then as now was independent from both Tel Aviv and Amman. In fact, if Ambassador Macomber went to Ramallah north of Jerusalem, he had to stop at the eastern limits of Jerusalem, take the ambassadorial flags off his car, drive through to the northern limits of the city and then put the flags back on. He would have to reverse that returning to Amman. He was not allowed to fly his flag in Jerusalem and the same applied to the ambassador in Tel Aviv. Only the consul general could do that. We would go frequently to Jerusalem for recreation and to take pouches and/or talk with the Consulate General staff.

We did try to monitor what the Palestinians were thinking. We talked to Palestinians of various sorts. Among my contacts was a U.S.-trained Palestinian Christian lawyer from Ramallah, a judge who became Minister of Justice while I was there. Unhappily, he died suddenly in his hotel room in Amman. Ann and I also visited the Zaru family in Ramallah. Their son Nadim had been one of the six passengers on the Dutch freighter that I took to Beirut in September 1954 en route to AUB. Nadim later became a Mayor of Ramallah and, having been expelled from the West Bank by the Israelis, served for a time as Jordan's Minister of Transportation. His sisters were school teachers and his brother, a pharmacist, later became headmaster of the Quaker school in Ramallah. We became acquainted with Katie Antonius, widow of the Mandate civil servant and historian George Antonius. She had turned their traditional Arab house into a charming restaurant where we held a luncheon following our older son's baptism at St. George's Church, Jerusalem.

There wasn’t what one would call a terribly hectic political life in Jordan. There were parliamentary elections in 1963. I remember one day a Palestinian came to me when I was acting political section head to ask whether the embassy would be willing to support his candidacy. I said, “No. We don’t do that.” Periodically the government cracked down on dissent. At one point it became rather inconvenient for us. My wife was pregnant and all of a sudden her obstetrician was sent off to a prison camp, so she had to find a new obstetrician at short notice. But there was a continuing effect to monitor what Malcolm Kerr called the “Arab Cold War,” when the Jordanians found themselves caught between the Iraqis, on the one hand, and the Egyptians and Syrians on the other.

Q: Was there a strong Nasserist movement in Jordan at the time?

WRAMPELMEIER: Yes, there was a Nasserist movement. It had to keep it’s head down because Arab nationalists, Ba’athis and communists were not welcomed. If they got too politically active the government would crack down on them and send them off to jail to

cool their heels in the desert. But, yes, there were people who represented these particular views. There was also on the far right - the Tahrir, or Islamic Liberation, party composed of Islamist radicals who had sponsored terrorist activities. There were also concerns about Palestinians crossing into Israel from time to time and doing things which invited retaliation on villages inside the West Bank. That was a concern of the Jordanian Government which preferred to keep the border quiet.

We did have a period in 1963 where there was a brief period of political liberalization. The national assembly that was elected that year opposed Samir Rifa'i, who was the king's nominee as prime minister, and failed to confirm him in office. The king then abolished parliament and there were some riots in the streets for a few days.
This reminds me of a story. An elderly East Jordanian, who gone to Mexico and made some money as a peddler, had retired to his little village of Ermameen, about an hour from Amman. The gentleman sought to make himself the local godfather by going around to foreign embassies to invite the ambassadors to come out and have picnics in Ermameen. He invited the Spanish ambassador and the Chinese Nationalist ambassador (married to a Peruvian) among others. He kept coming to me to ask if our ambassador would come. After he had come by a few times, Ambassador Macomber finally said, "Look, what the hell, let's go." So we arranged for a picnic at Ermameen for the ambassador, the consul, and other embassy personnel and their families. Local dignitaries were also present. It wasn't bad, we had a good time. Turns out the man was really much more interested in cultivating the consul than he was the ambassador. When we got back to Amman that evening we found that the national assembly had rejected the prime minister and had been suspended, martial law had been declared, and tensions were running high. I don't think the ambassador was all that pleased to have gone on the picnic that day. (End of tape)

I think one of the initial problems we had when Bill Macomber arrived in Amman was that he had had no overseas experience with the Foreign Service. Perhaps he thought that we would be upset over the way his appointment had been handled and Shelley Mills' resignation had been accepted. So he came a little uneasy about us and it took a while for him to realize we were not there to undermine him or make him look bad in any way. He had some decided views about how things should be done. I remember one time he became annoyed with me for having drafted a telegram in which I talked about the king having "taken the wind out of the sail" of the opposition. He thought that this was a very unprofessional expression. He obviously thought better of his remarks and came back a little later to my office. He did not apologize but he gave me some sort of compliment which indicated that he realized he had spoken a bit too strongly.

On another occasion, I had drafted a telegram reporting that the king's announcement of his intending marriage to an English girl, Toni Gardener, now renamed Muna al-Hussein, had come as a surprise to everybody. Macomber said to me, "You shouldn't have written that because I knew about it some time ago and the British ambassador knew about it." "Well, yes sir, that may be true, but nobody else knew about it, including the rest of us in the embassy." He was upset that the cable had gone out without him having massaged it in some way.

As time went on he and the staff developed a very good modus vivendi. Macomber went out of his way to try to help what I was trying to do with the labor reporting, even though it was rather marginal in terms of the embassy's overall concerns. When AID had a RIF (reduction in force) that affected several of the AID employees in Amman, Macomber did his best to save their jobs or at least to help them to find other employment.

One year he called in the late Peter Sutherland, his staff aide, and instructed him to assemble a bunch of young single Jordanians and bring them to the residence for a picnic. He also organized a basketball team with some of the younger staff and Marine guards to play against teams in refugee camps. He was a great horseman and kept a horse which he would ride early in the morning. He once looked at me and said, "You know, Wrampelmeier, a young officer could make his career if he got up early in the morning and went horseback riding with his ambassador." I hurriedly explained that I was allergic to horses.

I think by and large Macomber enjoyed the assignment. There is one amusing story which I think I can tell. He was a bachelor throughout the entire period he was in Amman. At one point his mother came for a visit. As she was about to leave, he asked her, "Is there anything that I should be doing in the residence that you think would improve the comfort of overnight guests?" She suggested that he might have his butler lay out the guests' night clothes. Macomber thought that was a good idea and instructed the butler, "Next time we have guests, unpack their bags and lay out their night clothes." The next visitor he had was a U.S. Marine officer, who was stationed in Jerusalem with the UN Truce Supervisory Organization, and his wife. The butler went to unpack their bags but shortly returned to the ambassador and whispered to him, "Mr. Ambassador, I can't find the night clothes of the gentleman and lady." The ambassador told the butler just to ask the guests where they were. A few minutes later a very embarrassed butler came back and said, "Sir, they say they don't wear any." That was the end of that experiment in gracious hospitality.

It was always an amusement to me later on when Macomber became President of the Metropolitan Museum of Art because his taste in art ran more toward Currier and Ives than Rembrandt or Van Gogh.

Because Macomber was a bachelor there was always a question as to who was going to serve as his official hostess at dinners. Usually it would be the DCM's wife. But when Eric Kocher's wife returned to the U.S. to have a baby the question became who would be the official hostess - was it going to be the political counselor's wife, the USAID Director's wife, or the USIS Public Affairs Officer's wife, etc. It got rather dicey. As protocol officer, I was called upon to solve this problem. I think we finally resolved it by simply rotating the role among those wives who were available and wanted to do it.

Macomber left Amman in December 1963, to return to Washington as the Assistant Administrator of AID for the Near East and South Asia. On his way back he stopped in Switzerland to marry Phyllis Bernau who had been Secretary Dulles' secretary. I

understand they are now living on Nantucket where at one time he was teaching history and coaching football in the local high school. [Note: Bill Macomber died on Nantucket in December 2003.]

Macomber was succeeded as ambassador by Robert Barnes, a career officer. When Macomber had arrived I, as protocol officer, had set up the presentation of his credentials to the king. I asked the protocol people at the Foreign Ministry how many embassy officers could attend. They said that all of us on the diplomatic list would be welcome. So, we brought about 12 - 15 people. This was a formal ceremony and we had to wear morning dress which very few of us owned. We went around the diplomatic community trying to borrow the proper clothes. I got mine from the German third secretary. Somebody else got his from the Spanish ambassador. I think because of that experience, when Bob Barnes came, the Foreign Ministry let it be known that they wanted only chiefs of sections to attend. So it was a much reduced group that accompanied Ambassador Barnes to his credential presentation ceremony.

One reason we stayed at post as long as we did was because we had two children born in Amman. Our second son was born there in early 1964 and we didn't want to go back to the States on home leave and transfer with an infant less than five or six months old.

Q: How was Eric Kocher as a DCM?

WRAMPELMEIER: Very nice. We got along quite well. Eric, of course, was a frustrated playwright. He was always going to write a play about a particular village on the West Bank where the armistice line ran right down the middle of the village. Half of the village was in Israeli hands and the other half in Jordanian hands. There was nothing but a bit of barbed wire in between to mark the boundary. Eric and I went one day to visit the village and our Jordan army officer escort stuck his foot over the wire to show how easy it would be to get across. We watched chickens running back and forth. The villagers really were quite divided and avoided communicating with each other when Israeli or Jordanian officials were present. Eric thought that would be a great subject for a play. Some years afterward, after he retired, Eric helped establish an international affairs program at Columbia University. After he left that job he offered career counseling to Princeton graduates. He would be at the Princeton Club in New York City one afternoon a week and anybody who wanted counseling could see him there. I tried to call on him one time when I was in New York in 1991, but I missed him. Since then he has died.

Q: He was my DCM in Belgrade right after this. We have a lot of respect for him. He was a good New Englander and my wife is a good New Englander and they would get on the phone and there would be a rather short sentence, another short sentence and then they would hang up.

WRAMPELMEIER: Geoff Lewis replaced him. Subsequently Geoff was ambassador to Mauritania and then to the Central African Republic. Geoff was very good, too. He was primarily a Europeanist and had come to Amman from NATO. Andy Killgore was replaced by the late Bob Houghton. Bob was very good as a political officer. He had had

Middle Eastern experience dating back to his first job in the Foreign Service in Jerusalem during the Arab-Israel conflict of 1947-1948 and also served in Damascus.

Q: Would you say compared to some other places, working in Jordan you could come away with some positive feelings, as opposed to countries in the Arab world where there was a nasty dictatorship or they were rather feckless?

WRAMPELMEIER: I think one of the good things about Amman was that it was still a small city in those days. You got to know what one might call the "Amman 400" very easily. You would see them frequently. This included not only people in the government but also members of the military and businessmen. People would invite you to their homes or they would come to your home. I think there was at that point a fair degree, at least among the upper class, of friendliness towards America. There were people who obviously didn't like our Middle East policies but I think there was a general feeling that the U.S. was doing what it could to help Jordan, especially through various AID projects operating in the country. That was something that brought us into contact with the people. I had a feeling that you could travel freely in Jordan and meet and talk with people. I thought it was a very good time, although my successors would have a different view.

Q: Yes, after 1967 it was not the greatest time as well as the '70s.

WRAMPELMEIER: In 1970 Ambassador Dean Brown had to travel in an armored car to present his credentials to the king.

I should explain that towards the end of my tour Ann and I got permission to cross the Mandelbaum Gate into West Jerusalem. From there we went to Tel Aviv where Ambassador Butterworth kindly invited me to attend an embassy staff meeting and share my thoughts on what was going on in Jordan. We also did some touring, visiting Haifa and going up to Lake Tiberius by bus.

Q: We will stop at this point and put it down that we are at 1964. In 1964 where were you going?

WRAMPELMEIER: In June 1964 we went back to the States for home leave and then on to Jeddah where again I would be the junior political officer. Dick Murphy was chief of the political section. Parker Hart was the ambassador and Nick Thatcher was initially the DCM. I was two years there.

Q: Okay, we will pick this up at that point.

WRAMPELMEIER: Okay.

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Q: Today is April 13, 2000. You next went to Jeddah. You were there from when to when?

WRAMPELMEIER: I was there from September 1964 to September 1966.

Q: What was the situation in Saudi Arabia when you arrived there?

WRAMPELMEIER: I think my first impression was how hot it was. It was mid-September when we got off the plane and it was like being hit in the face with a hot wash cloth. The general situation was, of course, that there was continuing tension between King Saud, who was still on the throne although he had been stripped of his powers in 1962, and his younger brother, Crown Prince Faisal. The problem was finally resolved in November 1964 when the royal family got together and announced that they were transferring their allegiance from Saud to Faisal. The religious leaders endorsed that and Saud went into exile where he died several years later.

In the meantime, of course, the Yemen civil war had broken out in September 1962. The Egyptians had sent troops to support Abdullah Salal and the revolutionary officers who had announced that they were supporters of Nasser. The Saudis had come to the support of the deposed ruler of Yemen, Imam Muhammad al-Badr. So there was a great deal of tension along the southern border of Saudi Arabia. Much time was spent by Ambassador Bunker attempting to work out an arrangement by which the Egyptian troops could be withdrawn from Yemen and thereby ease the situation. That did not happen until after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war when the badly beaten Egyptians finally withdrew their troops from Yemen. The civil war in Yemen went on for several more years but eventually the republicans won and Muhammad al-Badr went into exile in Spain.

Our concern at that time was the Yemen situation and what became the Faisal/Nasser struggle for greater influence in the Arab world. Faisal created in the middle ‘60s the Islamic Conference Organization in which he was trying to push Islamic solidarity among Muslim countries in opposition to Nasser’s Arab nationalism and his alliance with the Soviets. At the same time the Saudis began wanting to improve their military posture. A fair amount of time was taken up dealing with their requests for military equipment and ironing out disputes between American companies over which fighter aircraft they should buy. Washington finally sent the famous test pilot, Chuck Yeager, to Saudi Arabia to go through the merits of the various aircraft the Saudis were considering. He tried to appear neutral, but he came down in favor of the F86 which was what the Saudis eventually bought. They were also concerned with improving their land forces and beginning to think about their navy. In Saudi Arabia we also had an ongoing U.S. Geological Survey that project which was mapping the country and discovering, for example, old gold mines that the Saudis might try to restore and work. The Army Corps of Engineers was involved in still other projects, primarily the establishment of a television system for the kingdom.

Q: They (the Engineers) were first brought in to Dhahran to build an airport in 1959-60.

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, the airbase was in the ‘40s.

Q: Yes, but this was the airport.

WRAMPELMEIER: Yes, the civil airport. They came back in and worked on that. Well, this was what was going on in the kingdom during my tour. In August 1965 Nasser visited Faisal in Jeddah to try to work out their problems on Yemen. Nasser sailed into Jeddah on an Egyptian warship accompanied by the commander of the Egyptian navy. To demonstrate our support for Saudi Arabia and to deter Egyptian attacks, we had not only sent a squadron of fighter aircraft to Dhahran, but we had arranged for periodic visits to Jeddah by destroyers from the Middle East Force (MIDEASTFOR). We had a U.S. destroyer in the harbor when Nasser arrived. I was the liaison with the ship and we received a radio message the evening that Nasser arrived. The captain said, "We've got a peculiar situation here," and then the radio went dead. I went down to the port thinking maybe if I could get out to the ship... Well, the port was sewed up tight for security reasons. All boatmen were ordered to beach their boats and there was no way I could get out to the ship. So I spent the night worrying that somebody might have a ruptured appendix or something.

The next day we managed to get back in radio contact with the ship. The problem was that when Nasser's ship came into the harbor, flying his presidential flag, the U.S. warship had not fired a salute in recognition, a standard international naval courtesy. The Egyptian admiral had sent a stiff message of complaint over to the American captain. The American captain said "You know, we only fire a salute if we are told to do so by the local port authorities and nobody told me anything. I'm sorry about that." They eventually ironed it out over a cup of coffee.

Q: We still had relations with Egypt?

WRAMPELMEIER: We still had relations during my tour. This was a question of how the Navy conducted their courtesy. I think those were the chief things that were going on during this period.

Q: When you arrived there was Egypt seen as the threat?

WRAMPELMEIER: Yes. I think earlier on, of course, in the '40s and '50s the British and the Hashemites were seen as the threat to Saudi rule. By this time, however, the Egyptians were seen as the threat. This was the period of the "Arab Cold War." Nasser was trying to extend his influence into Syria, with which he had a brief political union, the United Arab Republic, and also was in competition with whatever regime happened to be in power in Iraq as to who was going to carry the banner of Arab nationalism. Of course, Nasser's sending troops to Yemen was a further demonstration to the Saudis that Nasser was a threat and was trying to surround them. At some point in 1965 there were demonstrations against the British in favor of Nasser in some of the Gulf states like Bahrain and Dubai. So all of these things were worrisome to the Saudis.

Q: What was your job?

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, my job was a very frustrating one in the sense that I didn't have much to do. The embassy was in Jeddah and with the exception of the Foreign

Ministry all of the government was in Riyadh, about 700 or 800 miles away. The ambassador, DCM and senior political officer had established their contacts and there really weren't very many left for the junior political officer other than to do protocol things. So, I must say that I did not find it a very happy tour.

I was in charge of ship visits and would often go aboard visiting destroyers to brief the captain and his officers on the Saudi scene. I accompanied the captains in their courtesy calls on the local Saudi military commander, an elderly bedouin whose headquarters was in a picturesque old mud fort. On one occasion I went up to Yenbu, the port for Medina, to perform the same role for our first naval visit to that port. We also had a visit from Harold Snell, our regional labor attaché from Beirut; he and visited a social welfare facility in a *wadi* a few miles outside of Jeddah.

Q: Can we talk a little bit about logistics. The embassy had been in Jeddah since opening relations with the Saudis in the '40s. What was the status when you got there in 1964?

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, the status was that our embassy was on a compound. However, the size of the post had grown and there was no longer sufficient housing on the compound for all the staff. A number of people were living outside in rented houses. Our arrival was not a very happy one because while still on home leave I had corresponded with the embassy and been told that the ground breaking of what would be our house had just taken place. I asked if I should leave my family in the States for a while and was told to come with family. When we arrived our intended residence was still nothing but a hole in the ground. We were put up in a so-called villa of the Kandara Palace Hotel. It had two bedrooms for three young children, our Jordanian maid, my wife and myself. We were there for several weeks and my wife was about to climb the walls when friends of ours who were also looking for housing said they had seen a place they didn't want but we might. We rented a house that belonged to a Saudi air force officer who had been transferred to Riyadh. It took time for us to get it into shape but it proved quite liveable. Still, we had the feeling that the embassy administrative staff wasn't really on the ball.

Q: Had the ambassador, Parker Hart, and the DCM...?

