

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

**Ambassador James P. Zumwalt**  
**An Oral History**

*Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy*  
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Editor: Kyle Hawke

Proofreader: PJ Perdue

Indexer: Kelly Bergh

Cover and Book Designer: Kyle Hawke

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To Ann,  
the love of my life

This oral history is dedicated to you for standing by me for decades as my life partner, my wise counselor, and my trusted advisor. I began learning from you the day we met 37 years ago at the American Citizen Services counter of the American Embassy in Tokyo. During our first encounter, you taught me the Japanese language phrases I needed to perform consular work in Japan. That day, you impressed me with your professionalism and your compassion for your colleagues and your clients.

Your strong moral compass has continued to provide direction in both my personal life and my professional career and your tolerance of my many shortcomings has enabled us to persevere through a few difficult challenges. Your good humor and resilience have enabled me to overcome hardships and manage stressful challenges. Together, we have celebrated many happy occasions during our Foreign Service careers. I am not sure where I would be without you.

## Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful to the friends, colleagues and family members who have read and commented on chapters of this oral history. My sister, Frances Zumwalt, and my Foreign Service colleagues, Pat Alsup, Hagop Avedissian, MaryKay Carlson, Mark Fitzpatrick, Greg Garland, Karin Lang, Kristine Marsh, Sandra O'Leary, Michael Scarlatos, and Eleanor Sutter have improved this document with their useful insights. Their corrections of my faulty memory and suggestions for additional context have improved this text tremendously. Any errors that remain are solely my responsibility.

My editor Kyle Hawke has worked assiduously to check facts, improve the narrative flow, and propose changes to enhance the readability and comprehensibility of this story. I could not have finished this project without his patient guidance throughout the editing process.

Many Foreign Service mentors who have guided my career deserve my heartfelt thanks. They are too numerous to name individually here, but their examples of diplomatic tradecraft, moral leadership, and courage and resilience in the face of adversity have shaped my Foreign Service career in positive ways. These teachers and guides appear in every chapter of this oral history volume.

This work would not have been completed without the guidance and direction of my interviewer, Charles Stuart Kennedy. When I sat down for the first oral history interview in February 2016, my sole intent had been to relate my experiences in Embassy Tokyo in March 2011 as we coped with a major natural disaster beyond the scope of any of our imaginations. One two-hour interview, I thought, and the project would be complete. To my surprise, Stuart began our first session by asking questions related to my childhood to elicit comments on my motivation for joining the Foreign Service. Over the course of 36 hours of interviews during an eight-month period, Stuart's penetrating questions elicited many details of my life experiences and diplomatic career that enriched this story. Stuart was ably supported by the staff of the Office of the Historian at the State Department throughout this project and, without their assistance, this project would not have been finished.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents, who provided me two examples of moral and community leadership as they instilled in me a passion for excellence, an intellectual curiosity about the world, and a desire for public service.



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## **Foreword**

As an amateur student of history, I agreed to record my memories from a 36-year Foreign Service career in the hopes that this account might assist scholars of American diplomatic history. Accordingly, I have organized this story into chronological chapters to enable researchers to focus solely on the elements of interest to their scholarly work. One word of warning to anyone reading this oral history: this narrative is told from the perspective of my position at that time. From the vantagepoint of a junior officer in Kinshasa in Chapter 3 to that of the Ambassador in Dakar in Chapter 15, my perspective has changed over time as I matured and gained more career experience.

I also hope that this oral history can help aspiring diplomats and others interested in diplomacy by supplementing the academic theories with examples from real life. Diplomacy is an art more than a science. Certainly, aspiring diplomats should study international relations theory, the tools of statecraft, government organizational theory, and diplomatic history to establish an intellectual framework for their diplomatic work. However, mastering the practice of diplomacy involves learning from the experiences of others. Over the course of my career, I have gained insights from many policy practitioners, both Foreign Service officers, government political appointees, and foreign government officials. I hope that this volume might provide positive examples to aspiring and practicing diplomats for ways to overcome miscommunication, resolve problems, and manage challenges diplomats face as they attempt to advance the national interest.

Jim Zumwalt  
December 29, 2020

## Chapter I

### Growing up in California; First Encounters with Japan

FEBRUARY 1, 2018

*KENNEDY: Jim, where and when were you born?*

ZUMWALT: I was born in La Mesa, California, a suburb of San Diego, in 1956.

*KENNEDY: Tell us something about your family, first on your father's side. What do you know about them?*

ZUMWALT: My father grew up in the San Joaquin Valley of California. My family is proud of our history in the United States. I am an eighth-generation American descended from Andrew Zumwalt, who landed in Baltimore in 1737. Andrew Zumwalt settled first in Pennsylvania, then later moved to Virginia. He had seven sons, most of whom served in local militias during the Revolutionary War. Almost every Zumwalt in the United States is related to one of Andrew's seven sons.

His grandson, Jacob Zumwalt, moved to Missouri where my great-great-grandfather, James Brown Zumwalt, was born. That is where my name, James, comes from. Their settlement, just north of modern-day St. Louis, has been rebuilt as it looked in 1812. They were subsistence farmers. Their reconstructed cabin is located in Fort Zumwalt Park in O'Fallon, Missouri. James and his brother moved to California in 1849, then later returned to Missouri to lead others in a covered wagon train across the continent back to California. He didn't succeed as a gold miner, so he turned to farming. He settled in California's San Joaquin Valley, where my grandfather and father were born.

*KENNEDY: Where in the San Joaquin Valley?*

ZUMWALT: My father's hometown is Tulare, California. It lies southeast of Fresno in a very fertile valley between the Sierra Nevada and California Coastal mountain ranges. Now, there is a lot of dairy and alfalfa, but also fruits, nuts, grapes, olives, and vegetables. Tulare County is one of the top agricultural producers by value in the United States. While the valley floor is flat and agricultural, to the east rise the Sierra Nevada mountains. Sequoia National Park and Kings Canyon National Park lie in Tulare County.

*KENNEDY: I remember, as a kid before the war, being taken by my aunts who lived in Beverly Hills, taken in a Model T to go over and look at the wildflowers in the Central Valley.*

ZUMWALT: My family also used to drive from San Diego to Tulare in the summers to visit my grandfather. I thought it was a very hot place, but my father, who grew up there, had positive memories of small-town life, despite the poverty of the Depression. My grandfather was a doctor in this town of perhaps twenty thousand people. My grandfather was a public figure with many friends; at one point, he was elected mayor. I never met my grandmother, who died when my father was still a child, but she was a very accomplished woman; she too was a medical doctor. My grandparents had four children, my father being the youngest. The eldest, my aunt Saralee, married her college sweetheart and settled in another small city in California's San Joaquin Valley. The second-eldest, my uncle Bud, graduated from the Naval Academy in Annapolis and

became a naval officer. He had a successful naval career and rose to become the Chief of Naval Operations in the 1970s. When I was in high school, I was so proud when Uncle Bud was featured on the cover of *Time* magazine.

*KENNEDY: Basically, you grew up as a kid in San Diego.*

ZUMWALT: I grew up in the suburbs of San Diego. My father was a high school American history and civics teacher. When I was small, my mother was a housewife and very active leader in the community. My mom is from Switzerland.

My parents met in 1951 when they were students in Paris. They married in Switzerland and she later emigrated to the United States. I'm sure that her early years living in the United States were a struggle because she had to master a new language and assimilate into a new culture. It was the 1950s and there was pressure to assimilate as an American, so she made a conscious decision to speak only English to her children. We did not speak any foreign languages at home because she wanted us to fit in to American society. As a child, my parents would talk to each other in French when they had something they did not want us to understand, but mostly we had a typical American middle-class upbringing.

*KENNEDY: I went through that with my mother. Her family spoke German and, at Christmas time, an awful lot of conversation ended up German.*

ZUMWALT: Our family had pride in our Swiss roots: every August 1<sup>st</sup>, my father would hang a Swiss flag from our balcony for Swiss National Day, which commemorates the first Swiss Confederation in 1291. We celebrated Christmas and other holidays with Swiss food and Swiss Christmas cookies. I remember, as a child, receiving packages from my aunts and uncles with Swiss chocolate, which in those days was still quite rare and expensive.

My interest in foreign affairs comes from both parents. I grew up listening to my mother's stories about Switzerland and the differences from America. She had grown up in Latin America because my grandfather was an insurance company executive who had spent most of his career on that continent. My mother was born in Brazil and grew up in Argentina, but culturally she was Swiss. They returned to Switzerland when she was about six, so she talked some about Argentina and her childhood memories but more about Switzerland. Often, she compared things that were different between Switzerland and America. So, I grew up realizing that other people lived with different cultures and traditions. My father used to invite the foreign exchange students at his high school over for dinner. I remember, when I must have been about six or seven, being fascinated meeting a student from Uganda and another from Brazil. They both seemed so mature and so wise and they came from exotic places.

*KENNEDY: Did the navy play any role in your background?*

ZUMWALT: When I was a baby, my uncle rented a house nearby because he was going to be deployed at sea frequently and wanted my Aunt Mouza and her children to live near other family members. I am told there was a lot of sharing of dishes and birthday parties between our households when I was just a baby. My older sister would play with her cousins then. But later, when I was in the fifth grade, my uncle returned to San Diego for another one-year assignment — he was an admiral at this point — and his family lived in Coronado. He had a nice house with a swimming pool, so almost every weekend in the summer, my sisters and I would visit him, use

his pool, and play with our cousins. We attended his incoming and outgoing change of command ceremonies and I was fascinated by the military culture that marks these transitions.

I also remember a few years later, two older cousins, Richard and Elmo, had joined the navy and began to prepare for their assignments in Vietnam. I must have been in junior high school then. For about six months, we saw each of them frequently because they were training in San Diego. My cousin Richard's roommate was later killed in Vietnam. That news was shocking to me; it was my first experience with someone dying in service of his country.

*KENNEDY: What was it like as a young kid growing up in El Cajon?*

ZUMWALT: El Cajon was an idyllic, safe place, but it was not very diverse. There were some Hispanics, but very few African Americans. I only recall one Asian American in my elementary school. One of my high school friends was part Laguna Pueblo and I remember being fascinated by his stories of summers living with his grandfather on the Laguna Pueblo reservation in New Mexico. El Cajon was a very 1950s California version of Norman Rockwell's New England. In summer, we could play out in the street and, during the school year, we could walk to our elementary school, which was about twenty minutes away.

*KENNEDY: I would think though that you were very close to Mexico, a few miles...*

ZUMWALT: Yes, we did occasionally visit Tijuana. I remember, for example, seeing a bullfight with my father and some friends. We went to Tijuana a few times for shopping for pottery or wool rugs, but there were not many reasons to go back and forth across the border. My mother was not yet a U.S. citizen — she had a green card but was a bit nervous about crossing the border. So, Mexico was not a place we went to frequently. Some of my well-off friends had maids who came from Mexico, so once in a while I would see someone who did not speak good English, but that experience did not really spark an interest in Latin America.

*KENNEDY: What religion were your parents?*

ZUMWALT: We grew up in a Presbyterian church. My sisters and I attended Sunday school every week until we finished ninth grade. We also sang in our church's children's choir. My mother was quite active in our church. She had been an elementary school teacher in Switzerland, so she taught Sunday school and even became the head of our church Sunday school program, which was pretty large — ten grades and several hundred children every week. She had to work with the curriculum and recruit teachers and organize all of the classes. Mom was also a Girl Scout leader for both of my sisters' troops and a room mother for my elementary school class. She was also active in my school's Parent-Teacher Association. She performed a lot of unpaid volunteer work in the community. I remember being quite proud of her when the PTA of my school gave her an award as the outstanding volunteer of the year.

*KENNEDY: You had sisters?*

ZUMWALT: An older and a younger sister named Frances and Barbara.

*KENNEDY: So you are the middle?*

ZUMWALT: I was the middle child and the only boy. My older sister became a high school history teacher and was very involved in her teachers' union activities. She became her school district's union president and worked hard on issues like safety in school, paid maternity leave,

and adequate funding for public education. My younger sister became a journalist and for many years worked in sports before she shifted to become a city editor, focusing on reporting local news. They both remain quite interested in the civic side of citizenship.