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, Parker Hart was in Washington on a promotion panel, so the DCM, Nick Thatcher, who later became ambassador to Saudi Arabia, was chargé.

While in Jeddah, I was able to make a couple of very interesting trips. The economic officer, Slator Blackiston, was an Arabist, and wanted to travel up into the northern and central parts of Saudi Arabia. Ostensibly our purpose was to study bedouin resettlement activity by the Saudi government. We arranged for an escort, a Palestinian who spoke English, from the Ministry of Agriculture and they also gave us a driver, a man from Chad. The Spanish ambassador, who was bored to tears with nothing to do except during the Haj when people from Spanish Morocco came through on pilgrimage, asked to come so we took him along. We were also joined by a woman named Barbara Toy, an Australian who had married a Finnish American. Her husband and child died during the

war under circumstances that she never explained. She had become sort of a poor woman's Freya Stark. She owned a custom-fitted Landrover which she had driven alone around the Libyan Desert, in Ethiopia, and across the Sahara. She wrote books about her adventures. She had driven her own vehicle up to Jeddah from Aden. The Saudis allowed her to drive herself so long as she did not do so in Jeddah. Barbara later wrote up this adventure in a book entitled The Highway of the Three Kings.

We went up near Medina and spent the night in the house of a British engineer who was in charge of the Medina power station. This poor guy lived and worked outside the city. As a non-Muslim, he could not enter Medina. If he wanted to go anywhere to buy something he had to drive 400 kilometers south to Jeddah. He very hospitably let us camp out on the floor of his living room for which he received a half bottle of scotch.

We tried to travel up the old Hijaz railway, which was being repaired by a British-German company.

Q: After Lawrence had blown the thing up.

WRAMPELMEIER: Yes, after Lawrence had blown it up. At this time - 1965 - there was underway an effort by Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia to try to rebuild it. The effort collapsed after a bit. I don't think the Syrians or Jordanians really had the money and finally decided the project wasn't worth it economically. We drove up along the restored track bed until we reached the camp of the British and German construction engineers. They warned us not to try going further, it was too rough. So we returned to Medina and took the main road up to Tabuk. At that point Barbara Toy continued on to Jordan and Beirut while we went northeast to Sakaka and Qurayyat al-Milh ("villages of salt") where the chief industry was digging holes in the ground, pouring in water and then returning a day or two later to dig up the salt left by evaporation. Interestingly, the emir there was a young man educated in California who spoke very good English. He gave us a very interesting lecture on the bustard and how to hunt it. Then we went along the TAPLine (Trans Arabian Pipeline) road as far east as Rafah and then back south to Ha'il. TAPLine carried the oil from Saudi Arabia up to the Mediterranean through Jordan and Syria to a Mediterranean terminus at Sidon. TAPLine was closed in 1967 because of damage in Syria to the pipe which was never repaired.

We began to have trouble with one of the vehicles. In the middle of the Great Nafud Desert it broke down. I think we had a broken engine mounting that cut a hose. The Spanish ambassador and I agreed to spend the night in the middle of the sand dunes while the other vehicle went into Ha'il to find a mechanic. I was surprised at how much traffic there was. About every two or three hours a truck would come by. The drivers would always stop and try to do what they could. These big Mercedes trucks have drawers built into the side in which the driver has all sorts of tools and spare parts. Eventually Slator and the others returned with a mechanic who got us going so we could at least reach Ha'il. We spent a day or two there. Ha'il was still really medieval. The governor was the one originally appointed by King Abd al-Aziz after he had kicked the Rashid family out in 1925. We found him colorful but he was notoriously miserly. The food was awful. So

we were not too unhappy to leave. We continued to have trouble with our truck and progress was very slow back to Medina where our escort and the driver were able to get it repaired and we finally got back to Jeddah. The whole trip took about two weeks.

I also made a trip down to Jizan on the Yemen border. I flew down while Slator Blackiston drove down in an embassy Landrover. It was such a hard trip that he put the embassy vehicle on a truck and sent it back to Jeddah while he flew back. We spent a few days in Jizan and I got to know some Saudi army officers stationed there. When I arrived, I was sent over to the army guest house. I suppose they wanted to keep an eye on me. The town was like the wild west, full of wild-looking Yemeni royalist fighters plus the Saudi military.

Q: At that time was the Saudi military doing anything with the Yemeni royalists?

WRAMPELMEIER: Yes. They were giving them support. The Saudi troops were not going into Yemen as far as I know, but because the Yemeni royalists were backed up on the Saudi border the Saudis had reenforced their own units down there. It was a matter of some concern lest the Egyptians, who had staged a couple of aerial attacks on Saudi Arabia in 1962 and 1963, do it again.

One of the intriguing persons whom I came across in Jizan was an American, a fellow with whom I had shared an Arabic class while I was a student at AUB. Bruce Condé claimed to descend from French royalty. As a boy he became interested in postage stamps and struck up a correspondence with the then Imam Yahya of Yemen, who also collected stamps. Bruce wanted to go to Yemen. He learned some Arabic in Beirut and then went to Yemen, where he converted to Islam, renounced his U.S. citizenship, became a Yemeni citizen, and married a Yemeni woman. He tried to corner the market in postage stamps but ran afoul of somebody with more clout and ended up being put in chains and shipped out of the country on the Ethiopian Airways. This was after I had returned to Beirut in 1959 and the local newspapers every day reported his adventures. He was flown to Addis Ababa, where they wouldn't let him land because he had no papers. Then on to Cairo, where they wouldn't let him off. Then to Beirut, where they wouldn't let him off. He flew back to Egypt and Addis Ababa. For a week he was the unwelcome guest of Ethiopian Airways until the Lebanese finally agreed to let him land. When the Yemeni civil war broke out in September 1962 Condé joined the royalists in Yemen. Shortly thereafter, he reappeared as Major General, the Prince of Bourbon-Condé, the Postmaster General of the Royalist Forces. He invented his own postage stamps and cancellation marks with statements such as "delayed in transit through enemy lines." He was a very colorful character. He was up in Jizan with some medical problem. This was the sort of wild group that existed there.

Q: There was a period of time when the AID mission was kicked out and they had some problems. We had to send I think Parker Hart and Herman Eilts down to pack them up. Was that during your time?
WRAMPELMEIER: I don't remember that, I think that may have been later. At one point there was an allegation that some members of the AID mission had been firing

rifles or something. It didn't make any sense, but the charge was that they had engaged in some sort of illegal activity. I think that may be when they were kicked out.

When I was in Jeddah Parker Hart had, of course, been accredited not only as ambassador to Saudi Arabia, but also as ambassador to Kuwait and as minister to Yemen. When he left Jeddah in 1965 to become ambassador to Turkey, his staff had a party for him and several of them, including Dick Murphy, put on a "this is your life" skit which included three people dressed as the king of Saudi Arabia, the ruler of Kuwait and the Imam of Yemen singing a song to the tune of "We Three Kings of Orient Are."

After Hart left and Nick Thacher went on to Tehran as DCM, Herman Eilts came as ambassador and Talcott Seelye as DCM. Eventually Dick Murphy went on to Amman and Bob Stuckey, who had been the chargé in Yemen, took his place as senior political officer. Stuckey was a little bit suspect to the Saudis as they knew he had urged the U.S. to recognize the Yemen republican regime. He didn't stay very long in Jeddah but resigned and went to the University of Texas where he earned a Ph.D. and wrote books on Yemen and other Middle Eastern subjects.

I made one trip to Dhahran and from there took the railroad to Riyadh. It was a railroad that Aramco had built for the Saudis. I like trains. In Riyadh, I visited an American couple I had known in Amman and made one or two brief courtesy calls at various ministries. You could really walk around in Riyadh in the mid-'60s. It had not yet sprawled out the way it is today.

Q: Was part of our embassy already located there?

WRAMPELMEIER: No. There were some American government people as advisors but no embassy personnel.

Q: Why didn't we do that?

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, the Saudis didn't want foreign embassies up there. They were willing to take technicians and advisors, but they didn't want diplomats up there because if the Americans moved up there, then the Egyptians would want to move up there too. Also, some of the smaller Muslim countries preferred to keep their embassies in Jeddah where they could more conveniently assist their countrymen on pilgrimage.

Q: This was a little bit naive in a way. You can't very well have your capital one place and keep the embassies somewhere else.

WRAMPELMEIER: Yes, but we have done this with Israel.

Q: It means someone is in the car.

WRAMPELMEIER: Yes. Well, we could fly up. The U.S. Military Training Mission (USMTM), which had its headquarters in Dhahran, had a branch stationed in Riyadh.

USMTM was still flying an old C-47 that once was used by *General* Eisenhower when he was head of SHAPE. Bill Rugh had established a small USIS English Language Training program there in the late 1960s but it wasn't until the early '70s that the embassy opened an informal office in Riyadh. I think Skip Gnehm was our first resident officer in Riyadh and for many years our little office up there had no real official status. The Saudis did not formally recognize its presence but allowed it to exist. Finally they agreed that all embassies could move up to Riyadh, establishing this big diplomatic enclave out on the edge of town where our embassy is today.

Q: As political officer, albeit junior political officer, the major political event was when the Saudi princes all got together and said, "Faisal in and Saud out." Saud was considered a pretty ineffective king and Faisal was obviously the person who was running things anyway. Did we have any feel for this or were we able to monitor this process?

WRAMPELMEIER: Yes, we would get reports from various sources. Americans who were in Riyadh or other people would tell us what was going on. Essentially, the power had shifted from Saud to Faisal in October 1962 when the family agreed that Faisal as crown prince and prime minister would have the deciding voice on government affairs. Faisal had then announced a ten-point program which included things like the abolition of slavery which was legal in Saudi Arabia at that time. It also talked about establishing a consultative assembly which actually was not formed until the 1990s by King Fahd. I forget the other things that were in the program but the purpose was to set forth various government reforms.

Saud, probably egged on by some of his sons who lost power in this shift, tried to reassert himself. In the fall of 1964, just after I had arrived, there was almost a shoot out in Riyadh between Saud's royal guard and the National Guard and army forces which had surrounded his palace. The royal family decided that they must depose Saud. Faisal very deliberately went off on a desert trip so he was not in Riyadh when the family made this decision. He only showed up in Riyadh once the decision had been made. We eventually were able to piece together a picture of how this was done. It was an instructive lesson in how the royal family could handle effectively a difficult succession problem.

Q: Well, one of the real strengths of the Saudi government was that the power was so wide spread within the family.

WRAMPELMEIER: The family is huge. So far, the succession has gone down through the sons of King Abd al-Aziz in order of seniority. Saud was his eldest surviving son. Faisal, the next eldest son, had been named crown prince. The two brothers had been pledged to cooperate with each other. There had been this period of tension in the late '50s because they had differing views on what the role of the king should be. The next in line after Faisal were Nasser, Sa'id and then Muhammad. Muhammad was a drunk and a hot head, the wicked grandfather in the notorious "Death of a Princess" episode. He was the one who made sure his granddaughter was executed for her escapade with a young man. The family bought off the princes in between Faisal and Khalid, who was the next

eldest prince with any sort of experience in government and who was generally recognized as qualified to rule by the family. The succession has continued to go down through the next eldest brother with the understanding that he has had experience in government. Thus, Fahd succeeded Khalid and Abdullah is designated to succeed him. But this generation is now in their sixties and seventies. The question today is what about the next generation, the sons of Faisal, for instance, who also have considerable government experience.

Q: When I was in Dhahran, (1958-60), the question was will the House of Saud make it? Was this still the question?

WRAMPELMEIER: I think our impression was, particularly after the family handled the succession to Saud was yes, the family was pretty well organized. It was big enough that it wasn't going to be easily overthrown like, say, the rulers of Yemen and Iraq and ultimately the Shah. We used to be somewhat bemused by the Shah and his supporters saying, "the Saudis can't last." Even today I think the general feeling is that despite the criticisms of the Saudi regime that are coming from the right, from the religious groups, this regime still has the strength to keep itself in power. There is a lot of evidence that Abdullah, who is really now the effective ruler of Saudi Arabia since Fahd's illness, has been taking steps that will further open up the economy, for example, and encourage foreign investment. He, unlike Fahd, is not so vulnerable to being criticized by the religious elements for immoral practices, etc. I think the family is going to have to bend and sway a bit but I think they will probably survive.

Q: I was trying to capture the feeling at the time.

WRAMPELMEIER: At the time, I think we felt that Faisal was a strong enough person and, while there had been some threats of disunity during the Saud period, that these had been overcome by Faisal becoming king and solidifying his control over the country. We didn't have a feeling that the regime was in serious trouble.

Q: Back in the late '50s I got the impression that there was concern of too many Palestinians in positions of technical authority, including the military. The pilots were mostly Palestinian at this time. Had this changed?

WRAMPELMEIER: I think this was changing. I remember the Saudi air force people I knew, and I knew a few because I was living in an air force enclave, were not Palestinians. I don't remember meeting any Palestinians who were air force pilots, although I am sure there were Palestinians in various technical professions like mechanics and engineers, etc. There certainly were Palestinians teaching in schools, but there were also Egyptians and Syrians. The foreign-born people around the king, that is people like Rashad Far'aoun and Yusuf Yassin, were Syrians rather than Palestinians. I don't think we had a feeling that the place was run by Palestinians. By this time you had increasing numbers of young Saudis coming back from school abroad. All but the eldest of Faisal's children, for example, had gone to the Hun School in Princeton, New Jersey and some had gone on to Princeton and other U.S. or UK universities. They were back in

Saudi Arabia and beginning to find positions in the government. There were other examples like that as well. Certainly Aramco had a lot of Palestinians and Lebanese working for them. But, even there, Saudis were beginning to replace them.

Q: Were you monitoring the suq to see if there were lots of pictures of Nasser around and to figure out what the "people" were thinking about?

WRAMPELMEIER: I never saw a picture of Nasser in the suq and I doubt if anybody in the suq would have had the nerve to put one up. I think the Saudi police would have stepped in quite quickly on that. No, I must say, I don't think we monitored the suq. It was not one of those things that the Saudis would be comfortable with if you went in and asked what their political view was on this. They would clam up very quickly. They were not used to discussing politics with foreigners.

Q: Were you able to establish contacts with the Saudis or at least with other Arabs there?

WRAMPELMEIER: That was a problem. As junior political officer most of the accessible contacts were all ready taken. I did get to know some army officers whom I first met in Jizan. One of them actually was from an Uzbek family that had settled in Saudi Arabia in the '20s or '30s. But, no, we didn't have that many social contacts with Saudis. We did have contacts with the other missions - Jordanians, Indians, Pakistanis, etc. - but with Saudis it was very difficult. I did have contact with the military in part because of my role in coordinating ship visits. I would take people to call on the local military commander and Foreign Ministry people. After Jordan, where we had had wide contacts and the people were talkative, we found Jeddah was not the same sort of place.

Q: Did you or the rest of the embassy find yourselves busy during the Haj season?

WRAMPELMEIER: There weren't that many Americans making the Haj in those days and the few who did usually didn't contact the embassy because they would be handled by the *mutawwafs*, the authorized pilgrim guides who met the pilgrims, saw to their needs, and assured their departure at the end of the Haj. Once I met an African American Muslim who had been studying at the Islamic university at Medina. He had been kicked out of school for some reason, but he didn't seem interested in pursuing the matter and I think he left the kingdom shortly after his visit to the embassy.

One of my jobs, oddly enough, was embassy representative on the international committee in charge of the non-Muslim cemetery in Jeddah. This was a little walled cemetery which had grave stones going back to the massacre of Europeans and Jews in Jeddah in the 1850s. It also had the grave of a British vice consul who had been murdered by one of the sons of King Abd al-Aziz.

Q: Was this the case that started the abolition of liquor to the foreigners?

WRAMPELMEIER: Yes. The king's son had been drinking at the British vice consul's home. They argued about something and the prince shot him. I think there were a couple

of Americans buried there. Italian prisoners of war who had been interned on an island off Jeddah during the world war were buried in the non-Moslem cemetery. There was even a Buddhist grave. I took my wife one time to see the cemetery and she said it was an awful place. It was sunbaked and without trees.

We had very little to do with the Haj. Now my successor, David Long, took a great interest in the Haj and eventually wrote his Ph.D. thesis on it which he had published as The Haj Today. David's book focused on the administrative aspects of Haj and how increasingly the government of Saudi Arabia had become involved in managing the Haj by improving the health, safety, and transportation of pilgrims.

Q: What was your impression of Parker Hart? How was he as an ambassador?

WRAMPELMEIER: I thought he was very good. I didn't see that much of him. He was gone when I arrived and came back only shortly before he was transferred. I think we overlapped four or five months. He was a very competent ambassador and certainly knew Saudi Arabia. He had known Faisal since the '40s. In fact, he had been at the founding of the United Nations in San Francisco in 1945 as a liaison with the Saudis and some of the other Arab countries. I later worked with him briefly when he was Assistant Secretary for Near East and South Asia (NEA). I was then on the Saudi desk. I thought he was very good.

Now, Hermann Eilts was also very good. He was very attentive to the daily management of the embassy and was very demanding about what he expected from his officers. Under him, the embassy was well run, by and large, except on the administrative side. That situation was always a problem.

Here it might be worth mentioning King Faisal's 1966 State visit to Washington to meet President Johnson. On the king's return, Ambassador Eilts arranged that all of the embassy officers and their wives would be at the Jeddah Airport to greet him. The king's arrival was broadcast by Saudi television. This was probably the first time that Saudis ever saw their king shaking hands with Western women.

Q: You left there in 1966.

WRAMPELMEIER: I left there in September 1966 and returned to Washington for a two-year tour as analyst for Egypt in INR (Bureau of Intelligence and Research). I guess the high point of that tour was the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict. I remember the day it started. Harold Glidden, who was in charge of the Near East section of INR, took me aside into a back room. Our job was to determine who fired the first shots because, as you may remember, Lyndon Johnson, and also de Gaulle, had said that they would not support whichever side started the war. Early on the Israelis announced that they had attacked the Egyptians because they had seen various threatening movements. Our job was to try to determine what in fact had happened. We did not find the evidence that supported the Israeli claims but by the time we came out of the room three days later the war was over and Johnson had already decided to support the Israelis with arms and

equipment. The Israelis were no longer concerned about trying to justify why they had sent their air force up on the first day. So, in that sense, my view of the war was very limited except what I could catch on television in the evening. Afterwards, I spent a fair amount of time trying to analyze what was happening in Egyptian politics. Who in the leadership was being held responsible for losing the war and the high-level shifts in personnel within Nasser's regime.