*KENNEDY: Speaking of grammar and pre-grammar school, what sort of activities were you doing?*

ZUMWALT: I had a typical childhood growing up in a suburb. I was rather bookish, not very athletic, but I was interested in professional sports. My father and my best friend's father would take us to attend many San Diego Padres baseball games. I would say that almost every weekend my parents would take us on what they called "an excursion." Our family might picnic in the mountains, spend a day at the beach, or visit a museum or San Diego's zoo. I enjoyed an idyllic childhood.

*KENNEDY: As books go, do you recall any of the earlier books that grabbed you?*

ZUMWALT: My mother, being a former elementary school teacher, was very careful in choosing books for me — I would always receive presents of books for Christmas or my birthday. She would take us to the public library every week, where we each could select a children's book to take home and read. Dr. Seuss was big in our household. I remember one Christmas, I received the *Book of Nations*, a colorful volume where every page featured a different country — a map and flag, some photos, and information such as the name of the capital, the size of the population, and its climate. I was fascinated to learn the name of the country's capital, see its place on the map, and to look at photos of life in each country. My father interested me in collecting stamps; when I got a foreign stamp, I would also turn to my father's atlas to identify where the country was located.

*KENNEDY: Stamps are a wonderful introduction to the Foreign Service.*

ZUMWALT: I don't know that many children collect stamps anymore. When I was in elementary school, I would save my money and buy bags of stamps — sort them, arrange them by country in my stamp book, and trade some duplicates if I wanted something else. For several years, I was quite involved in stamp collecting.

*KENNEDY: In elementary school, as you started out, you came from a schoolteaching family and sometimes that works and sometimes has the opposite effect...*

ZUMWALT: I always liked school and its social aspect. I had friends there, so I looked forward to going to school each day. I certainly was not the star student in elementary school; I received some A's and some B's and a few C's. But I did enjoy reading. In summers, our local library had contests where you could win a small prize by reading a certain number of books. Most summers, I would be the library's first child to finish the ten or fifteen books to claim a prize.

*KENNEDY: Where did your family fall politically?*

ZUMWALT: My paternal grandfather was a very conservative Republican; he lived in the San Joaquin Valley in central California, which was John Steinbeck territory. However, I remember my uncle (who took a lot of flak for spurring racial integration in the navy) say that he learned about the importance of diversity from his father, my grandfather. One story my aunt, his older sister, would tell is about the day President Herbert Hoover came to town and my grandfather

and grandmother hosted the president for a dinner in their home. My aunt would tell the story that, as a teenager, she was required to sit with the adults because they needed another woman at the table for gender balance. She could see my uncles and father peeking through the kitchen door window to try to catch a glimpse of President Hoover in the dining room.

My father grew up in this very conservative, very Republican, 1930s small town. When he was in the Marine Corps, his political views had not yet evolved from this conservative small-town background. But after completing his military service, Dad spent time at UC Berkeley, then dropped out and traveled through Europe for two years. I think that experience of living abroad changed his outlook on life. He met many people who had other viewpoints, people who saw the United States differently. He never changed his political party affiliation, my father continued to be registered as a Republican, but he usually voted for the Democratic Party candidates for governor, senator, and president.

I remember, as a child, my father and my Uncle Bud having arguments about the Vietnam War. My father was opposed as the war dragged on, whereas my uncle was stationed in Vietnam and very committed to the war effort. Rereading their letters, what comes across is that, despite their foreign policy disagreements, they had a strong love for each other. Usually my uncle would win the foreign policy arguments because he knew a lot more — he was responsible for U.S. naval forces in Vietnam as a vice admiral. My father, being a teacher, was interested in his brother's point of view. He had a great deal of intellectual curiosity and was a wonderful listener. What I learned from my father and uncle was that it's possible to respect each other despite having intellectual differences.

Prior to voting in every election, my father and mother would sit down at the kitchen table with their sample ballots and discuss together how they were going to vote. I remember asking them about this practice at one point and they said, "Well, if we vote and each of us votes a different way we may as well stay at home. So, we'll talk about it and decide how we're going to vote together." Their actions taught me the importance of voting as part of one's civic duty.

*KENNEDY: Did your father ever talk about his experiences in the marines during the war?*

ZUMWALT: My father had a rough childhood. His second-oldest brother, Bruce Craig, died of spinal meningitis when my father was ten. That death hit my father hard because Bruce Craig was his closest sibling. Three or four years later, his mother died of breast cancer. His mother's death was also extremely hard for him. Soon after that, as both of his surviving siblings were away in college, my grandfather returned to active duty in the army. So my father's family completely scattered when he was still in high school. He lived with his grandmother for a time, then moved in with a neighbor who was a close family friend and who was my grandfather's medical partner. That family was very nice to him and my father remained close to them, but he did not share with us much about the period after his brother and mother died. He told me that he enlisted in the Marine Corps when he graduated from high school in 1943 because all boys enlisted as their patriotic duty. I am sure that was true, but for him there was no close family to keep him in his hometown.

*KENNEDY: Every war has this.*

ZUMWALT: After enlisting in the Marines, Dad grew up fast. For most of his service, he was stationed in North Carolina, operating a radar picket. Once we visited North Carolina's Outer Banks and he told us about his experience looking for German submarines. There, he was not in

physical danger. Once, I asked him about the decision to drop the atomic bomb in Japan. I assumed he would say that dropping the bomb was the wrong decision because it was inhumane. But he said, "You know, when I heard the news that the atomic bomb was dropped, I was ecstatic. We had been reassigned California and my unit was practicing beach landings. This was after the Battle of Okinawa and we were training for the invasion of Kyushu. We were briefed that there would be forty percent casualties. When I heard the news about the atomic bomb, I thought 'I don't have to do this; the war is over.'" He didn't really answer my question whether it was the right decision. For him, the atom bombing meant that he did not have to risk his life in the invasion of Japan.

*KENNEDY: I felt the same way. I turned eighteen when the bomb went off and I was getting ready to enlist. This is what you did. We all knew what they were talking about — Okinawa, the look in their eyes, how difficult this was going to be.*

ZUMWALT: The war was horrible. Growing up, my mother talked more about the impact of the war on her childhood than my father did. She would talk about her life in Switzerland before the war broke out in Europe, about being frightened of Hitler, about her father's worry that Switzerland might be invaded, about food rationing and shortages. We heard these stories about the war — Switzerland was a neutral country, but people still faced hardships. My Swiss grandfather, who was an insurance company executive, served as an army reservist like most Swiss men, so was often away for drills and training. Mom talked sometimes about rationing of basic commodities like sugar and butter. She told us that, as a child, she would collect used cooking oil from her neighbors for recycling. Growing up in such an affluent society, it was difficult for me to imagine what life must have been like for her during the war.

*KENNEDY: Where did you go to high school?*

ZUMWALT: I went to Grossmont High School, which is in the east part of San Diego County. It was the first school built in the east county in the 1920s, as that area was growing rapidly. My father began his career teaching at Grossmont, but he transferred to a new school further east because he did not want to work in the school that his children attended. My high school was very nice, but not very diverse. There were Jewish and Mormon children, but not many Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians. I must say, after four years of high school, I did not feel completely prepared for college. I got almost all A's in high school. My teachers did not push me hard enough; only when I started university did I realize that there were many kids who were smarter and better prepared than I was.

*KENNEDY: I lived in San Marino, Pasadena and in those days — way before your time — we weren't pushed very hard.*

ZUMWALT: I should mention that while I was in high school, I participated in the speech team, competing in debate and extemporaneous speaking. The experience of competing in speech tournaments taught me about logical argumentation, building a case to support a point of view, and public-speaking skills. That experience was valuable.

*KENNEDY: I remember taking public speaking very reluctantly, being pushed to do that. It's awfully hard for a young lad or girl, unless you really have it in your bones, to get up there and talk.*

ZUMWALT: Public speaking was challenging for me. I was not a natural public speaker. And participating in this program encouraged me to follow current events, because we were competing in the area of extemporaneous speaking. I remember our coach pushing us to read *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *The New Republic* magazines every week. We needed to stay well-informed to be ready for any topic.

I applied for a study-abroad program called the American Field Service (AFS) during my junior year of high school and ended up living in Japan for one year. I had been taking German and thought that the program would send me to a German-speaking country. I went through the application process and never thought I would be sent to a place like Japan. For some unknown reason, the program decided I would be a good fit in Japan, where a family and high school were willing to host me. That decision changed my life.

*KENNEDY: Let's talk about that. Where did you go, what were you doing, what were your impressions?*

ZUMWALT: I left in March of my junior year of high school. I stayed in Japan for almost thirteen months. I arrived in Yokohama at the beginning of their spring vacation, started school in April 1973, completed their school year in March 1974, and enjoyed another spring vacation before I returned to California. For the first month in Japan, I loved it. Everything was exotic, life was interesting, people were nice. In 1973, Japan had not yet become the international country it is today. As a Caucasian student wearing a Japanese school uniform, I received a lot of attention. But by the second month of my time in Japan, I became quite homesick. Now, I realize that I was experiencing culture shock. I was struggling with the Japanese language and could not understand the lectures in my classes. I remember thinking that I wanted to go home; I feared that this experience was too difficult. Then finally, by summer vacation, my host family took me to visit Kyoto and the Seto Inland Sea. My Japanese communication skills began to improve and I made some good friends at school. By the end of the year, I remember wishing I could stay longer. When I returned to California, I had already decided that I wanted to continue to study the Japanese language.

My reentry experience was also difficult. I returned to my high school in April of my senior year. People were involved in the prom and various other senior events; they thought of these activities as milestones, but these events no longer interested me. My friends were not so interested in my experience in Japan and we seemed to have grown apart. My high school required me to complete one year of home study in Civics and Senior English in order to graduate. I only had about eight weeks to complete 36 weeks' worth of lessons in each subject. So although I was attending school at this time, I was almost always at home going through required workbooks in order to complete my high school graduation requirements. By throwing myself into all this study, I could distance myself from the social life at my high school. I just wanted to complete high school and move on at that point. I was expecting reintegration to California to be easy but discovered that cultural reentry was hard.

*KENNEDY: Let's go back to Japan. Where were you?*

ZUMWALT: I lived in Yokohama but my school was in Tokyo. Japan in the 1970s was still a developing country. It was only 28 years after the end of World War II and the country was still reconstructing from the devastation. I lived in an industrial part of Yokohama and was shocked by the tremendous pollution. The air would smell foul many days. My train station was situated

on a platform over the Tsurumi River, one of the most polluted in Japan. The station frequently smelled like a sewer. I had to wear a blue wool uniform with an uncomfortable collar. Each way, my commute took an hour and fifteen minutes with three train transfers. There were more constraints and school rules than my American school. For example, after leaving school, we were not allowed to do anything frivolous such as meeting friends in a coffee shop. My friends and I used to go together to a bookstore to hang out. If we were caught at a coffee shop or pinball parlor in our school uniform, we would be in trouble.

I attended Komaba Toho High School, a very strict all-boys school that was very focused on preparing students for their college entrance examinations. The students worked hard. I remember the teachers admonishing us that “If you study four hours a night, you will get into the University of Tokyo; three hours a night, you’ll get into Waseda or Keio; any less study than that and you are hopeless.” I did not have to worry about taking the Japanese college entrance exams, but I did feel the pressure to study along with my friends in school. My Japanese high school was difficult to enter and most of its graduates did go on to excellent Japanese universities. Many of my classmates are now medical doctors or senior business executives. One is a judge.

The level of mathematics at my Japanese high school was far, far ahead of my American school. I was placed in a class with Japanese eighth-graders who were at the level of my eleventh-grade honors algebra class! It was a bit humiliating. I also remember my first world history exam where I received seven points out of 100; I think the next-lowest student got sixty points. The teacher posted on the wall outside our classroom a list of students’ names in order of their exam results. It was so embarrassing to see myself at the very bottom of the list behind everyone else.

Fortunately, I had some very nice teachers. The school had only one other foreigner, a student from Taiwan. Three English teachers agreed to tutor me in Japanese. Each day for two or three hours, I would leave my class and go to the library for self-study or for a private Japanese-language lesson. I focused most of my energy on improving my Japanese and did make good progress thanks to my three language teachers.