Q: *Prior to the war, how did you feel from your perspective that INR was working with the desk?*

WRAMPELMEIER: I think we did what we felt we needed to do. We would show our intelligence reports to the desk and sometimes they would disagree or ask that they not be further circulated within the USG. However, we dealt mainly with the intelligence community rather than with the regional bureaus. I remember on one occasion there was a question about something Nasser had said in a speech. I learned in talking to my counterpart at FBIS (Foreign Broadcast Information Service) that we hadn't seen the full text and that there were things Nasser had in fact said that cast a different light on what he had been widely reported as saying. I thought it was very important to bring that information to the attention of my INR superiors and to others in the Department, for which I was thankful to the FBIS analyst who told me about the missing passages in the speech.

One of the things, of course, that we did in those days was to periodically take our turn as the early morning briefing officer. We had to go through all the overnight message traffic and make a precis of what was noteworthy, not just on Egypt, but on everything from Morocco to India and then brief the Assistant Secretary of INR so that he in turn could brief the Secretary and the other Department principals. That meant getting down to INR around 6 am and trying to make sense of things that I normally did not follow. That was always interesting but sometimes I worried whether I had correctly portrayed something that involved developments in South Asia or Greece, areas about which I knew very little.

I think my experience in INR was useful in learning how to write concisely and lucidly and to be precise about how I phrased things. I had as mentors people like Harold Glidden; Herbert Liebesny, who was our legal specialist on borders and issues like transit of the Suez Canal; and Phil Stoddard, who replaced Glidden and whom I had known when he was a graduate student at Princeton.

I was in INR for two years and then I went on to the Saudi Arabian desk in NEA (Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs).

Q: Sticking to INR first, were we seeing signs that Nasser was getting restive, because it was actually his action of calling the UN out? Prior to that were we seeing the war clouds gathering and Nasser felt time was not on his side or something like that?

WRAMPELMEIER: I think we were seeing the problems that everybody else saw. I am not sure that we were overly concerned. I do, however, remember Harold Glidden telling

me that spring that I could not go off on a training course at FSI because problems were going to come up. That was probably in late May, 1967, about the time when Nasser announced that he had called for the UN force to withdraw from the Sinai and the Straits of Tiran. I don't recall a sense that war was going to break out. I think as we got closer to it, in early June, we felt it was going to be very difficult to avoid it. But, I don't know that we had good intelligence at that point on thinking in the inner circle of Egypt. Our ambassadors were changing at that point. Dick Nolte had just gone out as ambassador to Egypt. I don't think he had even presented his credentials when the war broke out and our embassy staff were kicked out of Egypt. I think Don Burgess was the political counselor in Cairo at that time.

Q: I don't think he was. Dick Parker was...

WRAMPELMEIER: You're right. Dick Parker was political counselor in Cairo. I do know shortly thereafter Parker replaced Don Burgess as head of the Egyptian desk in NEA. Don then served as head of the U.S. Interests Section in Cairo.

Thinking back on it, it seems to me that the outbreak of hostilities was, while not unexpected, still a surprise because we continued to think that maybe something could be worked out diplomatically. In fact, it may have been a surprise to Nasser for all we know.

Q: Well, it certainly caught his air force with their pants down.

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, he probably thought somebody would rush in and somehow or other arrange things. He was blamed by some for having demanded that the UN people be withdrawn. But, I really don't recall very much detail about the situation.

Q: Right after the war Nasser offered to resign. This was a sort of theatrical gesture. Were we seeing at that point perhaps a decrease in the influence of Nasserism?

WRAMPELMEIER: Oh, yes, you certainly saw a decrease after this. King Hussein of Jordan admitted that he had made a terrible mistake in putting his troops under Egyptian command and consequently losing the whole West Bank to the Israelis. I think in Cairo we saw evidence of a realignment of influence within the Free Officers movement. I remember writing a paper about one officer who seemed to be moving up but it never happened. Certainly Nasser was shaken politically and psychologically, there is no doubt about that. His position was badly undermined. His health was undermined. It was only three years later that he died, while he was trying to resolve the Black September conflict in Jordan.

Q: Did Sadat cross your sights at all?

WRAMPELMEIER: No, he didn't mine, but the person who understood Sadat was Mike Sterner who was then on the Egyptian desk. Sterner had been Sadat's escort when Sadat, as chairman of the national assembly and vice president, had been invited to the U.S. At that time nobody paid much attention to him but Sterner took him around. When Sadat came to power, Sterner was one of the few people who knew the new President of Egypt.

And, of course, that was still the period when we had no formal relations with Egypt. We had only an interests section. I think it was fortuitous that we had that connection with Sadat early on.

Q: In INR you are gathering information, when the embassy was closed and we only had an interest section, did that really make much difference from your perspective?

WRAMPELMEIER: No, I think we still got information. A lot of that came from speeches and the media as well as the limited contacts that our people had in the Egyptian government. But, then, I don't think our contacts in Egypt were all that extensive before the break in relations.

Q: It was a pretty hostile system wasn't it, as far as the United States was concerned? Secret police were all around.

WRAMPELMEIER: Oh, yes. There were limitations on whom you could see and what you could see them about. I don't think there was a particularly active group of anti-Nasser Egyptians that we had contacts with. In fact, many of those who were anti-Nasser were probably communists with whom we didn't have any contact anyway. So a lot of our information really was based on publicly available sources.

Q: Did you sense, while you were in INR, that there was an Arab or an Israeli bias by our policy at that time?

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, by that time Lyndon Johnson had clearly come down on the side of the Israelis in 1967. I think if any bias was demonstrated it was in favor of Israel and not of the Arabs. There was the diplomatic effort that followed adoption by the UN Security Council of Resolution 242 to deal with the consequences of the 1967 war. I didn't see us pressing the Israelis as hard to do things as much as I saw us pressing the Arabs to accept and work within the 242 restrictions. In other words, we were trying to get a settlement of the whole Arab-Israeli issue within that context. That wasn't helped when the Arabs got together in Khartoum in September 1967 and stated the three noes – no negotiations, no recognition, no peace treaty.

Q: Did you have much contact with the Israeli desk - the analysis part of it?

WRAMPELMEIER: I wouldn't say that I got much into the analysis of the 242 issues. I was really focused much more on Egypt domestic politics, Egypt in Yemen, and Egypt's relations with the Soviet bloc. The Israeli analyst was the one who was focused much more on the issue of the peace process.

Q: Were we also looking at Soviet influence?

WRAMPELMEIER: Yes, indeed, and a lot of my contacts within INR were with the Soviet and Eastern European branch in INR. There were a lot of times that we got together to analyze something. What were the Soviet doing in Egypt and so on.

Q: You moved out of INR when?

WRAMPELMEIER: About August, 1968 I moved to the position of Saudi Arabian country officer in NEA's Office of Arabian Peninsula Affairs (ARP) and I stayed there for six years.

Q: So you were there from 1968 to 1974.

WRAMPELMEIER: I replaced Mike Sterner on the Saudi desk and he moved over to the Egyptian desk. Bill Brewer was the ARP country director. Later on Dick Murphy was office director for about a year before he went to Mauritania, the first of his several ambassadorships. In 1973 Fran Dickman came back from Jeddah where he had been the economic counselor and replaced Murphy as office director.

A great deal of my time was taken up with political/military issues. This was the period when the Saudis were really interested in buying military equipment from us. We got into the naval expansion program in which we helped the Saudis to develop a two coast, ten ship navy with bases at Jubail and Jeddah. We arranged for American contractors to come in and help them to train seamen and to maintain the ships. We also undertook a similar training and maintenance arrangement with the Saudi Arabian Coast Guard and Frontier Force, a branch of the Ministry of Interior.

We also initiated the Saudi National Guard modernization program. The Saudis decided they wanted to modernize the National Guard which is recruited from the central Arabian bedouin tribes who are regarded as likely to be more loyal to the regime than the regular army which was recruited primarily from the Hijaz. Prince Abdullah, head of the National Guard and now crown prince, wanted to modernize the National Guard by upgrading tribal levies into a trained and uniformed well-equipped force. We started out by training two battalions of troops with armored cars and some light artillery, as well as maintenance and logistic support elements. I remember going up to Capitol Hill to explain this program to the staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, specifically to Dick Moose. Moose, as you know, had been an FSO and then left the Service to work for Senator Fulbright and later for Senator Frank Church. Later, he returned to State as Under Secretary for Management and Assistant Secretary for Africa. Shortly after I had returned to my office, Moose called me and said something along the lines of "What are you hiding? Two battalions? This is nothing. What are you guys really planning to do?" I told him that we had no plans other than to train and equip these two battalions. Well, Moose was very skeptical. And at the time we didn't have any other agenda. This started as a very modest program but like a lot of other Saudi programs it grew over time and became a much larger program.

Q: As we worked on this program were we always looking over our shoulder because we didn't want to develop anything that could be a threat to Israel?

WRAMPELMEIER: Oh, yes. You wouldn't have been able to sell it on Capitol Hill if it

was regarded as a threat to Israel. At one point I think there were restrictions as to whether or not the Saudis could base F-5 aircraft in places like Tabuk, which was within an easy flight time from Israel. So all of these were factors that had to be considered; selling these programs on Capitol Hill became increasingly difficult as we got into more and more complex and sophisticated types of equipment. Once we got into the '80s with the AWACs and F15 fighter aircraft and that type of thing, sales to Saudi Arabia became very controversial.

Q: Nixon's presidency started during this time. It, along with Henry Kissinger, became enthralled with the Shah of Iran and sort of opened up our arms to this. Were you getting any reflection of that or was that a different policy because that was anti- Soviet or something like that?

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, I think it was anti-Soviet but it also went into the whole issue of the security of the Gulf. Increasingly we had begun focusing on what was going on in the Gulf. By 1968 the British had announced their intention to withdraw by 1971 from their traditional role of protecting power for the smaller Gulf Arab states. They had already left Aden in 1967, withdrawing under pressure from civil insurrections. By 1971, the decision to withdraw had in fact been taken, so our concern was who was going to fill the vacuum and this, of course, led to the Nixon Administration's so-called "Two Pillar Policy." We were going to focus our attention on Iran primarily because it seemed to be the larger and stronger military power and to a lesser extent on Saudi Arabia which was to be the "second pillar." Our concern was the Soviets, of course, and also Iraq which constituted a threat to Bahrain through its support of dissident groups there and in Oman's southern province of Dhofar, where an active rebellion was also being supported by the Marxist regime which had come to power in South Yemen. We saw all of that as requiring our help to build security systems in the Gulf to respond to what were perceived as outside threats to the stability of the region.

Q: I would have thought there would have been a certain conflict from your perspective of Saudi Arabia and Iran, which was our major ally, on the Persian Gulf because the Iranians had claims or eyes, at least, on some of the Gulf states and off shore islands.

WRAMPELMEIER: There was a problem. Some of it was worked out in a median line agreement at the end of the '60s between Saudi Arabia and Iran to settle conflicting claims to various islands and oil fields in the Gulf. The relationship between Iran and Saudi Arabia was at least officially friendly but not warm. The Saudis, being Wahhabis, don't like Shia very much at all and there were some problems because of that but not serious state-to-state problems. I think the general thought was that the Shah is important and he is going to protect the Gulf to some extent from the Soviets and also counterbalance the Iraqis. We were concerned about what he might be trying to do on the Arab side of the Gulf. Certainly we were concerned about the Shah's action in November 1971 in seizing for Iran the islands of the Tunbs and Abu Musa that were claimed by Ras Al-Khaimah and Sharjah, respectively. But, again, there were problems between Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Abu Dhabi, too, over borders.

Q: Had the Buraimi crisis been solved?

WRAMPELMEIER: Yes, long before. It hadn't really been solved, but it was in abeyance. That is, the Saudis' effort to seize and hold parts of the Buraimi, or Al-Ain, oasis had been frustrated in the mid-'50s when British-officered Omani Scouts came in and kicked a small force of Saudi policemen out of the oasis. But the border between Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi had not been resolved and when the smaller Gulf states became independent in 1971 there was a period of several years during which the Saudis did not recognize the United Arab Emirates (UAE) because they were holding their recognition hostage to get Abu Dhabi to agree to a border agreement on Saudi terms. A border agreement was reached in 1974, but it was never published.

Q: Did we get involved in that?

WRAMPELMEIER: We didn't get involved in the border issue per se. I think we were concerned that the Saudis recognize the UAE and help stabilize the situation, but we didn't get involved in the nitty gritty of the issue.

Our focus in the early '70s was on the emergence of the nine Gulf states and Oman as independent actors and on the question of our diplomatic presence there. We started off with accrediting our ambassador in Kuwait, William Stoltzfus, also to Bahrain, Qatar, the UAE, and Oman. Up to that time, Consulate General Dhahran had been responsible for our consular affairs in these emirates. About 1972 we also established small diplomatic posts under chargés in Bahrain, Doha, Abu Dhabi and Muscat. That worked for maybe a year or so until it became obvious that each of these countries wanted to have a resident U.S. ambassador. By 1974 we were appointing resident ambassadors to all the Gulf states. Mike Sterner was our first ambassador in Abu Dhabi. The late Joe Twinam, who had been desk officer for the Gulf states in ARP, went out to Bahrain as ambassador. Bob Paganelli was sent as ambassador to Qatar and Bill Wolle to Muscat.
Q: I would like to stop at this point, but before we leave this desk job, I would like to talk about two other issues and you might have something else you would like to talk about. One was the reaction after the 1973 war, the October war on Saudi Arabia which changed the equation a bit. The other one was your impression of the interest or lack thereof in Saudi Arabia on the part of Nixon and Kissinger. We will pick this interview up next time with those issues.

WRAMPELMEIER: Okay.

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Q: Today is May 3, 2000. Brooks, shall we talk about those two issues?

WRAMPELMEIER: I was talking about my six years as the Saudi Arabian desk officer from 1968-74. I had mentioned that for the first several years the largest part of my time was spent on political/military matters. We were getting into a whole range of new military programs with the Saudis. In addition to the Saudi Navy Expansion Program and

the National Guard Modernization Program which I discussed earlier, there was something called the Saudi Arabian Mobility Program. We were helping the Saudi Army to develop an ordnance capability to repair and maintain their vehicles and other military equipment. We then developed a program for the Saudi Coast Guard and Frontier Force in which the U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. contractors helped to improve that branch of the Ministry of Interior. Through the USAID Public Safety Program, we provided training to some Saudi police officers. We were also getting involved in a program to upgrade the Saudi Air Force from F-86 to F-5 aircraft. Given my several years experience in political-military things I went along as the State Department member on a Department of Defense team sent in February, 1972 to examine Kuwait's military needs and to prepare recommendations for possible U.S. military sales and training to that Emirate. So, that was one big part of what I was doing.

Q: When you look at it, Saudi Arabia was on the periphery of a pretty rough neighborhood. You had Iraq – at that time Iran wasn't a factor – Israel and a lot of space and money. What were we thinking about? What was the military supposed to be doing?

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, I think a lot of this was tied to being as helpful as we felt we could be to the Saudis. Of course, some of it was linked to the 1971 British withdrawal from their traditional military responsibilities in the Gulf. We were concerned that Saudi Arabia have the military capability to assure not only its own security but also to provide some measure of security to the smaller Gulf Arab states which were coming out from under British protection. Of course, I think at the time that we felt that Iran, being larger, stronger and more militarily developed was going to be the key pillar, but we also were hoping that Saudi Arabia could begin to also play some of that role.

One of the other things was that the British had left South Yemen as well and it became independent under a Marxist regime that was seen as threatening not only by Saudi Arabia and Oman, but also by the non-communist regime in North Yemen. The problem became how do we get the Saudis, who were not all that friendly to republican North Yemen, to begin to assist the North Yemenis against the South Yemenis. There was also the insurrection in Dhofar where South Yemen was aiding tribal elements seeking to wrest Dhofar away from the control of the Sultan of Oman.

Q: Was there any concern that we might over-militarize the Saudis and they might thrust southward, eastward, etc.?

WRAMPELMEIER: No, I don't think so because the Saudis had so few military people and their degree of training and trainability was such that we felt it was going to be a long time before the Saudis would be a threat to anybody except their smaller neighbors. There was also on the part of the Israelis some concern that the Saudis not be given such a strong air capability that, in the event of another Arab-Israeli war, the Saudis would constitute an additional military threat against which Israel would need to defend itself.

Another thing we dealt with began in the late '60s with the changing balance between the oil-producing countries and the international oil companies. The U.S. was becoming increasingly dependent on imported foreign oil and there occurred a whole set of

circumstances in Europe and in Libya which enabled OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) suddenly to impose new pricing arrangements on their oil concession holders. Rivalry between the Libyans and the Gulf oil producers led to several rounds of oil price hikes. The Shah of Iran was one of the leaders in this. Then the OPEC governments began to put pressure on the American and other international oil companies to agree to what they called participation, that is, to surrender a portion of their concessions to the host governments. This was an issue that also came to involve the U.S. Government as well as the oil companies for we were concerned that the latter's concession rights not be violated or that disputes over participation lead to interruptions in the supply of oil.

I had taken that trip to Kuwait in 1972 and on my way back I visited Saudi Arabia. In Jeddah, I participated in a meeting that took place between our ambassador, Nick Thatcher, his DCM, Hume Horan, and Rashad Far'aoun, the advisor to King Faisal. Nick told Far'aoun why we were concerned about this push for participation and our feeling that, while it was between the Aramco owner companies and the Saudi government as to what the future of the concession would be, we certainly did not want to see this done by fiat in a way that would then complicate the whole oil picture. Also, we did not want there to be a problem of American companies having their property in effect seized without proper compensation, since that could impact on our overall relations with the Kingdom.

Meanwhile, the Saudis were beginning to hint that the future supply of oil might depend also on progress being made toward a reversal of the results of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. At that time, the Israelis had captured the Old City of Jerusalem, with its important Muslim shrines, and all of the West Bank. As guardian of the Holy Places in Mecca and Medina, this was a matter of considerable distress to King Faisal. A 1970 initiative by Secretary of State William Rogers had failed to break the impasse over implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 242, which called for the restoration of occupied territories to Arab control. On a State visit to Washington in May 1971 Faisal expressed to President Nixon his deep concerns about continued Israeli occupation of Jerusalem and warned that this situation was providing the Soviet Union with opportunities to expand its influence in the Middle East. In the spring of 1973, Faisal sent the Saudi Oil Minister, Ahmad Zaki Yamani, to Washington to warn us that if there was another Arab-Israeli war, Saudi Arabia might be compelled to use its oil as a weapon on the Arabs' behalf. Oil would then become a political issue. We didn't take this warning as seriously as perhaps we should have. Of course, when the war did come, the October War of 1973, Faisal ordered Aramco to cut its exports by five percent and embargoed shipments of oil to the U.S. and to the Netherlands, because the Netherlands was the major oil depot in Europe from where oil was rerouted to many other countries. On the other hand Faisal allowed oil products to continue to go to the U.S. forces fighting communism in Vietnam.