*KENNEDY: Where did you live?*

ZUMWALT: I lived with a Japanese family named Mitsuhashi; they had three sons named Yukiteru, Masayuki, and Yoshiyuki. In Japanese fashion, I referred to the two older brothers as *Onisan* (a respectful term for “elder brother”) and only called my younger brother Yoshiyuki by his name. They were well-off. My Japanese father and mother ran a family rice-milling business with about two hundred employees. They were very successful at that point, marketing their milled rice in large supermarkets and to many restaurants and school cafeterias. They had money for a fancy imported car and to travel overseas.

But later, my Japanese mother told me that, in 1948, she had been forced to marry because her family simply could not afford to feed her any longer. She said that when she was in junior high school, she was so hungry that she peeled some paint off the wall and tried to eat that. She was married off to a rice-milling family at age seventeen so that she would have food at least. My Japanese parents had a good relationship. My Japanese mom was an excellent businesswoman and, behind the scenes, she had a great deal of influence in the company. Several times during my year in Japan, she would tell me about the horrors of war. She told me that she was hospitalized because she had become so malnourished. She was self-taught since she had missed so much school as a girl. But when I came in 1973, they were quite well-off.

However, one could still see poverty in our neighborhood. On my way home from school, outside my train station I had to walk by out-of-work day laborers who had passed out on the sidewalk. I was shocked to see these scruffy homeless men sleeping off their drunkenness on the street. There was an old man who came around on his bicycle, collecting old newspapers which he would exchange for a roll of toilet paper. Another elderly neighbor would collect metal scraps. She would push a cart through the neighborhood, looking for bits of metal from construction sites and trash dumps. My Japanese mother told me she was a war widow. A lot of the neighborhood housing was quite ramshackle. Some of the roofs were just loose pieces of corrugated metal. That area of Yokohama had all been destroyed by U.S. bombs in 1944 and 1945 and the stock of housing still had not been rebuilt. This poverty surprised me because I came from a place where people lived comfortably in single-family stucco homes with two-car garages.

*KENNEDY: Did you date?*

ZUMWALT: There were no girls in my school and the students were focused on their studies. There was tremendous pressure to study for the college entrance exams and dating was strongly discouraged. The students looked forward to joining clubs and having a social life in college.

This year abroad was an eye-opening experience, learning about a new culture and reexamining my own culture through a different lens. However, I missed the U.S. college application process. When I arrived home in April of my senior year, it was too late to apply to many universities, but I received a late admission to San Diego State University, where I spent my freshman year. I remember taking a cultural anthropology class which helped me understand the culture shock I had experienced living in a foreign country. I did take some basic Japanese classes at San Diego State, but one reason for transferring to UC Berkeley was they had a much more developed Japanese-language program. I graduated from Berkeley with a double major, U.S. History and Japanese.

*KENNEDY: What was UC Berkeley like?*

ZUMWALT: My grandmother and grandfather and my father and aunt and uncle had all graduated from Berkeley. My family visited the campus when I was maybe seven or eight and I decided right then that I wanted to attend UC Berkeley. I did not even consider other options, but neither did I experience any stress about college admission. As a graduate of a California high school in the top ten percent of my class, I was guaranteed admission to one of the University of California campuses. Today, I think there is much more stress about the college admissions process.

*KENNEDY: But it's also extremely good.*

ZUMWALT: UC Berkeley was a good school. However, I was not well prepared for its academic rigor. I had been used to being one of the smartest students in the room in high school, but at college there were many students who were better prepared academically. I realized that if I wanted to succeed, I would need to push myself harder. I buckled down and studied. The intellectual environment was quite stimulating.

*KENNEDY: Was there much Asian influence at Berkeley?*

ZUMWALT: Yes, at Berkeley in 1974, Caucasian students constituted less than half of the student body. There were many Asian American students and also many foreign students from Asia. Because Berkeley was a state school, there was a huge population of students from San Francisco Bay Area public schools, which have a large Asian American population. The tuition in those days was very inexpensive — my parents paid \$636 a year for my in-state tuition — a very reasonable sum compared to any private school.

Berkeley also had a sizable Japanese student population, both graduate and undergraduate. I made many friends among these Japanese students. Our interactions gave me a chance to practice speaking Japanese. Berkeley is very different now with many foreign students from China, but in those days, there were students from Hong Kong and Taiwan but not from the People's Republic of China (PRC). During my time at Berkeley, I remember only once meeting a student from the PRC; a professor brought him to my Chinese history class to talk about the Cultural Revolution in China. He seemed to us to be such an oddity — someone who actually had lived in China.

*KENNEDY: Was there much talk at that time about the internment of the Japanese in California?*

ZUMWALT: My senior thesis focused on the Japanese immigrant experience in California. I remember interviewing someone, a very nice woman who had been taken away from her home in rural California as a young girl and interned with her family in Arkansas. The experience must have been hard for her to talk about, but she gave me a good account for my research project. She told me what it felt like to have the police come in her house and search through her clothes. She talked about the fear of being bundled onto a train and not knowing where she was going, how her parents tried to shield her and tried to pretend it was a fun adventure. I had been aware of the internment, but it wasn't commonly discussed in school those days. Now, there is much more education in California public schools about the internment of Japanese Americans.

I do remember asking my father about the internment because he grew up in the San Joaquin Valley where Japanese farm families had lived. He said that he had two Japanese American friends on his high school football team. He said that one day they suddenly left and no one talked about it. He regretted this when he spoke to me, but he admitted that at the time nobody thought to question the U.S. government actions.

*KENNEDY: Berkeley at one point was at the forefront of protest and the Free Speech Movement, anything you can think about. Anti-conventional stuff. What was going on?*

ZUMWALT: Berkeley was famous for Mario Savio and the Free Speech Movement, but by the time I arrived on campus, it was a rather conservative place. One of my roommates was a graduate student, six years older than me. He had been an undergrad at Berkeley ten years earlier and he would tell me stories about student protests and learning to cope with tear gas on the campus. His stories were interesting but seemed like ancient history. The only protests I remember were Iranian students protesting the Shah and the secret police.

*KENNEDY: When were you at Berkeley?*

ZUMWALT: From 1975 to 1979. I became a U.S. History major; I loved history. When I arrived, I planned to pursue Asian Studies, but Berkeley had an incredible and large history faculty, so I signed up for more and more history classes each term. But I also continued taking Japanese because I wanted to master the language. Then I participated in a third-year study-abroad

program to Japan. When I returned, one of my counselors said, “You’re two classes short of having a second major in Japanese.” The problem was the two classes were the first and second semester after my senior year, but I liked being a student. I talked Mom and Dad into continuing to pay for me so I was on the four-and-a-half-year graduation plan to take these last two classes and obtain a second major.