At this point Faisal certainly got Washington's attention. Up to then Henry Kissinger, as National Security Adviser, had not taken a great deal of interest in Saudi Arabia. He had met with Saudi visitors like the King and Prince (now King) Fahd, then the Minister of Interior and Second Deputy Prime Minister, who had come to Washington in November

1969. (We had invited Fahd because we felt it was useful to develop some rapport with this man who might some day become king.) Kissinger participated in those talks but otherwise Saudi Arabia did not loom that high on his or Nixon's horizon beyond the Kingdom's role as the second pillar of our policy in the Gulf.

With the 1973 war and with the oil embargo, Saudi Arabia was soon included on Kissinger's diplomatic shuttle visits to the Middle East. A great deal of effort on his part was made to try to persuade the Saudis to lift the embargo. The Saudis, however, insisted that he first achieve the disengagement of Egyptian and Israeli forces in Sinai and then begin the process toward an Arab-Israeli political settlement. Eventually Faisal agreed to lift the embargo in the spring of 1974.

It was now clear, however, that the U.S. needed to do much more to demonstrate to the Saudis that its interests, and ours, would be advanced by a closer bilateral relationship. In early 1974, a National Security Study Memorandum (NSSM) recommended, inter alia, that we strengthen and expand our ties with the Kingdom in a variety of ways. We accordingly offered to create two high-level U.S.-Saudi joint commissions. An economic commission under the Secretary of the Treasury and his Saudi counterpart would look at all sorts of ways that we could help the Saudi government to modernize and improve its administrative capabilities. The other joint commission under the Secretary of Defense and the Saudi Minister of Defense and Aviation was a security committee that would assess Saudi Arabia's security needs and develop bilateral military programs and joint exercises. Part of that program, obviously, included the overbuilding of certain Saudi facilities like airfields which became so important to us during the 1991 Gulf War.

Prince Fahd came to Washington in May 1974 and signed these two agreements with Secretary Kissinger.

Q: This overbuilding was done on purpose?

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, I think the idea was that the Saudis would say, "Look, we want to go first class." Our military would then say, okay this is what we would do if we were doing it for ourselves. We would build a runway of such and such length, etc. The Saudis said that was just what they wanted. I can't really say that someone sat down and said that was a great idea because we might use that facility sometime, but I certainly think it was in the back of somebody's mind. It was not something that we sat down and discussed with the Saudis. We were going to give them a first-class military capability to the extent that we could and help train their people to the point where they could operate it or at least engage contractors could do that for them. This was basically an enhancement of the military and technical assistance relationship that had existed since the early 1950s.

Q: Did you see a change in the Saudi outlook after the 1973 war in which the Egyptians had at least given a jolt to the Israelis?

WRAMPELMEIER: I think there was. I think first of all the Saudis were much happier

with Sadat than they had been with Nasser. They did not see Sadat as an Arab nationalist threat in the same way they had seen Nasser. I believe Faisal also was aware that Sadat was becoming increasingly disenchanted with the political and military support he got from the Soviets. The Saudis were therefore prepared to take a more active role in pushing for some sort of Arab-Israeli settlement that met minimum Arab demands. The Saudis were also using organizations like the Islamic Conference Organization and the Islamic Summit to rally international support for the Egyptian and Syrian positions. I think it was a period of much closer Egyptian-Saudi relations. The Yemen problem was behind them. A greater concern for the Saudis was that as long as the Palestinian issue existed their relationship with the U.S. was vulnerable to criticism from Arab radicals, Palestinians and others. If the Middle East conflict could be resolved then they and we could go ahead and cooperate with less friction and criticism. But I don't think the Saudis were prepared to take the lead on Arab-Israel issues.

One other memorable, if tragic, event of this period was the murder in Khartoum of our Ambassador, Cleo Noel, and his deputy Curt Moore. Black September, a Palestinian terrorist organization, had seized Noel and Moore during a party at the Saudi Arabian embassy in Khartoum and were holding them hostage. Word of this reached the Department about lunchtime and, because the Saudi embassy was involved, the Secretariat promptly alerted the Arabian Peninsula Office. I immediately went to the Secretariat and soon found myself on a task force headed by Armin Meyer. I began keeping the log of messages and other actions and, over several days, spent most of my time on the task force. Eventually, President Nixon announced that the U.S. Government would not deal with terrorists. Those of us on the task force felt that this announcement had probably sealed the doom of our two colleagues and that proved to be the case, although there is some question whether the kidnappers ever intended to let them live.

Q: In 1974 you left the Arabian Peninsula desk.

WRAMPELMEIER: I left the Arabian Peninsula Office and the Arab world and went to Africa. The reason I went to Zambia was that I was scheduled to go to Abu Dhabi as DCM but Henry Kissinger had come up with his Global Personnel Policy, or GLOP. Suddenly I was told I could go anywhere in the world except the Arab part. I started desperately looking around for a job, but this was May and I was supposed to be transferred in the summer, so most of the jobs were already filled. I eventually came up with Zambia which didn't involve any language training as the main language is English and they had schooling for my sons. So, we went to Zambia for two years.

Q: So you were in Zambia from 1974 to 1976.

WRAMPELMEIER: Right. Jean Wilkowski was the ambassador and Harvey Nelson was the DCM when I arrived. I was the sole political officer. It was not a very large embassy. I think there were 15 Americans total. One of my principal duties there was to maintain liaison with the so-called freedom fighter movements from other southern African countries. In the spring of 1976 the then DCM, Peter Lord, had to return to Washington and I became acting DCM for the remainder of my tour.

Q: It was called a front line state.

WRAMPELMEIER: It was called a front line state because you had all of these exiles from Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa, Mozambique and Angola in Zambia and they all had offices there. Increasingly we became involved in efforts to find some sort of agreement between the African nationalist movement in Rhodesia and Ian Smith's minority rule. The climax, of course, was Henry Kissinger's safari to Zambia and other African countries in the spring of 1976 during which he made a statement indicating that the United States was going to take a much greater interest in Africa than it had before. The Secretary's speech certainly delighted Kenneth Kaunda, the President of Zambia. I think it did lead to a more activist U.S. role on the Rhodesian question. After I left Jean Wilkowski was replaced by Steve Low (who also grew up in Wyoming, Ohio). Steve spent a good part of his tour as Ambassador to Zambia on airplanes traveling between Washington, London, Lusaka, Harare, Cape Town and Pretoria trying to negotiate, along with the British, some way in which the white minority leadership in what is now Zimbabwe would give way to a government based on majority rule.

Other than that there wasn't much going on. Zambian internal politics were dominated by the Zambian United National Independent Party (UNIP) and Kaunda dominated the UNIP.

Q: This was 1974-76. What was our reading on Kaunda then?

WRAMPELMEIER: Kaunda was a very charismatic figure. I think he was a man who had a genuinely humane character. His political philosophy was what he called humanism in which he was looking for the betterment of his people. The problem was that just about the time I arrived, the price of copper, Zambia's principal export, plummeted. This was virtually the end of the Vietnam war and as we didn't need as much copper anymore; this caused the price to fall. In addition, the 1974 Portuguese revolution had led to the independence of Mozambique and Angola followed by further civil strife in both countries. This complicated Zambia's ability to ship out its copper. The normal transit lines east and west were interrupted. Furthermore, the Zambians for political reasons had decided in 1973 to close their border with Rhodesia and they could no longer ship their copper by rail through Rhodesia to ports in South Africa. So along with falling copper prices they were having trouble getting their copper to market. The Chinese were building the TanZam railroad and we had helped to build a road up to Dar es Salaam, about 900 miles away, but still they couldn't get much copper out that way, and the railroad wasn't finished until about the time I left in 1976.

So Zambia just didn't have any money. One indication of their economic problem: when I arrived, the principal Lusaka book store was full of books, mostly British, but when I left it had only local newspapers and the complete works of Lenin in English that had been donated by the Soviets. Almost everything had to be imported. You couldn't get soap, you couldn't get tea, and if you could get tea you couldn't get coffee. As my children would say, the only thing that there was no shortage of in Zambia was shortages.

I think Kaunda had a very, very difficult time trying to provide some sort of economic satisfaction to a growing number of people and there were occasional food riots.

Q: Did Kaunda brook opposition?

WRAMPELMEIER: No. Not really. The people who were serious threats to him were put in jail for one reason or another. It was not a cruel regime. People weren't hanged or disappeared, but if individuals were deemed political threats he found some way to push them off to the side and the most serious threats to him ended up in jail.

Q: So there was no real political activity. What was your impression of the representation of the freedom fighters?

WRAMPELMEIER: Some were fairly good. I got to know Sam Nujoma, head the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) and first President of independent Namibia. He was impressive, I think. SWAPO people were a bit unsure of their relationship with us. Shortly before Secretary Kissinger was due to visit Zambia, Ambassador Wilkowski suggested to the Department that when he came he might want to talk to Nujoma. I got a 4:30 am phone call from Bill Schaufele, then Assistant Secretary for Africa, who had been unable to arouse the Ambassador. Schaufele said that the Secretary did not wish to consider that suggestion and to tell the ambassador not to press it. I think that Kissinger was hoping to enlist the South Africans' cooperation on the Rhodesian problem. South Africa at that time controlled Namibia and Kissinger did not want to do something at which they would take offense. Shortly thereafter, Senator Charles Percy, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, came through Lusaka with his wife. I had arranged for them to meet some SWAPO people at my residence one evening. In the course of this meeting Senator Percy said, "Well, are you going to be meeting with Kissinger when he comes?" The SWAPO men obviously had not been briefed on this and sort of hemmed and hawed. Percy said, "Well, if the only problem is that you have not yet received an invitation, I'm giving you an invitation." I was sitting there sweating and wondering what I should say when Mrs. Percy broke in and said, "Chuck you can't do that." Well, I think SWAPO as well was uneasy about the idea of such a meeting, so none occurred.

The Secretary did want to meet with the Rhodesian African nationalist leaders. At that time, Joshua Nkomo led one group, the Zimbabwe African Nationalist Union (ZANU), composed primarily of Ndebele tribesmen, while Ndabiningi Sithole led the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) dominated by members of the Shona tribe. A third leader, Methodist Bishop Abel Muzorewa, had attempted to form a compromise leadership and ended by creating still a third faction. The three were invited to meet with Kissinger but Sithole backed out and so did Muzorewa, so only Nkomo met with the Secretary in Lusaka.
I called a few times on an elderly couple in the ANC's Lusaka office but I didn't meet any of the South African nationalist leaders and I had no contact with the military wing of the African National Congress (ANC). And, who else? Oh, the Angolans. I did see some of the UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) people and in fact

UNITA's leader, the late Jonas Savimbi, came to lunch with the ambassador a few times. At that point we saw Savimbi as a counterweight to what we perceived as a pro-Soviet Marxist regime in Angola. We were therefore interested in talking to Savimbi. I found him a charismatic individual but clearly no democrat.

Q: We talk about democracy, but did you see much commitment to democracy and did it really make much sense during the early emergence period of African states?

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, one saw a great deal of lip service given to democracy, but I didn't see much evidence of it. In Zambia, the party (UNIP) dominated political life and I don't think elections within the party were all that free. And certainly the same was true in the freedom movements. Their object was to achieve independence and/or majority rule and they did not expect this was going to be done by free and open elections. Such elections were not going to be held by the colonial or white minority regimes and therefore their objective was to develop enough of a military threat plus political power to try to get the U.S. and Brits to put the pressure on the Rhodesians and South Africans.

One of the odd little things that I was responsible for became apparent shortly after my arrival in Lusaka. I opened a desk drawer and found a full box of what I first thought were brightly colored balloons. I then learned that I was the post's family planning programs officer and these colorful balloon-like things were condoms to take around to organizations involved in family planning. At one point I even ran a small police training program which came at the tail end of the AID public security program. Another task, and one that helped gain me entrée into the various African nationalist movement offices, was to coordinate the granting of scholarships to southern African refugees to study in the U.S.

We had a number of official and Congressional visitors because of the growing interest in Rhodesia and Angola. They all tended to arrive on Friday night and leave on Monday morning and they wanted to see the president over the weekend, which after a while was a bit of a strain. We started dropping hints, couldn't somebody come during the week? It primarily had to do with the plane schedules, however.

In the spring of 1976 we had a visit from Senator Frank Church, accompanied by Dick Moose, Mrs. Moose, and another Senate staffer. Ambassador Wilkowski clashed with Church and Moose when they tried to exclude her from their meeting with President Kaunda. She attended anyway and the visit ended with bruised feelings on both sides. Church was concerned that the Administration was secretly supporting Savimbi in the Angola civil war and later succeeded in getting legislation passed to curtail such activities.

Other than that I found it a very interesting time and certainly enjoyed the experience of seeing a Kissinger visit which was second only to a presidential one in terms of the amount of logistics involved. There were three aircraft, one for his armored car. He had Secret Service protection and a crowd of correspondents came with him.

Q: He was Secretary of State.

WRAMPELMEIER: Yes, he was Secretary of State at this time. It was really quite an enterprise. We had so few people at post that we had to draft officers in from posts all over Africa to help out. One officer did nothing but stand in the courtyard of the embassy and direct the taxis we had shuttling between the embassy and the hotels.

Q: Did Kissinger stick with his staff or was he working on a different level?
WRAMPELMEIER: He was working on his own level. We dealt with his staff, who could be difficult enough on occasions. The visit however went fairly well. The Zambians wanted Kissinger to fly down to Livingstone to see the Victoria Falls and be photographed looking across the Zambezi River into Rhodesia. Kissinger agreed to go down. However, his plane, a 707, was too big for Livingstone's small airport and he had to fly down in a Zambian plane. When the party got down there the local governor had arranged all kinds of dancing, dinner and a boat ride. So they boarded a boat and went out on the river above the falls. Someone said, "Oh, look over there," and everybody went to one side of the boat which was in danger of tipping over until Ambassador Wilkowski yelled, "Oh, everybody get back," and got everyone back to the center of the boat. We learned later that neither the Secretary nor Mrs. Kissinger liked small boats, but nobody had told the Zambians. It was, I think, a highly successful visit. It somehow or other brought Africa up on the sights of Washington where it had not been very high to that point.

In July 1976 I left Lusaka, came back to Washington, and spent a year of university training in Middle East studies at SAIS (School of Advanced International Studies). It was very worthwhile and I had a good time.

Q: To go back to Lusaka, I take it AIDS was not a problem.

WRAMPELMEIER: Sexual diseases were common because of the promiscuity in the population but AIDS had not yet appeared.

Q: And the trucking patterns, too, I understand.

WRAMPELMEIER: I think so. But largely it was a society where a great deal of promiscuity was accepted although it was also a very strong church-going society. There was some concern about sexual disease. Ultimately, one of Kaunda's sons died of AIDS, but that was years later.

We didn't get around much in Zambia. I never got to a game park, for example, except for a little one outside of Livingstone.

Q: Were the copper mines run by Zambians by this time?

WRAMPELMEIER: They were parastatals run by Zambian Government-owned companies and many of the officials were Zambians. But most of the senior miners, the

more experienced miners, tended to be South Africans, Rhodesian, or British. There was always a bit of racial tension there. These were people who were key because there were not enough Zambians, blue collar types, who had training or experience to replace them. Many of these people were not friendly to Africans. The Zambians were always concerned that there not be any parties on the night of the anniversary of the unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) by the white minority regime in Rhodesia. If any of the white miners had a party that night it was suspected that they were celebrating UDI. Once, as part of this humanistic program, Kaunda announced that he was going to nationalize the two private medical clinics – the one in Lusaka and the other in the Copper Belt, which were used primarily by the expatriates – because they charged money. He had to reverse that decision because so many of the foreign white workers were going to quit if they could not have access to the clinics. They would have been required instead to go to the government hospitals which they didn't trust and consequently were not going to stay. Kaunda had to pull back from that decision and, while the clinics were nominally nationalized, they were allowed to operate as before so that the same standards could be maintained. The government hospitals, unfortunately, were not all that good. There were always long lines of people waiting to get in and be seen. I think Kaunda had his heart in the right place but he just didn't have the resources to maintain the sort of welfare state that he wanted to run.

Q: Were we making any effort to promote either democracy or a capitalist economy?

WRAMPELMEIER: I wouldn't say that. We made some effort to try to help them with their transportation system so that they could get their copper to market. That was one of our principal USAID programs. We didn't have a USAID mission which is why I became family planning officer and public safety officer and a couple of other odd jobs. We didn't have a big AID program at all. It was these relatively small things. I think the program to try to get some trucks in to take things from the Copper Belt up to Dar es Salaam was probably our biggest USAID program and that ran into all sorts of trouble. Eventually most of the trucks were sidelined due to a contract which didn't work out. I can't remember what money we actually put into it, but in general it was an area where we were not spending very much money.

Q: Did we have concerns about the Soviet Union, Communist China and North Korea in messing around there?

WRAMPELMEIER: Yes, they were certainly there. The Soviets, the Chinese, the North Koreans and most of the Eastern Bloc were represented in Zambia. There was some reason why the Zambians felt they might be a little more compatible politically because they were much more outspoken about their support for southern African national movements. The Chinese, of course, were building the railway to Dar es Salaam. I don't remember the Soviets doing much or recall whether any of the Eastern European countries had big programs. Some of the Western Europeans, especially the UK and the Scandinavians, had programs mostly for providing technical assistance.

Q: When you left there in 1976, what was your view of Africa?

WRAMPELMEIER: My feeling was that I wanted to get back where I could have sand between my toes. Zambia was interesting and I'm glad I served there because I really should have seen something of the world besides the Middle East. I thought things looked like they might be moving in Africa, but I really didn't have that much of a sense of Africa as a whole. Certainly things that were going on in West Africa were not all that encouraging, Ethiopia had a revolution in 1974 and Angola was falling apart. In general I had the feeling that socialist regimes in Africa were not working very well at all, which was not encouraging for their prosperity and development.

Q: In my interviews I have heard people express this and probably next to AIDS, the greatest blight on much of Africa was the London School of Economics. That includes India, too. They cranked out these people trying to put statism into these countries.

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, Kaunda's model was President Nyerere in Tanzania, a product I believe of the University of Edinburgh. Obviously Nyerere wasn't doing all that well in Tanzania and Zambian humanism wasn't doing well either. But certainly Tanzania was a better model than some. However, it was not the sort of model that the IMF (International Monetary Fund) would have approved of in terms of making an effective national economy. The Zambians always felt a little self-conscious that they didn't have a distinctive national dress like the West Africans' very colorful robes and head dresses. Most Zambians dressed in Western clothing because I think the native dress up until the British arrived in the late 19th Century was lion skins, which were no longer chic, much less available. Tourism was an important factor for the Zambian economy, but not as many tourists came to Zambia as visited Kenya or South Africa. There were two major game parks which people did visit but they had limited facilities. Other than the game parks and Victoria Falls, there wasn't much reason to come to Zambia for tourism. So much of the Zambian economy was run by people on contract. The airline was run by Alitalia and later by Aer Lingus. There were a few other Western companies that were involved in some way or other in helping them.

Q: Back in Washington when you were studying at SAIS, what was the thrust of the courses you were taking?

WRAMPELMEIER: I was required by FSI, which was in charge of my program, to take courses on the Middle East or which had some sort of Middle East connection. I took a course on Middle East economics, and one on the Middle East generally taught by John Duke Anthony. I wrote a paper on the UAE (United Arab Emirates), which I thought would be helpful because my ongoing assignment was to Abu Dhabi. I also took a course on North Africa, an area of the NEA Bureau in which I had never served. I had a course on the military in politics, taught by Riordan Roett. He is primarily a South American scholar but he included a segment on the Algeria and Turkish armies in politics and I wrote a paper on the Yemeni army which I thought would make the course acceptable to the FSI. I also had a course on the structure of the oil industry and another on international business generally, which I thought were well taught by Ted Moran who later worked on State's Policy Planning Staff.

I went to SAIS with some trepidation because I thought I would be competing with all these bright and mentally focused kids 20 years younger than I and that they would eat me alive. I found instead that many of them were so busy at jobs to earn their tuition money to stay in SAIS or to prepare for their Arabic language classes that they didn't have time to do all the course reading. I didn't have to worry about tuition or language and had plenty of time to do the reading and write the papers. For me, it turned out to be a very nice respite. It was ironic, of course, that my wife had been in the SAIS Class of 1957 so of course we show up on the SAIS alumni register 20 years apart. I'm sure many people have assumed that she was my mother.

Q: The Israeli-Arab problem sort of permeates anything about the Middle East. Was this true at SAIS?

WRAMPELMEIER: It was there. I did monitor a course on the Arab-Israeli situation taught by a former CIA analyst. Students were divided between Arabs and pro-Arabs on the one hand and pro-Israelis on the other. I finally stopped auditing it because it didn't seem to be going anywhere. I do think the Arab-Israeli dispute was a factor. The SAIS Middle East Studies Department was run by Arabs or pro-Arab sympathizers. Some of the people who were there at the time later came into the government. Howard Teischer, well known for his involvement in the Iran-Contra affair, worked for Bud McFarlane at State and at the NSC. Margaret McKelvey is an office director in the Population, Refugee and Migration Bureau and Stanley Roth became the Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. When I was at SAIS Roth was the only student I met who expressed interest in joining the Foreign Service. Instead, he went to work for Congressman Stephen Solarz and came into the administration from Capitol Hill.
Other SAIS classmates were Kevin Taecker, who was Treasury Attaché in Riyadh in the late 1980s, and Ellen Laipson who has worked on the Middle East at the NSC and with the CIA.

Q: So then, in 1977, you got to the United Arab Emirates.

WRAMPELMEIER: Finally I got to the UAE. Francois M. Dickman, who was my office director for the last two years I was in ARP in the mid-'70s, was by this time ambassador in Abu Dhabi. I spent three years in Abu Dhabi as DCM and found it a fascinating place. The United Arab Emirates at that time was only about five years old as a federation. There were still a lot of growing pains. Tensions persisted between Abu Dhabi, which had the money and was essentially financing the federation and who's ruler, Sheikh Zayed, was and still is the president of the federation, and some of the other emirates, particularly Dubai, whose Sheikh Rashid was pushing for a more independent role. Dubai's oil production was declining but Rashid had invested in other projects that brought in a steady income. Although Rashid's son Muhammad was nominally federal Minister of Defense, Dubai kept control of its own army, under a British contract commander. There was often there was a good deal of strain between Dubai and Abu Dhabi over the role that Dubai would play within the federation. Most of the other rulers had little choice because they didn't have the money to go their own way. This included

the rulers of Sharjah, Ras al Khaimah, Umm al Qaiwain, Ajman and Fujairah. While they were not always happy with Abu Dhabi's domination of the federation they really were dependent upon Abu Dhabi's wealth.

Q: Now, the border problems. The Buraimi business was settled by this time.

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, it hadn't been settled entirely but it was over as an issue. It wasn't until 1974 that Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi even established relations. I think it involved on the part of Abu Dhabi the giving up of some territory. There was an agreement that was never published and I don't know that anyone has officially published any maps showing what was agreed to in 1974. It also got tied up with where the Omani border would be because it was an area where Saudi Arabian, Abu Dhabi and Omani claims all came together. But, as a main issue of dispute Buraimi was over. The Saudis tended to look down on the Abu Dhabians. I remember raising with some UAE army officers why they sent their people for training in the U.S. or in Europe. Why not send them to Saudi Arabia? They replied that the Saudis didn't pay much attention to the UAE military and even asked why the UAE needed an army since Saudi Arabia could protect them. That was a minor symptom of what was going on between them. But, it was not a major factor. There was a Saudi ambassador in Abu Dhabi at this point.

I would say that, while I tried to follow inter-emirate politics, our primary focus was on what was going on in the Gulf. While I was in Abu Dhabi the Iranian revolution occurred and that had an impact.

Q: You have seven different entities. How did you deal with them?

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, the ambassador did travel occasionally to visit the other emirates, but most of our dealings obviously were with the federal government in Abu Dhabi - the Foreign Ministry, Ministry of Finance, Petroleum Ministry, etc. We had a consulate in Dubai and the consul there, Charles Currier, spent a great deal of time visiting the various emirates up there. I would go up occasionally to join him on calls on the rulers of the smaller emirates. Also, I used to run what I called "the seven hour, seven emirate tour." Starting in Dubai I would drive visitors to all seven emirates, ending up in Abu Dhabi by nightfall.

Q: All the way across...

WRAMPELMEIER: All the way up to Ras al-Khaimah on the Gulf side and then down to Fujairah on the Indian Ocean side and back across the peninsula. There was a good highway so I would take visitors on this trip. We did see a growing interest on the part of the Abu Dhabians in getting technical assistance from the United States. We had no military attaché so I became the military assistance officer as well as DCM and political officer. I even flew up to European Command headquarters at Stuttgart, Germany, for a week-long military assistance training program. We tried to develop an undergraduate pilot training program for the UAE air force, but there weren't enough pilots with sufficient English proficiency to come to the States and enter this program. Many UAE

air cadets eventually went to Italy where they were first trained in English by the Italians.

We had a number of naval visits in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. I got to know the Middle East Force admirals very well, especially Sam Packard who had married a woman from Cincinnati.

We also, of course, followed closely what was happening in the UAE oil industry. Although the federation had a petroleum minister, each emirate with oil largely handled directly relations with its foreign concession holders.

Q: How did they respond? Obviously Abu Dhabi was pretty small. From whom were they taking their lead?

WRAMPELMEIER: The Saudis were the ones who set the pace in oil at this time simply because they had so much of it and they would raise and lower the production rate and set the price of oil accordingly. Saudi policy, under Petroleum Minister Ahmad Zaki Yamani, had been to make sure that OPEC held together. Yamani's policy was that the Saudis, as the OPEC member with the largest surplus production capacity, would act as OPEC's swing producer, raising or lowering its production as needed to maintain OPEC's agreed production levels. That changed when Hisham Nazir replaced Yamani. Nazir's view was that the Saudis should do what they could to hold on to and even to expand their share of the world oil market. They would therefore be willing to increase their production if that would improve their market share. That policy lasted well into the ‘90s.

Mohammed Otaiba, who was the UAE federal oil minister as well as director of oil matters for the emirate of Abu Dhabi, was concerned principally with making sure that each oil concession holder produced as much oil as it could. There were always rumors of Abu Dhabi cheating on its OPEC-assigned quotas. It was at this time that we were spending a lot of time and high-level interest in talking to the OPEC countries because of their importance for our oil supplies and the placement internationally of their large financial reserves. We had annual visits by the Secretary of Treasury, accompanied one year by Senator Lugar and two members of the House Banking Committee. Dick Cooper, then Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, once came to talk to Otaiba and to the directors of the Abu Dhabi Fund.

Q: Where was the money going?

WRAMPELMEIER: A lot of it was coming to the U.S., especially into Treasury notes. The Kuwaitis also put a lot of money into developing Kiawah Island off South Carolina as a resort and were buying up other property in the United States as well as oil companies in Europe. The Kuwaitis formed a large retail oil company in Europe known as Q-8. Abu Dhabi and other Gulf Arabs with surplus revenues established funds to give money to less-developed African and other countries. They obviously had more money than they could easily spend at home and various investments were made abroad although not always wisely. A few years later Sheikh Zayed of Abu Dhabi found that one of his trusted employees had been embezzling money from Zayed's personal accounts

and playing the commodities market in Chicago, unsuccessfully, via a front company in Panama. Zayed had lost, I don't know, a billion dollars. Our concern was to try to keep up with what was going on in the financial and oil spheres and to be responsive to Abu Dhabi in improving the UAE's security.

The UAE did have some security concerns. Shortly after I arrived in mid-1977 a Black September gunman tried to assassinate the visiting Vice President of Syria at the Abu Dhabi airport. He missed and instead killed the Under Secretary of the UAE Foreign Ministry, a very nice man named Sa'id Ghobash. From then on there was a greater concern in Abu Dhabi about security issues.

Another incident involved a Lufthansa airliner that had been hijacked by Palestinians and taken to Dubai where it stayed for a couple of days. We learned there was at least one U.S. citizen on board. Our consul in Dubai, who had good contacts with the Dubai authorities, arranged for me to go up into the control tower and monitor the negotiations with the hijackers. The UAE Minister of Defense, Sheikh Muhammad bin Rashid, who was also in charge of Dubai security, handled the negotiations. I thought he managed the negotiations very well. At the end Sheikh Muhammad was prepared to prevent the plane from taking off by shooting out the tires. However, he was told by UAE president Sheikh Zayed to let the plane depart. It went to Aden, where the pilot was killed, and then on to Somalia where the Germans were able to board it and rescue the passengers. That was a very interesting illustration of how effectively the UAE could hand security situations like that.

Q: Were we thinking about using that area as a strategic point at this time - stockpiling, etc.?

WRAMPELMEIER: Dubai was building this huge port at Jebal Ali. It was like scooping out a giant swimming pool in the middle of a desert. We obviously recognized its potential value to our navy but we saw it primarily as a significant commercial project aimed at capturing much of the transit trade in the Gulf region. However, I don't think we were thinking at that time that we were going to get any sort of naval storage facilities there. That came later.

Q: Well, let's talk about the Iranian business, both externally and internally. There were a significant number of Iranians in the area.

WRAMPELMEIER: Yes. There were a number of Iranians, particularly down in the markets - the suqs - and Dubai had a very sizable Iranian community. In fact, we found out during the Iranian hostage crisis in 1979 that our consulate in Dubai was located right in the middle of the Iranian Shia district. By and large we had no problems with the local Iranians. I recall that shortly after the Iranian revolution the Shah's picture came down in a lot of the little Iranian-run market stalls and Khomeini's picture went up. Dubai, of course, depended very heavily on trade with Iran, so the ruling family and merchants were inclined to take a slightly different view of the revolution than did Abu Dhabi which was less involved commercially with Iran. I think there was certainly dismay at the

official level about what was happening just across the water, but I don't think the UAE leadership saw the Iranian revolution as threatening to its interests as it seemed to Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, for example. I think Abu Dhabi was somewhere in the middle on this.

Q: Did we see a whole different equation? Our concern was obviously with oil but all of a sudden were we seeing a sort of hostile Iran populating the entire northern coast?

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, yes, we certainly saw the end of our Two Pillar policy and realized that we could no longer rely on Iran to share our security interests in the region. The British had already left the Gulf and we saw that in the future we would have to play some greater role in the area. The difficulty was that the Gulf states themselves wanted us to play it from over the horizon and did not really want to see a major U.S. military presence in the area, although occasional naval visits were acceptable. We did have a DOD team that came out to look at the UAE's military requirements and eventually that led to some military sales programs but that was well into 1980s.

Q: Did we see an Iranian threat to the UAE at all?

WRAMPELMEIER: We saw Iran as a general threat but I don't recall that we felt that there was a great deal of Iranian subversion going on in the UAE. No, I don't think we felt that the UAE, itself, was threatened by Iran.

Q: After the embassy was taken over in Tehran, did that have any repercussions on how we operated?

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, of course, most of our dependents were pulled out for several months and we operated from the end of 1979 well into 1980 with fewer officers. Not only did the dependents leave but our female commercial officer was evacuated.

Q: Were there screams and yells about doing this? A number of posts wondered what the hell we were doing.

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, we felt that but we were not pressed as much as some of the other posts because we had given our share and some wives did stay. The ambassador's wife stayed and also the admin officer's wife. My wife had already gone home to deal with a schooling problem involving one of our sons. But we didn't feel particularly threatened. I remember we were put on alert at the time of the abortive hostage rescue attempt in March, 1980, but we never really felt terribly threatened. I must say that the embassy at the time, and the consulate as well, were not very secure. The embassy was in a crumbling structure on the top floor of an apartment building while the USIS office occupied a ground floor apartment. There were third-country people who lived on the floors in between and the building was open in the center at ground level. You could have driven a truck underneath and blown up the whole place. We had some police guards down there but this was before the destruction of our embassy in Beirut ushered in the age of the suicide bomber. We were not able to leave that building then because the Department did not have the money to build a new embassy building in the projected

diplomatic quarter. My successor as DCM, Pat Theros, once cabled the Department that after a rain storm he counted 58 leaks in the roof and we needed to move urgently. The Department then erected a prefab temporary building in Abu Dhabi and they were at last able to move out of that apartment building.

Q: I'm surprised that you mentioned you had a woman commercial officer who was taken out of deemed danger's way. Why?

WRAMPELMEIER: It was put in terms that those who were not essential to the operation of the embassy should leave. It was decided that the commercial officer was not essential and should go. I don't remember whether we sent any other officers back or not. I think the feeling was that we had to send somebody back. Talking later with Joe Twinam, who was then Arabian Affairs country director, I learned that Secretary Vance insisted upon the evacuation because not only had there been the Iranian hostage taking but it was followed almost immediately by the attack on and burning of our embassy in Islamabad. At that point the Secretary was no longer willing to accept NEA's assurances that the Iranian situation would not repeat itself elsewhere in the region.

The Commercial Officer, FSO Diane Markowitz, did reasonably well in the UAE. We had other women officers at the post in the consular and admin sections and they also functioned effectively in the Abu Dhabi atmosphere. There were no problems for women employees like pressures to wear the abaya or a ban on women driving as there were in Saudi Arabia.

Q: Well, then you left in 1980.

WRAMPELMEIER: I left there in the summer of 1980, took my home leave and then reported to Kuwait as DCM, again working for Fran Dickman. He had moved up from Abu Dhabi to Kuwait in 1979 and been replaced by Bill Wolle from Muscat. This was the third time that Fran was my boss.

Q: From 1980 to when?

WRAMPELMEIER: To 1982.

Q: Where is Fran Dickman now?

WRAMPELMEIER: He is retired and lives in Laramie, Wyoming where he teaches courses at the state university on the Middle East and the oil industry, makes model ships and is very active in all sorts of state historical associations. I see him occasionally when he and Margaret visit their daughter in Falls Church.

Kuwait, when I got there, was just recovering from sending everybody home in 1979. The spouses were just beginning to return to post. I was there only a about two months when Fran and Margaret Dickman went on home leave beginning in September. A few days later the Iraqi-Iran war began. We first learned about it when two American

engineers showed up in our office one morning to report that Iranian aircraft had bombed their construction camp in southern Iraq. Two American employees were killed and the bombs had destroyed the office in which all the Americans' passports were kept. Only these two men happened to have passports and Kuwait entry visas. There were a number of American workers and their dependents who wanted to get out of Iraq but were unable to cross the border because they didn't have documentation. We sent our RSO (Regional Security Officer) and a vice consul, Keith Loken, up to the Kuwait-Iraq border to see what was going on and how we could get our people to safety in Kuwait.

In the meantime, I contacted the Foreign Ministry and worked out an arrangement that we would give these Americans some sort of documentation and would be responsible for them if the Kuwaitis would allow them to cross the border. We had to assure the Kuwaitis that they wouldn't be in Kuwait for more than a day or two before we would send them on. As most of them worked for one or two U.S. employers, we were able to get the companies to charter aircraft to come pick them up in Kuwait. To deal with the documentation problem, my consular officer, Karen Reed, prepared pieces of paper stating the bearer was an American citizen, leaving the name blank. A whole bunch of these papers were photocopied and had all kinds of gold seals and red ribbons put on them to make them look extra official. We sent these laissez passer up to the border where our RSO and vice consul crossed over to Iraqi side, and wrote the names of each American on a document. The evacuees holding these documents were then driven back to the Kuwaiti border post which processed the documents and allowed the holders to enter Kuwait. Meanwhile, we rented several buses to go up to the border and bring the evacuees down to Kuwait City. We also sent our embassy nurse to the border because we weren't sure whether people were injured. We knew of at least one woman whose husband had been killed in the bombing raid and we were concerned about her physical and mental welfare. Our Admin Officer, Bill Hoffman, had secured as many hotel rooms as he could. I stayed in Kuwait City trying to organize and coordinate all this and also to keep in touch with the Department and with some of the other embassies like the British who also had people trying to cross the border. I remember calling one South Asian embassy and saying, "There are a lot of your people up there on the border and they can't get in." The response was, "Well, I'm sorry but I've got a tennis game scheduled for this afternoon. We will send somebody up this evening." I am happy to say that by midnight all of the Americans who wanted to come across had arrived in Kuwait City and were in hotel rooms or, if necessary, in hospitals. Within a day or two most of the evacuees had been flown out by chartered aircraft or regular commercial flights. The evacuation went quite well and subsequently the post received a Superior Honor Award for our efforts.