*KENNEDY: You went back to Japan?*

ZUMWALT: The UC system offered a wonderful study-abroad program. There were 25 students from the eight different UC campuses that attended International Christian University (ICU) in the suburbs of Tokyo for a summer of intensive Japanese-language training and then a calendar year of classes. I think there were four of us from Berkeley, none of whom I knew beforehand because none were Japanese majors. One was a legacy speaker who spoke really good Japanese and two were Japanese Americans who did not have Japanese but went on this program to learn the language. The first summer, we spent ten weeks with six hours a day of language class to complete an academic year of ICU’s “semi-intensive Japanese” program. The program was pretty brutal with a great deal of homework, but I improved my written Japanese fast. Then for the academic year, I mainly took Japanese-language classes or classes in Japanese such as linguistics. This study-abroad program was a wonderful experience — I made a lot of friends, Japanese and American. Adjustment to Japanese college life was much easier than adjustment to Japanese high school life.

*KENNEDY: Did you see a real change in Japan?*

ZUMWALT: Good question. I left Japan in 1974 and came back in 1976, so the change to society wasn’t dramatic, but I saw a major change from Japanese high school life to college life. Japanese high school was so rigid and there was so much pressure to excel. In college, most of the students did not study much. In class, out of 120 students, maybe fifteen would attend. Those who attended would take notes and pass them to their friends to study for the end-of-term test. Because the Japanese students had worked so hard in high school, I think they thought of their college years as their vacation time.

*KENNEDY: The Japanese language, is it alphabetical or is it ideograms?*

ZUMWALT: The written language is not alphabetical. Japan imported Chinese characters — one needs to understand about two thousand Chinese ideograms to read a newspaper. Unlike Chinese, however, Japanese verb endings conjugate and the language also has particles of speech — for example, sounds to mark a subject, a verb, or the beginning of a subordinate clause. Therefore, the Japanese written language uses what is called a “syllabary,” abstract representations of sounds in addition to the imported Chinese characters. The elements of this syllabary were invented in Japan to represent the sounds of these particles, such as the sounds of the changes to verb endings that appear after the borrowed Chinese ideograms in written Japanese. Learning written Japanese required a lot of memorization. I remember we were required to memorize thirty new Chinese ideograms every week. I hated that! But I was committed to learning Japanese, so I continued.

While studying at ICU, I lived with an elderly Japanese woman who took in students as boarders. Her name was Ms. Ikeda, but we students always called her *Obasan* (auntie). I rode a bike to school, about a 25-minute commute. There were girls in the school, so ICU was more interesting

than high school. Colleges had long vacations, so every vacation, I traveled around Japan taking advantage of deep student discounts on train tickets. Usually I stayed in youth hostels or sometimes visited homes of friends. I explored the country during this year.

*KENNEDY: Were there many radical movements going on in the college?*

ZUMWALT: I managed to avoid student radical movements throughout my student career. When I attended high school in Japan, there was a lot of student radicalism among Japanese university students. There were many demonstrations on Japanese college campuses and a few were violent. I heard stories later from some of my ICU teachers about student radicals harassing teachers on campus. I remember learning the Japanese word for billy club (*geba-bou*), a word I have never again used, but at the time one could read in the newspaper about students using billy clubs to threaten students and teachers who attempted to ignore the student strikes by attending classes.

By the time I attended ICU, those demonstrations were over and the campus was peaceful again. At ICU, I benefited from some talented and dedicated teachers who took me under their wing and helped me master the Japanese language. It is a hard slog to learn Japanese and it takes time and effort, but I had some wonderful help along the way.

*KENNEDY: Did you have any contact with the U.S. embassy?*

ZUMWALT: Not at that time. I never had a reason to visit the embassy when I was an ICU student. I was interested in learning Japanese, but not in order to become a diplomat. Being from California, I did not know anyone who worked in a civilian federal government job. The Foreign Service was not a career I had considered.

To be honest, my entry into the Foreign Service resulted from a chance conversation. I was interested in graduate studies in history and considered becoming a teacher or college professor. The Japanese language was a tool needed to perform academic research. I was in an honors history class in my last semester at Berkeley when my professor encouraged me to take the Foreign Service Exam.

As a result, I sent a letter to the State Department (there was no internet or email then) asking about jobs in the Foreign Service and they replied, "The deadline to sign up for the written exam is in a week." I sent in my application without a moment to spare. I took the written exam at a federal office building in San Francisco on a Saturday during my fifth year of college. I did not feel much pressure because the Foreign Service still was not a career I was considering seriously. I later received a letter in the mail that I had passed the written exam. At that point, I was about to graduate and had received a Japanese government scholarship for two years of study in Japan. I could not afford to go to Washington to take the oral exam, but State offered an appointment for an oral exam in San Francisco the week prior to my scheduled departure for Japan.

The oral exams did not make me nervous because I was focused on my upcoming exchange student program in Japan and just saw that exam as an experience to help me prepare for job interviews in the future. I wore my one suit and my one tie. It was only after I had arrived in Japan that I received a fat envelope saying I had passed the oral exam and asking me to fill out a long questionnaire for the security background check. I did this, but soon forgot about the State Department as I did not hear from them again for over a year.

My third experience studying in Japan was at the Japanese Language Department of the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. I was on a full-ride scholarship with a monthly stipend, so graduate student life was quite comfortable. The Japanese department was designed for foreign students studying to become Japanese teachers, most from Korea, Taiwan, and the PRC. We foreign students spoke to each other in Japanese as our common language. I was the only American student in the department. Most of my classes were general education classes with Japanese undergraduates from other language departments. The Japanese students at the institute were all enrolled in foreign-language departments — English, French, Spanish, German, Russian, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, Hindi, and so forth. All of these students were required to take basic education classes during their first two years of college and I could join them to study economics, Japanese history, business, anthropology, and other subjects taught in Japanese. Mostly these classes were taught by visiting professors from other universities and they were talented and entertaining lecturers. Attending these classes in Japanese was a great way for me to expand my Japanese vocabulary and become comfortable reading in Japanese. I participated in this program for almost two years from April 1979 until December 1980.