For the next two years most of our time was obviously spent on trying to follow what was happening in the Iran-Iraq war. We also reported on domestic politics. The Ruler of Kuwait had dismissed the national assembly a few years earlier and now decided to restore parliamentary life. There was an election in 1981, which we observed with some interest. It produced a mixed bag of deputies, some of whom were critical of the U.S. for one reason or another, but most of whom were supporters of the Kuwaiti government.

We did have, as a consequence of the military mission that I went on in 1972, a military

training mission in Kuwait that advised the Kuwaitis on flying and maintaining A4 fighters and some other military items they had purchased from us. We did not have many naval visits because the Kuwaitis were not enthusiastic about our navy being in their waters and attracting the Iranians' attention.

Q: One of the things I have heard is that one of the problems that came when Kuwait was taken over by the Iraqis in 1990, that in the Arab world, particularly their neighbors, despised the Kuwaitis because they were this arrogant, not very lovable people and they had really stiff shouldered us until the minute after the last minute. How did you find this?

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, the Kuwaitis did have that reputation among other Arabs. Their treatment of Palestinians and other foreign nationals in Kuwait was not of the best. These people were able to make money and Kuwait was not a bad place to live, but the Kuwaitis were rather contemptuous of them. I found it amusing that the Kuwaitis and Saudis didn't like each other. The Kuwaitis would make snide remarks about the Saudis and when I returned to Saudi Arabia several years later, I found that Saudis would make snide remarks about Kuwaitis. I think there was a feeling of smugness on the part of the Kuwaitis of "we are doing well."

We were very much concerned about Kuwaiti oil policies. We were following what they were doing in the oil business, which, of course, had been nationalized by this time except for the Getty oil operation down in the Kuwait-Saudi Neutral Zone. I think Getty had the Kuwait concession and the Japanese-owned Arabian Oil Company had the Saudi concession. Although Fran Dickman was primarily his own petroleum reporting officer, I was once again following what was happening in the oil industry and trying to keep track of Kuwait's oil income and its official investments abroad.

One important event that happened during this time was the financial disaster that struck Kuwait with the collapse of the Suq al-Manakh. This was an unauthorized stock market that had recently arisen. Companies selling their stocks on this exchange were mostly off-shore firms registered in Bahrain, Sharjah or Dubai. Many of them owned nothing more than shares of other similar companies. They were not producing anything material. One might compare it with tech stocks which are now in NASDAQ. The Suq al-Manakh just ballooned like the famous "South Sea Bubble" in the 18th century. The prices of these stocks were going up and up and everybody in Kuwait was buying them and trading them, paying for them sometimes with checks dated as much as a year in advance. There were remarkable stories. Telephones had to be set up outside Kuwait University classrooms because the students and professors were constantly going out to call their stockbrokers. Even cabinet ministers were excusing themselves from meetings to check on the market's performance. Finally, somebody tried to cash a post-dated check that bounced. When it couldn't be cashed the whole edifice began to crumble. It was a multi-million dollar disaster for the Kuwaitis in terms of how to deal with the losses. So many people owed other people money that eventually some individuals, including at least one member of the ruling family, went to jail. He was not a prominent member but nevertheless a member of the Al Sabah family. I think that was done in part to

demonstrate that the government was indeed not playing favorites in dealing with this disaster. The government ended up having to bail out a lot of people. Our economic officer, Jim Larocco, who later was our ambassador to Kuwait and more recently senior Deputy Assistant Secretary in NEA, was one of the few observers who could understand the Suq al-Manak; he did some excellent reporting on it. That disaster put a damper on the Kuwaiti spirit the last year I was there. All of a sudden Kuwaitis' belief that things were always going to get bigger and better was suddenly jolted to a halt.

We had a visit from former President Gerald Ford who came to Kuwait because he was on the board of Santa Fe International. Santa Fe International was a U.S. drilling company that had been bought by the Kuwaitis and they held a meeting in Kuwait with their new board of directors. We did not have many other remarkable visitors, I'm afraid. In 1982 we did have a visit from former Maine Senator and Secretary of State Edmund Muskie. I can't remember why he came out to Kuwait but the ambassador hosted a luncheon for him with a number of prominent Kuwaitis. We thought it would lead to a lively discussion of foreign policy and regional issues, but Muskie ended up talking mostly about growing strawberries. Incidentally, I found that he and I had something in common. As teenagers, we had both worked at summer hotels on Kennebunk Beach, Maine. The farm to which Muskie retired was about a quarter mile from my family's cottage there.

Q: Did we have somebody there or did Treasury people come up to try to direct Kuwaiti money?
WRAMPELMEIER: No, I don't think so. The Kuwaitis were pretty good at directing their own money. They were probably much more sophisticated than the Saudis were at that time in what they were doing with their surplus government funds. There were branches of U.S. stock market companies operating in Kuwait. I think we were always interested in what they were doing and at times we would try to push them in the direction of giving money to this or that under-developed country which we thought deserved help. But generally the Kuwaitis pretty much went their own way on these sort of things.

Q: What about dealing with the Kuwaiti government at that time?

WRAMPELMEIER: By and large we worked with them reasonably well on those things that were of interest to them. We had reasonably good access to most senior officials. Not so much to the Ruler, however. Sheikh Jaber was not all that accessible but we could call on the Crown Prince and most of the people in the ministries. That doesn't mean that they were always forthcoming with us. On their part, I think, there was always a reserve in dealing with the American, but we did have access.

One custom that our ambassador was careful to preserve was the practice of paying official calls on the Ruler, the Crown Prince, and certain prominent merchant families on the first two mornings of the Eid al-Fitr (at the end of Ramadan) and of the Eid al-Adha (the holiday hat marked the end of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca). By tradition, one half of Kuwait always called on the other half on the first day and vice versa on the

second. The British and American consulates had adopted this practice when they were about the only diplomatic missions in Kuwait. Hardly any diplomats other than ourselves and the Saudis and Gulf Arabs made these calls. One or two carfuls of us would go to each house in turn, congratulate the hosts on the holiday, have coffee and sweets, and chat awhile with whomever else was in the diwan.

I should mention an incident that was of some importance while I was there. An American woman had married a Saudi university professor in the U.S. They were living in Dhahran and she and he were having great difficulty in their marriage. She had decided to leave him but feared she would be unable to take with her their two children, both U.S. citizens. She knew that she could not leave him in Saudi Arabia so she persuaded him to take her and the children up to Kuwait, where he was going for a conference. As soon as he left their hotel for the conference, she jumped into a cab with the two children and came to the embassy. She explained that her husband had flown off to Switzerland on business. She had just received word that her father was dying in California and that she and the children must fly there immediately. She persuaded the consular officer to issue the children with new American passports as they had entered Kuwait on their father's Saudi passport. The consular officer then accompanied her to the Kuwaiti Immigration Office which accepted her story and issued them all exit visas even though the children had no entry visas. The consular officer next escorted them to the airport, put them on a plane and off they went to the States.

The husband returned to his hotel that evening and discovered the wife and children were gone. Somebody said they had heard the wife ask for a taxi to go to the U.S. embassy. He came to the embassy and asked where were his wife and children. The consular officer properly said, "I can't tell you that, but I can assure you that they are safe." The next thing we knew the husband had returned to Dhahran and complained to his government, which in turn complained to the Kuwaiti government. The acting Foreign Minister summoned Ambassador Dickman and read him a strong protest, saying that our embassy had abetted the kidnaping of these Saudi Muslim children from their Saudi father. The acting Foreign Minister then announced all of this to the press. Very quickly the consular officer was PNGed (declared persona non grata) and obliged to leave the country.

This occurred right in the middle of the very busy summer visa-issuing season, leaving the embassy with only a junior first-tour consular officer who was predictably overwhelmed by the added responsibilities. We soon had long lines of Kuwaiti students on the sidewalk each day waiting in the hot sun to get in. The Kuwaiti press reported, "Ah, the Americans are punishing the Kuwaiti students because we have PNGed their consular officer." I finally gave a press interview to a Kuwaiti journalist in which I said, "Look, this is the problem. This is the summer visa-issuing season for all the Kuwaitis who want to go to the U.S. as students or tourists. We only have one vice consul and he can only do so much and we don't have any place indoors for them all to wait." We did try several things including giving out numbers to the first 50 or 60 who showed up and telling the others to come back the next day, and so on. That may have helped a bit. Finally we got a temporary consul who was sent from London to help until a replacement could be assigned. I should mention that the consular officer who was PNGed did not

have her career adversely affected by this incident. She was an excellent officer and made it into the ranks of the Senior Foreign Service.

Q: Did you at some point say, "Well, you brought it on yourselves, fellows?"

WRAMPELMEIER: I didn't put it quite that way, but we did make it clear that the issue was, if we don't have a consul then I can't speed up the process in any way. I think that point got across. In fact, I understood that there were some Kuwaitis who actually said that they hoped their government would do for them what the Americans had supposedly done for one of their nationals.

By the way, this case cropped up again while I was Consul General in Dhahran. By that time the Saudi husband had come to the U.S. and kidnaped the two children back to Saudi Arabia. The wife then took a job in Saudi Arabia and remarried another American there in an effort to try to stay near the children. Eventually she had to return to the States. We finally found a way to get the ex-husband to sponsor her for a brief visit to Dhahran so she could see the children. That took a lot of effort on the part of my consular officer in Dhahran, but it seemed to work. When I left Dhahran she was coming back, I think, for a second visit. This goes to the heart of one of the problems that you have out there when marriages between Saudi men and American women don't work out.

Q: That one will never go away.

WRAMPELMEIER: That issue will never go away, that's right. The whole problem of child custody issues because of different laws, etc. is a major one that we face in the Middle East and elsewhere. I think it was interesting that the Kuwaitis were not only willing to go to bat for a Saudi on this, but also to make such a public display of their anger and annoyance with the embassy.

Q: Do you think this was calculated, that they liked to do this to the Americans?

WRAMPELMEIER: It could have been simply the action of the individual who was acting Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time. I suspect that if it had been somebody else, they might have handled the matter in a more quiet manner. Some of this may have been done to try to demonstrate to the Saudis that the Kuwaitis were going to be supportive in an issue of this sort. And, of course, the Kuwaitis themselves would be concerned that we not be doing things like this involving their own citizens, so they did want to make a point of it. Whether that was decided at a high level or was sort of a whim of an individual official I don't know.

Q: What about the Iran-Iraq wars? Kuwait is located right on the borders. Was this seen as any kind of threat? How did you view it?

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, the Kuwaitis were concerned about it in part because there was always a threat that if the Iraqi defenses collapsed, the Iranians could move into southern Iraq and therefore be in a position to threaten Kuwait. There was also an issue

over the islands of Warabah and Bubiyan, which control the entrance to Umm Qasr, by then Iraq's only access to the Gulf. The war had closed the access of Basra to the Gulf through the Shatt al-Arab waterway. The Iraqis kept saying that they wanted to station some troops on these islands to protect them from the Iranians and the Iranians were always threatening to seize the islands to keep the Iraqis from doing so. The Kuwaitis finally put some troops on the islands in order to deter either side from seizing them. The Kuwaitis felt under pressure from Iraq to provide it with financial assistance and to allow shipments to Iraq through the port of Kuwait. There was a fair amount of trade going up through Kuwait to Iraq throughout the war. It was always a matter of concern to us that the Iranians might try to block that commerce by bombing Kuwait.

Q: During this time were tankers a problem?

WRAMPELMEIER: No, it wasn't a problem when I was there.

Q: You said you had another story that took place while you were in Abu Dhabi. Let's get that in here now.

WRAMPELMEIER: I mentioned that while in Abu Dhabi we'd had a visit from Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs Dick Cooper. We had arranged for him to meet with UAE Minister of Petroleum Otaiba. However, when we showed up at his office we were told that the minister was in Al-Ain, about a hundred miles away, for his marriage to some teenage girl. After some discussion, his office said they could arrange for us to see him in Al-Ain. We all piled into a car and drove for two hours to Otaiba's house where we were greeted by a bevy of his hunting falcons. The minister was out at his wedding feast, so we waited and waited while somebody went to get him. Finally he came in and, after apologizing to Cooper for the mix-up, they had a useful chat. As we were getting up to leave, Otaiba said, "Why don't you come out to my wedding feast and you can see our young girls dance?" So, we followed him out into the desert to what looked like a huge used car lot. There were lights strung up on polls and a lot of vehicles. There were many bedouin out there doing their dances, rocking back and forth with arms over the shoulders of the person on either side. Ed Morse, who was Dick Cooper's staff aide, and I were watching the dancing. All of a sudden Ed looked around and Cooper had disappeared. Where was the Under Secretary? Otaiba had grabbed Cooper, handed him a camel stick, and shoved him into one of these lines of dancers. There was Cooper, a diminutive man, standing next to this huge bedouin with his arm wrapped around Cooper's shoulder and rocking him back and forth, back and forth. The sheepish look on Cooper's face made me wish I had my camera. Anyway, we finally rescued the Under Secretary and drove him back to Abu Dhabi.

The next morning, after a couple of other meetings, a UAE official and I accompanied Cooper and Morse to the airport to board the Gulf Air flight to Bahrain We were able to drive right up to the gangway. Cooper and Morse started to board when a stewardess came out and said, "I'm sorry, you can't come aboard; we already have six people standing in here." We were there for an hour trying to get Cooper and Morse on that plane. Finally Gulf Air managed to persuade enough other passengers to disembark and

we were able to send Cooper and Morse off to Bahrain.

Q: We will pick this up next time in 1982 in whither?

WRAMPELMEIER: Back to Washington as Deputy Director in the Office of Arabian Peninsula Affairs.

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Q: Today is May 24, 2000. Brooks, 1982 you have gone to NEA.

WRAMPELMEIER: Okay, I went back to NEA to take over the position of Deputy Director for the Office of Arabian Peninsula Affairs (ARP). There were two deputies. One dealt with Saudi Arabia and Yemen; the other one, myself, dealt with the five other Gulf Arab States. We each had two desk officers under us. The Country Director at that time was Bob Pelletreau, who in about a year moved upstairs to be a Deputy Assistant Secretary in NEA and I became the Country Director for ARP. I remained in ARP for two years.

Q: Essentially you were looking after the Gulf affairs.

WRAMPELMEIER: I was to look after Gulf state affairs. Just before I left Kuwait my wife and I took a trip down the Gulf to Manama; Doha, where I had never been to before; Abu Dhabi and Dubai; and Muscat, so that I could refamiliarize myself with the area that I was going to be responsible for. When I got back to Washington the Iraq-Iran war was still going on. There was a great deal of concern about the fact that Iran might win. There was much writing of various papers trying to develop a policy about what we would do if the Iranians did win. I think it led eventually to what was called Operation Staunch which was an effort to try to cut off arms and other military supplies to Iran in order to force the Iranians to comply with the UN Security Council resolution calling on both combatants to cease fire and negotiate an end to the conflict.

Q: What was the thinking at that time if the Iranians did beat the Iraqis? What did we think the Iranians were after and what would be the repercussions?

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, we weren't sure. The big concern in 1982 was that it looked like the Iranians might succeed in capturing and holding the Faw Peninsula on the Iraqi side of the Shatt al-Arab. From there they could seize Basra after which they could march north toward Baghdad or south towards Kuwait to try to shut off the supplies reaching Iraq through Kuwait. We had no idea what their intentions would be, but the question was what would we do if this happened. There was a great deal of planning, but I don't think it accomplished very much except, as I say, the efforts to try to curtail arms shipments to Iran. Ultimately, the Iraqis were able to recover the Faw Peninsula and that pretty much removed the danger of an Iranian incursion, at least south into the Arabian Peninsula.

We were also at this time beginning to think a lot more about our own military presence in the Gulf region. What could we do if we had to do deploy forces there? There were discussions among State, Defense and the NSC about how to enhance our military presence in the Gulf. There was a great deal of effort put into trying to negotiate with various Gulf states about access agreements, pre-positioning of materiel, and communications facilities. We did get a pre-positioning agreement with Oman. We also offered to conduct joint exercises with air and naval forces of the Gulf states and we upgraded the strength of our Navy's Middle East Force. All of this was going on during this period. Most of the Gulf states, Oman somewhat less so, were reluctant to be associated with us overtly in any way in these matters. Kuwait, ironically, was reluctant even to allow U.S. Navy ships to make port calls.

At one point an Iraqi attack on an Iranian off-shore oil derrick led to a major oil spill in the Gulf and to a great deal of concern about how the spill was going to be contained. That preoccupied us for several weeks until it turned out that most of the oil slick settled to the bottom of the Gulf and did not foul up as much of the Gulf shoreline or fisheries as people had feared.

Military sales to Saudi Arabia, of course, were continuing to be a major preoccupation. We were getting into the issues of selling the AWACs and the more advanced fighter aircraft, etc., which the Saudis wanted.

Q: Did you have the feeling that people were kind of pulling their punches? We had Khomeini on one side and Saddam Hussein on the other.

WRAMPELMEIER: This was a period when we re-established formal diplomatic relations with Iraq. We had had, of course, an interest section in Baghdad for some years. We raised our interest section to an embassy in 1984 and were looking for ways to try to conduct normal relations with the Iraqis. We were not prepared to sell them military equipment, but we were willing to look at other things that we could sell them short of that, especially food.

The Soviets as well as the French were supplying military equipment to Iraq. The Iraqis did not have a problem getting military equipment nor did they seem to be short of funds because they were getting funds from the Kuwaitis and Saudis as loans. That, of course, became an issue in 1990 when Kuwait wanted to call in its loans to Iraq and the Iraqis insisted the Kuwaitis should have given the money to them as grants.

It was certainly a period when much of what we were doing on the desk involved political/military issues of one sort or another relating to the war and to the whole idea of improving the military capability of friendly Gulf Arab states.

Q: *Did we see that northern coast of the Persian Gulf dominated by Iran who might try to cut off the Gulf of Hormuz or disputed islands?*

WRAMPELMEIER: The Shah was the one who had occupied the Tunbs and Abu Musa.

This is still today an issue between the UAE and Iran. We were concerned, obviously, over what the Iranians might be doing out on those islands and whether or not they would use them to harass traffic in the Strait of Hormuz. That was a matter of great concern to the Navy. One reason why we were particularly interested in developing better relations with Oman was that the Omanis also patrolled the Strait and we wanted to make sure that, if we had to, our ships could transit the strait. I don't think the Iranians made any particular effort to block traffic there simply because they also needed to use the Strait.

This was also a period, and I think we may have touched on it a little bit last time when you raised the question as to whether we were deliberately overbuilding military facilities in places like Saudi Arabia. I spoke with one of my former Defense colleagues whom I saw shortly after our last meeting. He said that although it was never explicit and it was all done with a wink and a nudge that, yes, we were intentionally overbuilding this type of facility against the possibility of future use by our own forces.

Q: Runways longer and thicker and that type of thing.

WRAMPELMEIER: And more facilities than might be necessary, the argument being that while you won't need it now a decade from now you might want it and it is cheaper to build it now rather than later. That in a way was how we built the facilities which of course were vital to us in Desert Storm.

Q: Let's turn to arm sales to the Saudis. I imagine you came up against AIPAC. Could you talk about your 1982-84 period?

WRAMPELMEIER: Initially, I wasn't really responsible for Saudi Arabia. Somebody else handled that. Come to think of it, in those two years we were sort of in between major arms sales. I think the AWACs issue had been resolved and we were not yet into the political debate that accompanied the major new Saudi requests for aircraft and missiles in 1985. We had, of course, a very large ongoing military sales program with the Saudis which continued throughout this period. Oftentimes these issues involved rather exotic and little-known types of radar, certain air-to-ground munitions, etc. that did not create the same public relations issues as had the AWACs and F-15s, but which still, were matters of some concern to those who knew what it was all about.

We spent a great deal of time with the Pentagon people and the political/military people in the Department trying to move these issues through the bureaucracy and Congress, when that was necessary. Again, in thinking back on this period what I particularly remember are the efforts we were making trying to get agreements on access and pre-positioning issues.

Q: When dealing with the UAE, which has seven sheikdoms which have to come to an agreement, what were our arguments for our saying it was a good thing to do this?

WRAMPELMEIER: In some respects the UAE had approached us first. I remember while I was DCM there, they had approached us because they were getting tired of

having to deal with the French or the British and wanted an alternative to dealing with the Italians. But they were not able to produce enough qualified candidates who spoke English to send to our pilot training programs. As time went on, their educational system began to produce more people with enough English to allow them to benefit from some of these programs. We began to have a lot easier time in finding ways in which we could be helpful to them. So, we did get eventually into undergraduate pilot training and into some sales of military equipment, etc. We certainly had reasonable access, in Dubai particularly, where the Navy was fascinated by this huge man-made port that had been created at Jebal Ali. Certainly by the time 1990 came around, the UAE had indeed completed several military airfields that were used by our people. During the Gulf war one of my nephews flew an F16 out of an airfield on the Abu Dhabi mainland.

Q: Did they see that the Gulf war was a menace to the UAE and that we might have a role to play later?

WRAMPELMEIER: I think the UAE was divided on this. Obviously, Abu Dhabi felt that the UAE had to support Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Dubai and Sharjah, which had reasonably large Iranian minorities and also did a lot of cross-Gulf trading, were more ambivalent about their relations with Iran. Ras Al Khaimah, of course, was very unhappy with Iran because of the Tunb islands. Sharjah, in addition to the trading business, also had to get along with Iran because they shared Abu Musa island and the offshore oil concession around it. I would say the UAE's position probably was more ambivalent than that of other Gulf Arab states.

Q: Our mind set then was looking towards protection from aggression from Iran wasn't it?

WRAMPELMEIER: That's right. In the '70s I think we saw Iraq as more of a threat, particularly because of Iraqi support for dissident movements in Bahrain and the southern Dhofar province of Oman. In those days, of course, the Shah was regarded- (end of tape)

Q: You were saying that after the Iranian revolution in 1978-79 that all changed.

WRAMPELMEIER: That all changed and we now saw Iran as being the major threat in the Gulf, particularly when Khomeini started taking off after the Saudis. Iraq now being an opponent of Iran was seen not so much as a force for stability but at least as a force that would balance the Iranian threat. That influenced very much our thinking about what should be our relations with Iraq during the period of the Iran-Iraq war. We saw U.S.-Iraqi relations improving throughout that period. Towards the end, with the Halabjah massacre where Saddam Hussein used chemical weapons against his own Kurdish population, we were beginning to have a lot of voices raised in this country as well as elsewhere about the wisdom of cooperating with Saddam.

Q: You had been away from NEA, when you came back did you see any particular change in attitude?

WRAMPELMEIER: One of my first tasks after I arrived at ARP involved the visit of the Foreign Minister of Bahrain. We had arranged for him to call on Secretary Haig. I went with him to the Seventh Floor and after a few minutes Joe Twinam, who was then a Deputy Assistant Secretary and had been our ambassador in Bahrain, came out of the Secretary's office and said, "There is a problem. Secretary Haig is downstairs announcing his resignation. So, Larry Eagleburger will be meeting the Foreign Minister in Haig's place." On the way out after this meeting, in which Eagleburger did his best to explain to the Foreign Minister what was going on, the Bahraini turned to Twinam, whom he, of course, knew quite well, and said wryly, "Next time I have a meeting with the Secretary of State please tell me in advance if he is going to resign."

It was a period when we did have a couple of State visits. Sheikh Isa, the late Ruler of Bahrain, came to Washington to see President Reagan. Sultan Qaboos of Oman also came. Those were two fairly important visits, I think, because they were efforts on our part to try to increase high-level contacts with the rulers of two of the states that we felt had great potential for future military relationships with us: Bahrain for our ability to continue using its ports in the mid-Gulf and Oman because of its location on the Strait of Hormuz and also because of its pre-positioning agreements with us. I can't remember, but I'm sure we had some important Saudi visits but those were not at the chief of state level. We usually found out about what the Saudi Arabia ambassador was up to through the press. Prince Bandar, who took up his post in Washington at this time, seemed to have the run of the NSC and the Defense Department but rarely bothered to come around and talk to us lowly persons in NEA. This was one of the differences from the time when I had been Saudi Arabian desk officer in the early 1970s. Then the ambassador, Ibrahim al-Sowayyel, would come around to NEA once a year for a briefing. That was about the only time we saw him at the Department of State.

Q: You eventually ended up as office director. Did you feel that the importance of Saudi Arabia was well drilled into everybody including our political masters both in Congress and in the White House and State Department that there was no gratuitous messing around?

WRAMPELMEIER: I think there was. Obviously we weren't necessarily always put at the top of the agenda, but I think there was a feeling that the Saudis are important and that things were going fairly well in terms of our military, political and economic relationships. This was still the period when the Saudis had a lot of money and we were concerned about it being recycled responsibly through the international financial system. By 1982 the oil market had begun to weaken and as we went through the '80s we saw that the Saudis would have less and less financial clout. Nevertheless, they were still important even if they did not have the wealth they had in the late '70s.

The visits that were made out to the area again were primarily people from the Defense Department. I am trying to remember if George Shultz ever went out. He may have, but I just don't recall. I think at the top levels of the Department the principals were more concerned with the Arab-Israeli issues.

Q: What about Yemen or the Adens or whatever, what were they at that time?

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, they were still separate. North Yemen, after a period of considerable instability, had come under the control of Abdullah Saleh who is still president. South Yemen was a Marxist state with a Soviet military presence. There were frequent periods of tension between the two Yemens which involved fighting along their border. The Saudis were giving North Yemen some military assistance, somewhat begrudgingly. The Saudis often kept the North Yemenis on a very short leash. In fact, if I remember correctly, most of our military assistance to North Yemen was channeled through the Saudis so they had considerable influence on what we gave the North Yemenis and how. It wasn't, of course, until 1990 that North and South Yemen finally got together and announced they were going to unify. Despite a civil war in 1994, Salah has managed to keep that union alive. But in 1984 Yemen was not on the top of my agenda.

Q: Were the Soviets doing anything with the Marxist regime in Yemen.

WRAMPELMEIER: I don't think they were doing a great deal, frankly, because it was expensive. They were interested, of course, in having access to Aden's naval facilities. I think that was their chief interest along with propping up a client state. By this time I don't think that they were doing much to try to expand their influence outside of South Yemen. They, of course, did have a diplomatic presence in North Yemen and had given assistance of one sort or another to the North Yemenis for decades, but by this time their assistance was a lot less influential than it was 10 or 20 years earlier. Elsewhere in the Arabian Peninsula, the Soviets and their Warsaw Pact allies had diplomatic representatives only in Kuwait.

Q: In 1984 you moved to where?

WRAMPELMEIER: In 1984 I decided it was time for a change. I called up Joe Twinam, who had left NEA to become Dean of Professional Studies at the FSI, and said, "I have always felt I could run a better training program than the ones I was in when I was a junior officer, how about it?" Joe Twinam said, "Well, I have somebody for the orientation (A100) program, but we have this Mid-Level Professional Training Program mandated by Congress in the 1979 Foreign Service Act. We have been running it with a professor from the University of Maryland working part time but we now think we should have a Foreign Service Officer in charge. Why don't you come over and run that." I spent two years at FSI as Coordinator for Mid-Level Training.

The Mid-Level program had been developed, I think, with an eye to the training programs which the military has for company - and squadron-grade army and air force officers, i.e., officers with four or five years experience in the service. Mid-Level was a five-month program that was to provide specialist training in the political, economic, consular and admin cones. It also sought to provide some general knowledge about the foreign policy process, how the Department works, and in other ways to expand participants' knowledge of things that they might not have otherwise experienced.

Finally, we were to provide training in negotiating techniques and in management, however that might be defined. The idea was to help prepare officers to assume more responsible positions in the Service.

There were some serious problems with this program. A lot of officers didn't like the idea of spending five months in training which produced not an EER but only a training report. Moreover, many objected that much of the training was not relevant to their current or upcoming assignments. The facilities at FSI on Oak Street in Rosslyn were cramped. The second course I ran had 96 students which was the maximum we could fit into the largest room in the building. Breakout rooms for smaller classes were in short supply and we frequently had to bargain with the School of Area Studies for space.

Management training never went well. We tried different outside contractors to present management training in each of the three Midlevel programs that I ran. They all flopped. Part of the problem was that admin and consular officers were very much interested in learning about techniques of personnel management and supervision, but the political and economic officers found those issues too far beyond them. I actually had one officer say to me, "Why are you trying to teach me this? I'm just a junior political officer and it will be ten years before I ever have to supervise anyone." Some of the negotiations training, part of which was taught by a contractor from the American Arbitration Association, was better received but even that was a disaster one year when the students figured out that they could go home earlier if the opposing negotiating teams in the class exercise came to terms at once rather than negotiate seriously on the issues.

The professional training went much better. Most officers found the specialized training in their cones of assignment to be relevant. This training, about one-third of the course, was planned and coordinated by FSOs with experience in their specialties. I was particularly impressed by a one-week course segment put together by the Political Studies Department on what went wrong in Iran in 1978-79. The segment was designed to help political officers understand how to analyze and report events. It did not deal with the hostage crisis, but with what we knew and when we knew it about the circumstances leading to the fall of the Shah. The coordinators brought in former Ambassador to Iran William Sullivan; George Cave, a university classmate of mine who was one of the few CIA officers with extensive experience in Iran and who was later caught up in the infamous Iran-Contra affair; Henry Precht, the NEA Country Director for Iran at the time; former NSC Iran specialist Gary Sick; former Tehran DCM Charlie Nas; and several other people who had been involved in reporting or analyzing Iranian events in 1978-'79. At the end of the segment students were each asked to draft a paper explaining how they would have analyzed the situation based on what they had heard and read.

We had several one or two week "elective" courses intended to provide officers an opportunity to learn about something they might not otherwise have studied or experienced. There was a very interesting course on how the federal government budget works; it was taught by a very amusing speaker from the Department of the Army. We had courses on refugees and migration, and there were some pol/mil type courses particularly geared to people who didn't have any military experience. We had courses on

oil and nuclear energy. Most of these short courses were taught by outside contractors. These courses were generally well received but other parts of the program were not so popular.

There were just four of us running Mid-Level: myself; my deputy coordinator, JoAnne Arzt; a program assistant; and a secretary. After the second session that I coordinated I went to Steve Low, then Director of FSI, and said, “Look, we are facing serious problems. My discussions with Personnel indicate that we are likely to be getting more than a 100 students per session. I don’t have the staff. I don’t have the space. I don’t have an adequate budget to continue Mid-Level as it has been run. What shall we do?” I had reached the point where I even went across the street to "St. Exxon," the Methodist church located on top of a gas station, and asked if we could rent their sanctuary as a meeting hall for the entire group.

In the meantime some Mid-Level participants had complained to the Director General and other senior Department officers that they were not getting enough out of this "mickey mouse" course which had disrupted their careers for five long months when what they really needed in this period was to earn efficiency reports that would help them get promoted. A questionnaire I had mailed to previous Mid-Level participants asking how the training had helped them also brought a mixed response. Of the few who responded some indicated they had found at least parts of the program worthwhile while others were vehement in their castigation of the entire program.

Finally, Steve Low appointed a committee headed by Ray Ewing, a former ambassador to Cyprus, to take a look at the whole Mid-Level concept. The committee concluded that the five-months course really wasn’t working. So FSI decided to abolish Mid-Level after one more session which had already been scheduled and to which students had been assigned. It had been pared down to 50 or 60 students and therefore was much more manageable. For that reason I think it went better than the preceding session. Some parts of what had been run by the Mid-Level Coordinator were retained but packaged into one- or two-week courses. One example is the Washington Trade Craft course which JoAnne Arzt put together. It combined a course on Foreign Service drafting taught by a former INR office director, Marty Packman, and another by an outside contractor that introduced students to Congressional offices, the press and lobbying groups. The course was designed to familiarize officers newly transferred from the field to jobs in Washington with the milieu in which they would be working. I think that course worked fairly well and I gather it is still in the NFATC catalog.

Unhappily, we lost some of the elective courses that I thought were beneficial such as some of the political/military courses. These went by the wayside. Meanwhile I had inherited the DCM course and spent my last summer at FSI working on it. The course had been taught for some time by outside contractors who used by then rather dated case studies to alert DCMs to ways in which they could get cross-wise with their ambassadors and how such problems might be avoided. We took newly-assigned DCMs up to The Woods resort in West Virginia for a week, followed by a second week of presentations by various Department officers on issues or programs that DCMs should know about. One

night the course participants were invited over to CIA for dinner and an opportunity to discuss with senior Agency personnel matters of mutual interest. After I left FSI and Prudence Bushnell took over the DCM course, she revamped it and sent it in a very different direction. Again, I would have rewritten the course but we didn't have the funds or the time to go out and find somebody who could work up new case studies.

At the end of these two years I went in August 1986 to the National War College. One of my colleagues at FSI, the late Walter Smith, had spent a year there as a Senior Fellow at what was called the Strategic Concepts Development Center (SCDC). This little think tank had been founded by Frank Carlucci when he was Deputy Secretary of Defense to provide the Secretary and Deputy Secretary with a source of alternative analysis and comment on what was coming up to them through the DOD bureaucracy and the Joint Chiefs. There were about a dozen of us, both civilians and military. I was the only FSO. We were situated on the second floor of the War College building over at Fort McNair. My stated task was to think great thoughts about what should be our policy in the Persian Gulf and otherwise to provide whatever help and insight I could to the other fellows. I started out by helping the other Middle East specialist, Phebe Marr. Phebe, whom I had known for a number of years, is an academic and a specialist on Iraq. She was working at the time on a study of whether there were moderates among the Iranian revolutionary leadership. I also assisted in the arrangements for a seminar on Middle Eastern issues to which outside academics and specialists were invited.

Meanwhile I was reflecting on what should be our Gulf political strategy, my idea being that if you thought of the Gulf region as a stool with three legs - Iraq, Iran, and the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states - how do we sustain a trilateral strategic balance there and how much do we help the GCC states to maintain that balance in equilibrium. Just at that point, the Iran-Contra affair was revealed and then we were into the reflagging of Kuwaiti vessels as U.S.; flag ships, thereby giving the Navy the authority to protect them from Iranian attacks (the so-called "tanker war"). I would go into work each morning only to find that the Defense Department was already about two steps ahead of what I was preparing to recommend.

Q: You are talking about looking for moderates. Were these the moderates that supposedly we were baking cakes for?

WRAMPELMEIER: No, Phebe Marr too was upset by the Iran-Contra revelations because the affair completely undermined some of what she had been working on. She was able to brief her analysis and conclusions up through the Deputy Secretary of Defense, William Howard Taft IV. There was skepticism, at least in the Departments of State and Defense if not in the NSC, that there were any moderates to be found in Iran. The NSC contacts with Iran were something that went on totally unnoticed by us until it came out in the press. I would say by the end of my year at SCDC, I had not made any major contribution to U.S. strategic thinking in the Gulf but I had enjoyed the opportunity to do a lot of reading on the area and to gain a better understanding of how my military counterparts thought about our national strategies.

Q: That was 1987 or so?

WRAMPELMEIER: In the summer of 1987 I left the National War College and went to Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, as Consul General. I spent two years in Dhahran, 1987-'89. This was my last overseas post in the Foreign Service.

Q: Tell me about Dhahran, I was a vice consul there back in 1958-'60.

WRAMPELMEIER: I don't think you would notice a great deal of difference.

Q: Was asbestos still coming out of the walls?

WRAMPELMEIER: Oh, yes. There had been, of course, some additions made to the consulate office building. We had a glass-enclosed addition that housed the consular section and its waiting room and we had added another section across from it for the commercial section. Now the original stone building has two ells creating a sort of courtyard. However, most of the housing was the same as you would have remembered it. About half the compound was taken over by the American School. The consulate general had roughly 25 Americans and maybe 75 local employees, most of whom were engaged in maintaining the compound. We had our own electric generator and water supply if we needed it. We had streets that had to be maintained, although they rarely were. It was an expensive operation. At one point I suggested to the embassy that, much as I liked this compound, I thought we should begin to think about returning the property to the Saudi Government and moving the offices into a modern high-rise office building. We could then buy or rent a house for the consul general while other American staff would be housed in the growing number of commercially-run residential compounds. In fact, half my staff were already living in such compounds which many of them actually preferred to living on the consulate general compound.

It was an interesting period because first of all the long-time provincial amir, or governor, whom you may have known had retired. In fact, I finally got around to calling on old bin Jiluwi just the week before he died.