Just at the point when I began to consider seriously what to do next, I received a phone call from the U.S. embassy in early December 1980. By that time, I had almost forgotten about the Foreign Service. I assumed, not having heard anything for over a year, that the State Department was not going to offer me a job. On the other end of the line was a woman named Patsy from Embassy Tokyo's Personnel Office (they did not call it human resources then) asking, "Are you planning any travel outside the country?"

I said, "Yes, I was going to go to Taiwan with my friend over the winter break."

She said, "You might want to stay in contact with us because we might be offering you a job and, when you get the job offer, you have to decide right away."

So, I canceled my trip to Taiwan. A few days later, Patsy called and said, "Come into the embassy. We will offer you a job in the next Foreign Service entry class starting on January 6<sup>th</sup>."

For me, the timing was wonderful. I had two weeks to pack up right before Christmas. I was surprised that the State Department bought my plane ticket home and onward to DC. The timing of my entry process into the Foreign Service was excellent because my scholarship was about to expire in three months. In fact, the whole process was serendipitous. Any one different step in this three-year chain and I would have had a different career. The timing was perfect at each step.

*KENNEDY: Do you recall the questions you were asked during the oral exam?*

ZUMWALT: The oral exam then was very different than it is now. My wife is also a retired FSO (Foreign Service officer) and she worked for BEX (the Board of Examiners) for a few years, so I learned from her that the exam now is more scripted, organized, and focused on key Foreign Service tenets. My oral exam, frankly, was more casual and less professional. Some about-to-retire FSOs chatted with us. I remember an interview with one of them who quizzed me about Bolivia because he had served there. He asked me the name of its capital, its major exports, etc. Lucky for me, I had always liked geography and I was able to answer his questions satisfactorily. I also remember he asked me, "Pretend you're a cultural attaché in Eastern Europe" — this was during the Cold War — "and you have to organize an American film festival. What three American films would you select?"

Another part of the oral exam was a group exercise. The six of us being examined that day were to imagine that we were on an embassy committee to select projects to fund, but only had enough money to support two out of the six. Each of us made a presentation on one project, then we discussed which projects merited the funding. Most people in my group sought to exhibit their debating skills by convincing the others that their project should be funded. After hearing the other presentations, I said, “I don’t think my project should be funded.” Everyone else quickly agreed not to fund my project. As the discussion evolved, I was the only person taking a neutral position in evaluating the project proposals. I have no idea how they scored us on that group exercise, but I suspect they were looking for attributes like teamwork and mediation rather than debating skills.

## Chapter II

### Entering the Foreign Service

FEBRUARY 1, 2018

*KENNEDY: When did you go in?*

ZUMWALT: I joined the Foreign Service on January 5, 1981. My entering class still gets together for a reunion every year in early January. It's nice to stay in touch with many of them. But more and more of my classmates are retiring and moving away from the DC area. A few classmates have already passed away. Two years ago, I was one of only two officers (out of our entering class of 52 entrants) who remained on active duty in the Foreign Service. Now there is only one classmate still on active duty, our ambassador to Oman, Marc Sievers. There are a few who are still working at the State Department on contracts.

*KENNEDY: What was your impression of the entering class that you were part of?*

ZUMWALT: When I came into A-100 (orientation class), I felt unprepared, a similar feeling to my first days at UC Berkeley. I had not attended a graduate program in international relations. I had neither served in the Peace Corps nor worked in a congressional office like many other A-100 classmates. At 24 years old, I was the second youngest person in my class. I think our average age was 32 years old. I tried to hide this anxiety, but I felt unprepared when I looked around at my accomplished and older A-100 classmates.

I was also concerned that the State Department brought me in as an economic officer though I had not studied business or economics in college. The department assigned each incoming officer a work specialty called a "cone." At this time, there were four cones — political, economic, management, and consular. After the merger of the United States Information Agency with the State Department, a fifth cone — public diplomacy or PD — was added to this roster. I had only taken one economics course in my entire college career. I remember asking one of the counselors why I was assigned to the economic cone. He replied, "You demonstrate a real aptitude for economics," and showed me the test score from my Foreign Service written exam. My economic score was the highest of all the sub-categories. Reflecting back, I remembered that I had taken the Foreign Service written exam on the Saturday before my Introduction to Economics course final exam at Berkeley. My knowledge of economics the day of the written exam had peaked with studying for this college final; my test score did not reflect my "aptitude for economics." My counselor also explained that I had strong Japanese-language skills and the department needed economic officers with Japanese-language skills since many of our bilateral problems with Japan related to trade.

Although nearly all of the overseas jobs on our A-100 assignment list were consular positions, the department sent me to Kinshasa as an economic officer for my first tour. Kinshasa was a great place for a young foreign service officer: the embassy was small, the ambassador and DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission) took mentoring seriously. There were only three State junior officers in the mission. That situation meant that I would receive the nurturing and training that I needed.

*KENNEDY: Were you getting any impressions of the Foreign Service from the A-100 course?*

ZUMWALT: My A-100 class was about a third female, but it was not very diverse. I think we had two African Americans, one Asian American, and two Latinos in the class. We did have several mid-level people coming in from other agencies, mostly from the intelligence community, who were making a lateral transfer from the civil service into the Foreign Service. Over half the class was from the Northeast. Coming from my West Coast background, it seemed to me that Washington DC had a different culture, people talked differently, and their emphasis on attendance at famous colleges was alien to me. I had much to learn, both about the government and about the Foreign Service.

I was fortunate because my uncle, who had retired from the navy, invited me to stay with him in Arlington until I could get settled into new accommodations. I had no savings and arrived with all my possessions in two suitcases. My uncle took an interest in my career and gave me excellent tips on how to be successful in the bureaucracy and advice on ways to manage bosses. We talked a lot about networking and finding career mentors. But we also talked about the importance of staying true to one's values and of service to country. I also appreciated that he really admired the Foreign Service and that he congratulated me on my career choice. His home became my "safe place" where I could seek guidance as I adjusted to foreign service life in Washington DC. This period was a good opportunity to reconnect with my aunt and uncle and my cousins. My uncle and aunt included me in their family celebrations and it was wonderful to get to know my cousins, whom I had not seen in about ten years.