Q: He was a real Arab desert sheikh of the first water.

WRAMPELMEIER: He was still in the old emirate while across the street was a huge new glittering glass and steel building that had been erected for his successor, Prince Muhammad bin Fahd, the king's son. Muhammad's deputy was his cousin Prince Fahd bin Salman, the son of the Governor of Riyadh. Both had been U.S.-educated and spoke excellent English. They had brought a much different kind of government to the province. They were sophisticated individuals who were very much concerned about the economic aspects of the region. Of course, the economy was booming. Not only was there the expansion of the oil and gas industry but Jubayl had become a major area for industrial, mostly petrochemical, industries as well as a base for the Saudi Navy. Dhahran, of course, was still a major airbase although a new civilian airport was under construction between Dammam and Jubayl. It wasn't finished by 1990 but was used

nevertheless by our forces during Desert Storm. The runways were useable. When it was completed, the old airport in Dhahran was to become primarily a military installation.

Aramco (the Arabian-American Oil Company) was also undergoing dramatic change. When I arrived John Kelberer, an American, was still the chairman of the board, but the president, Ali al-Naimi, was a Saudi and all but one of the senior vice presidents were Saudis. While I was there the remaining American senior vice president stepped down and was replaced by a Saudi. Sometime in late 1988, before I left Dhahran, the Saudis formally assumed control of Aramco.

The background of this transfer began in the '70s when the Saudis had negotiated with the consortium of four American oil companies that owned Aramco to buy the concession from them. The final Saudi payment was made sometime in 1980. John Kelberer once told me what had happened next. "I telephoned Oil Minister Ahmad Zaki Yamani and said that we had received the final check and he now had an oil company. Where did he want me to deliver it." Kelberer said there was a long silence at the other end of the phone and finally Yamani said, "Why don't you just keep running things the way they are." This led to a curious arrangement whereby the Saudis legally owned Aramco but the consortium continued to operate it in accordance with its charter issued by the State of Delaware. It wasn't until 1988 that the Saudis finally decided that they were ready to manage the company. John Kelberer retired and the then Minister of Oil, Hisham Nazer, became chairman ex officio of what was now to be known as Saudi-Aramco. Nazer later told me that when he first announced this new name to the Saudi Council of Ministers, everybody sat there trying to figure out what "Saudi-Aramco" meant. Finally, Nazer told them said, "Don't worry about what it means. Its name is just Saudi-Aramco. Period."

From that point on the company was officially a Saudi company. Over a period of time there continued to be further negotiations between the company and the four former owners - Chevron, Esso, Texaco, and SoCal - over various aspects of what each of the former owners was going to do in the way of training, providing American technicians, etc. to work with Saudi-Aramco on various projects. In addition, Saudi-Aramco purchased a major share of Texaco's refining and distribution system in the eastern and southern United States.

Of course, as consul general, I tried to keep an eye on what was going on, not just in terms of what was happening within Aramco, but also what was happening in the oil industry in general. I was authorized to report directly to the Department on oil matters while keeping the embassy in Riyadh informed.

Q: Our big contact when I was there was an American who staffed the Government Relations Department. Obviously with Arabs running this thing who would you talk to?

WRAMPELMEIER: In addition to Kelberer, I talked to Ali Naimi who was then the Aramco president and is now the Minister of Oil for Saudi Arabia. I talked also to most of the other senior vice presidents and, of course, with people in the Government

Relations office. One of them, David Bosch, is now head of the Saudi-Aramco office here in Washington. And there were still several other Americans who had been there for a long time, like Harry Alter. It was clear that at some point the American influence was going to be still further reduced as other managerial positions were Saudi-ized. Already Aramco was no longer distributing The Blue Flame, the little booklet that explained how to make bathtub gin without blowing up the bathroom or poisoning your guests. I think pork was no longer available in the commissary as well as some other things.

Incidentally, there was a young woman on the Government Relations staff. She had been a summer intern in State's Office of Arabian Peninsula Affairs when I was there and later had taken this job with Aramco. She had bought herself a little red sports car. Everybody asked what she was going to do with it since she could not drive outside the gates of Aramco. She said, "That's all right. As long as I can drive within the compound I am happy."

Another major preoccupation, of course, was the Iraq-Iran war which was still going on. In October, 1987, not long after I had arrived, the U.S. Navy clashed with the Iranians in the Gulf. One incident involved Iranian torpedo boats; another was a raid by our people on an offshore oil platform that we felt the Iranians were using for military purposes. We saw an increase of U.S. naval visits to Dammam. Oddly enough, Dammam suddenly became a very popular port of call for the Navy. The reason was that the American community, which was still several thousand strong, would turn out to take a whole shipload of sailors and marines off to the compounds and give them a nice day, making sure that they got safely back on board. You didn't see sailors wandering around town. We didn't have any serious incidents. The Saudis were perfectly happy with that. This arrangement worked very well.

Q: Did you have problems with Americans being put in jail for automobile accidents, booze and all that? How did that work?

WRAMPELMEIER: Yes. Unhappily, on my predecessor's watch, we had the case of one of the local employees of the consulate general who was responsible for clearing incoming shipments of household effects and office supplies that happened to be liquid. Whenever the consulate general ordered a liftvan full for our little coop, he ordered an extra one without our knowledge. He then cleared both liftvans through customs but the second liftvan was delivered to him and two American business associates of his who were not associated with the consulate general. They then sold the contents covertly in the black market.

Q: Was this a regular foreign service employee?

WRAMPELMEIER: An FSN (Foreign Service National Employee). One day the Saudis followed the second liftvan to its destination and arrested the FSN and his two American compatriots and they all went to jail. My predecessor had been forced to provide some explanation to Prince Muhammad bin Fahd for why the consulate general had failed to prevent this serious infraction of Saudi Arabian law. I think our consular officer was still

periodically visiting the two jailed Americans while I was there. Another case I can remember involved a privately employed American who visited friends at Aramco and drank too much "sadiqi juice." He had an automobile accident when he left the Aramco compound. He was detained by the Saudi police and given a breathalizer test which mysteriously disappeared from the hospital before it could be analyzed. As there was no evidence of drunken driving, he was not brought to trial. However, he was fired by his Saudi employer and forced to leave the country. Things sometimes worked out that way.

I remember going to bat for an American woman who was arrested but not detained for taking pictures of a chemical fire up in Jubayl. The Saudis felt that was a security violation and were going to deport her. Her husband's American employers made a case that I took to the Emir and he agreed that she could stay. Fortunately, we didn't have serious problems like somebody being arrested for murder.

Q: What about the very common American woman meeting a Saudi student in the United States, they get married and come back and they have some kids after which she says, "the hell with this," and she wants to leave with the kids?

WRAMPELMEIER: I think I mentioned the case that I had in Kuwait where my consular officer was PNGed for helping an American woman in precisely those circumstances. By the time I came to Dhahran this case was still going. That summer of 1987 the woman, along with several other people, had made statements before a House committee describing how they had been abused in Saudi Arabia. She told about how her husband had taken their children illegally back to Saudi Arabia and how Saudi law prevented her from returning them to America. During my tour in Dhahran we finally were able to make some progress in letting her visit with her two children. My consular officer, Dan Goodspeed, was married to an Algerian and had a young son. I think that being a male and married to a Muslim, Dan was able to find a way to break the ice with the Saudi father. Previous consular officers had been female and this probably made the Saudi father uneasy. Dan made an arrangement to meet the man at a public function. Dan brought his child and the father brought his two children so Dan could report that he had seen them and that they appeared to be well taken care of. Eventually Dan was able to persuade the father to sponsor a visit to Dhahran by the American mother for very carefully supervised meetings with her two children. When I left Dhahran I think she had been able to visit twice. That was about the best that we felt we could hope for in her case, at least until the children (who by now were thoroughly Saudi) reached an age where they might be permitted to visit her in the U.S. We had a couple of other cases but I don't recall them being as serious as that one. By and large, we didn't have many cases in the Eastern Province of that sort. Indeed, I knew of at least one Saudi husband-American wife marriage that appeared to be quite successful.

We did see during that period a growing concern in the Eastern Province about Iranian influence among the local Shia minority. There was an attempt made to blow up the Aramco refinery at Ras Tanura that came within a quarter of an inch of succeeding. The charge had not been shaped properly and was muffled by the heavy insulation around propane pipes which, had they blown, could have leveled part of the refinery. There were

some young Shia who did get themselves into trouble and shot a police officer. Eventually they were captured and executed. There was also concern on the part of the Saudi authorities about anti-Saudi propaganda on Iranian television and radio which could be received in parts of the Eastern Province.

My own feeling, and I had contacts in the Shia community, was that probably the majority of the Saudi Shia simply wanted to be left alone by the Saudi Government. They were unhappy with the various restrictions that were placed on their religious life and practices and the fact that they were not usually able to get good jobs. They certainly were excluded from the police, the military and most government jobs. By and large, however, most Shia were politically quiescent. There was a small group who were pro-Iranian or at least wanted to do something to try to change the situation through violence. There was even a smaller group that one might call accommodationists who argued that the Shia should do more to earn the government's trust. Unfortunately, nothing much happened with that group. At one point, through an intermediary, I asked if Prince Muhammad might want to talk to people in this group. I got back the message that if they wanted to talk to him they could go through their community leaders. This would not have worked because clearly the community leaders were not the ones that were members of that group.

Unfortunately, what had happened at Ras Tanura and also at Jubayl, where someone did succeed in blowing up a tank of something, led to a clamp down on the Shia working at Aramco. Up to that point most of the security guards at Aramco were Shia. All of a sudden the Saudis realized that and promptly replaced most of the experienced company security people with bedouin whom they felt would be politically reliable even if they didn't know much about security. There was a lot of unhappiness among the Shia who traditionally had looked to Aramco as an important source of jobs. So the Shia's situation in the Eastern Province was not helped by this growing concern about security. At one point I was warned that a Shia group was surveilling the consulate general but we had no problem. When I left in September 1989 this was the situation. Since I left I gather we and the Saudis have substantially increased the security around the consulate general, especially since the bombing of the Khobar Towers which killed 19 U.S. airmen.

Q: What was your impression of the American business community in doing business at that time?

WRAMPELMEIER: There was a very active American businessmen's association that included people from Aramco like David Bosch, who served as president during part of my tour, and people from various American companies mostly related in one way or another to the oil business. They were very active together with the other U.S. chambers of commerce in the Gulf in coming to Washington and lobbying the Congress and the Administration on matters related to trade preferences, restrictions, etc., which affected the interests of American businessmen in the region. The size of the American community, of course, had gone down from the heyday of the mid-'70s when there had been many thousands in the Eastern Province. What you had by this time was a fairly stable group of people and they did have periodic meetings which I attended. The consul

general was an honorary member ex officio. They also invited the ambassador and various people from Riyadh to come down and talk to them, which they did. Adopting a practice that Fran Dickman had followed in Abu Dhabi and Kuwait, I held periodic briefings at the consul general's residence for the senior American businessmen. This enabled us to exchange information about upcoming events or to answer questions about U.S. policy. I think the association was an important aspect of our presence in the Eastern Province. The association was also responsible for organizing the annual Fourth of July picnic for the American community on the consulate general grounds. As the Saudi authorities made no effort to suppress its activities, I believe they also felt the businessmen's association made a positive contribution to our relationship.

Q: Were we watching any of the interplay between the Bedouin army or the White Army, and the professional army? Were we looking at the Saudi military there?

WRAMPELMEIER: I would say not a great deal because we didn't have any sense of tension between the two groups in the Eastern Province. I paid calls on the regular Army commander at his base on the road to Riyadh. I also called periodically on the regional commander of the National Guard, who happened then to be a son of the late King Saud. It was about this period that some of King Saud's sons were being politically resurrected. One son was head of the National Guard in the Eastern Province and another was governor of Baha Province on the western side of the country. I should add that the National Guard provided perimeter security for the consulate general compound.

Q: So it wasn't a factor?

WRAMPELMEIER: No, the two forces had their own separate responsibilities. The Saudi Army was not all that numerous in the Eastern Province and most of its units were stationed up near the Iraqi border. The air force and navy were more prominent than the army in the area around Dhahran.

Q: I imagine the air force was almost Americanized by then wasn't it?

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, the air force was fairly competent. There was the famous incident, I think in 1984, when the Saudis detected Iranian fighters coming across the Gulf and sent up two pilots who shot the Iranian planes down. While I was there, former Texas Congressman Charles Wilson, who was on the House Armed Services Committee and took a great interest in this part of the world, came out to visit. Prince Turki, the Dhahran air base commander, gave him a tour of the base. When they got to the ready room bunker in the middle of the field, Wilson looked up and said, "What is that red button?" Prince Turki said, "Well, press it and see." Wilson did and immediately bells went off and pilots came running out of the ready room, the hangar doors swung open and the planes taxied out and were very quickly up in the air. The party barely had time to move its vehicles away from in front of the hanger doors. It was a very professional-looking operation. So, yes, I think the air force was regarded as fairly good.

Q: I recall in 1959 or so a brigadier or major general air force officer saying that he

called an alert one time and nobody appeared for a while. He said that they couldn't fight their way out of a wet paper bag. I relate this just to show how things had progressed.

WRAMPELMEIER: Of course you have a lot of Americans working on the logistic side and on their training, etc. So I would say that the Saudi air force ran a fairly professional operation. The Saudi navy less so. It was still very much the junior service in Saudi Arabia. It had a nice base up in Jubayl and a training school in Damman. Their communication systems were probably not as good as the air force's and their crews still did not have extensive at-sea experience.

Q: Well, you left there in 1989.

WRAMPELMEIER: Although I still had another year to go of my three-year tour, I left Dhahran in September 1989 largely because my wife, whose parents were both seriously ill in Chicago, had not come with me to Dhahran. Her father died in December 1987 and as her mother's health deteriorated Ann had finally moved her to a nursing home in Bethesda. Visiting her at the home was becoming a strain for Ann because she doesn't drive and it took her two or three hours to get out to the nursing home each day and two or three hours to get back. One evening she had her purse stolen off her shoulder within two or three hundred feet of our house. Therefore I felt it was time for me to come back and play chauffeur at home. Also, I was 55 and had 33 years in the Service and it was time to start thinking about something else. Consequently, I put in for early retirement.

My successor had all the fun of Desert Storm which he and his wife handled beautifully.

Q: Who was that?

WRAMPELMEIER: Ken Stammerman.

Q: Where is he now?

WRAMPELMEIER: I think Ken is teaching economics at the University of Kentucky. I had known him at FSI when he ran the economic training program. He was in Kuwait as economic counselor while I was in Dhahran and he and Patty (who sadly died last year) had come down a few times to visit. Ironically, people from Embassy Kuwait came to Dhahran to buy pork.

Q: Okay, we will stop at this point. Oh, Brooks wants to add something more that is relevant to his foreign service career.

WRAMPELMEIER: I came back to Washington in September 1989 and went through the career transition course at FSI. Then I didn't do anything for a year. In the summer of 1991 I got a call from Allen Kieswetter, who had been political counselor in Riyadh and now was Director of the Regional Affairs Office of NEA. Allen said that the bureau needed a senior officer to attend the UN General Assembly (UNGA) that fall. Each

geographic bureau provides a so-called Senior Advisor to the U.S. Mission to the UN (USUN) to help out during the four month UNGA session. Just then NEA had no available active duty senior officer because they were all gearing up for the Madrid Arab-Israeli peace conference. Would I like to go? I said, “Fine, I had never worked in multilateral diplomacy and it might be interesting.” So, from September to mid-December, 1991, I was assigned to USUN where I shared an office with the regular USUN Middle East specialist. I worked on whatever came up. Lobbying for election of U.S. representatives to various international commissions was one duty. I remember lurking in the basement of the General Assembly building waiting to leap out at little ladies from the Bhutan mission and canvas their vote for an American representative on the international law commission.

I sat in on committee meetings and every once and a while, if nobody else could be found, I was allowed to sit in the senior delegate's chair to cast our delegation's vote and make an explanatory statement. I was also involved in talks with the UN Secretariat about its frustrating efforts to hold a plebiscite in former Spanish Sahara. Once I helped to arrange for a meeting of various Afghani mujahideen leaders who were at the UN and were to meet with Peter Tomsen, our special representative, who was trying to get the Afghans to agree on a unified coalition government that would put an end to the intermittent civil warfare that had followed the withdrawal of the Soviets from Afghanistan.

I think the event of greatest interest to me was the effort to repeal the UNGA's "Zionism is racism" resolution that had been passed back in 1975. Tom Pickering, our ambassador to the UN, felt that the time was ripe to move on this. The Soviets and the Eastern Europeans were no longer committed to supporting the Arabs on this issue. Tom began to put together a coalition of countries in favor of repeal and the number of co-sponsors grew rapidly. At the same time Tom was negotiating with the Arab bloc, which of course strongly opposed repeal. Tom was very frank with the Arabs. He said, “Look, I have the votes and you are not going to win on this. I am going to win. The question is, do you want to lose gracefully or do you want to make a real mess out of it.” The chairman of the Arab bloc at that time was the Lebanese who felt it preferable to lose gracefully. So it was understood that when our resolution was brought up for the vote the U.S. would introduce it and there would be two supporting speeches and then the Arabs would make one or two speeches against it. It was agreed that all of these remarks would be fairly moderate in tone. It was understood that if the more radical Arabs would not speak, then the Israelis would not feel that they had to exercise their right of reply. Larry Eagleburger, at this time acting Secretary, came up from Washington to preside at the head of the U.S. delegation when the resolution was introduced. All went off pretty well. In fact, we even had delegations coming up to sign on as co-sponsors in the middle of the speeches. So, we ended up with about 150 co-sponsors and the resolution to repeal was adopted overwhelmingly.

It was a very interesting experience and I found it fascinating to see how multi-level diplomacy works. One of the memories I have is that I would get the Arabs assembled in a lounge at the General Assembly building so Pickering could talk to them. Tom was

always late and when I went out to look for him he would be coming up the escalator with a portable telephone to his ear. Now this was before everybody had one of these telephones. Tom would be walking down the corridor and even begin shaking hands while still talking on the phone.

That was my last Foreign Service assignment. The following year I started to work part-time as a WAE (When Actually Employed) in the Department of State office that reviews documents for declassification and/or release in response to requests under the Freedom of Information Act. I have been doing that since 1992 for three or four months each year.

This, then, has been my Foreign Service career.

Q: Well, this is excellent. Thank you.

End of interview