I remember being a bit concerned years earlier when I told Uncle Bud that I was going to Japan as a high school student. After all, he had fought the Japanese as a young naval officer. His reply had been enthusiastic. He said, "That's fantastic! Japan is a wonderful American ally. Our country needs more people who speak Japanese." He was very encouraging. My uncle saw the U.S. military as working in partnership with American diplomats and he understood that diplomacy was an important component of national power.

Uncle Bud had fought in the Pacific war. He participated in the invasion of Saipan and the Battle of the Philippine Sea in June 1944 on the *USS Phelps*. Later that year aboard the *USS Robinson*, he supported U.S. forces landing with General MacArthur on Leyte Island. He told me stories about Japanese kamikaze attacks on his ship and about his actions in torpedoing Japanese naval vessels in the Battle of Surigao Strait. He told me that following this engagement, his battle group awaited with crossed fingers the arrival of the main Japanese force which had penetrated the San Bernardino Strait. Fortunately, the Japanese force broke off their engagement before reaching my uncle's ship.

We also discussed the reconciliation between the United States and Japan and his own efforts to build a partnership between the United States Navy and Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force. He told me that thirty years after the Battle of Surigao Strait, when he was Chief of Naval Operations, he'd had dinner with Admiral Ryuichi Itaya who was then the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces. Before dinner, Admiral Itaya toasted my uncle for his marksmanship in sinking his battleship and Uncle Bud toasted Itaya for his "survivorship."

*KENNEDY: When you came in, did the department say, "You speak Japanese, this is great?" Or were they going to mold you into something else?*

ZUMWALT: I tested in Japanese during A-100 and I received a score of 3+/3+. The Foreign Service uses a five-point scale to evaluate foreign-language proficiency with the highest score of five being awarded to a college-educated native speaker, while a score of one means one has very basic survival language skills. The first number in the rating is one's spoken and aural comprehension and the second score is for reading skills. At the time, I was pleased with this result. I thought that since the three level meant professional competency, a 3+/3+ score was pretty good! Six months later, at the end of my Foreign Service Institute (FSI) French training, I received a mark of 3/3 even though my French was far worse than my Japanese. I realized that I had not understood how to take the language test, so I went back and tested in Japanese again a few years later. By then, I had received additional training and I had continued with Japanese self-study. On a later tour when I was at Embassy Tokyo, they sent me to an interpreter school, so I continued to work on my Japanese and finally received a 4+/4+ on my last Japanese test score in the early 2000s.

The Foreign Service acknowledged that I had passed language probation with my Japanese score. But they assigned me to Africa. As you know, the job openings on the A-100 assignment lists are mostly positions that are difficult to fill with volunteers. Our assignment list had 52 jobs and probably 35 were in Spanish or Portuguese-speaking countries in Latin America, including four jobs at our Consulate General in Tijuana. My idea of the Foreign Service was not a post that was only a 45-minute drive from my San Diego home! I signed up for almost every non-Spanish speaking job on our list — openings in Africa and Southeast Asia. In hindsight, it would have been good if I had learned Spanish. But I volunteered for Kinshasa and other Francophone Africa job openings as a chance to learn French. My Swiss mother was happy when I started taking French, so I was fortunate to be assigned in Francophone Africa. This was how I ended up in Kinshasa, despite having no Africa background. It was a good time in my life for a hardship assignment like that; I was 24 and single — ready for adventure.

## Chapter III

### Kinshasa, Zaïre, 1981–1983

FEBRUARY 1, 2018

*KENNEDY: You were in Kinshasa from when to when?*

ZUMWALT: I was there for two years from the summer of 1981 to 1983. My tour in Kinshasa was a wonderful opportunity for me to develop my diplomatic skills. My assignment was a “rotational tour” with one year working in the embassy’s economic section and one year in the political section. This tour was a wonderful introduction to the Foreign Service.

*KENNEDY: What was the situation there?*

ZUMWALT: Zaïre (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo) was a poverty-stricken country of 25 million people when I arrived in Kinshasa in 1981. It’s a large and diverse nation — about the size of the United States east of the Mississippi River. The country lies mostly on the Congo River basin on a plateau about a thousand feet above sea level. There’s a small portion in the northeast of the country in the Nile River basin. The Congo River is the world’s second-largest, with a tremendous water flow year-round due to heavy rainfall in the extensive basin. The flow of water coming down the river in Kinshasa is forty times the flow of the Nile River in Cairo. The country had been riven by a separatist rebellion in the south that had been suppressed a few years before I arrived.

*KENNEDY: Were you aware of a difference of atmosphere, tribalism, or anything like that?*

ZUMWALT: Yes. The borders of that country had been created by the European colonial powers — Zaïre was a former Belgian colony and it was a completely artificial creation. There were 250 ethnic groups who spoke different languages. Four languages served as lingua francas (KiKongo in the west, Lingala along the Congo River, KiLuba in the center, and KiSwahili in the east and south.) Ethnic tensions were a major reason for the insurrection in that part of the country.

Mobutu Sese Seko was the president, but there were no checks on his power. My tour occurred during the height of the Cold War when the United States gave Mobutu a pass on human rights because he was on our side in this global conflict. The history is murky, but Mobutu received some CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) support when he was a young army officer for the coup that brought him to power in 1965. The political situation in the country had been chaotic after its independence in 1960.

*KENNEDY: I can’t think of the man’s name, well-known...*

ZUMWALT: Larry Devlin?

*KENNEDY: Yeah. He was the access to Mobutu.*

ZUMWALT: I met Larry Devlin a few times during my tour in Kinshasa. He had left the CIA by that time and was working for Maurice Tempelsman, the Belgian-American diamond merchant. Zaïre was a major producer of — mostly industrial — diamonds and he had hired Devlin as his representative in Zaïre due to Devlin’s relationship with President Mobutu and his inner circle.

I met Devlin several times at the Kinshasa airport. During this period, the airline flights from Europe (there were no direct flights to the United States) arrived at N'djili Airport between midnight and three in the morning. This flight schedule allowed the planes to refuel before continuing on to South Africa for a morning arrival in Johannesburg. (Zaire was one of the few African countries that allowed flights to South Africa, so many airlines flew via Kinshasa on their way to South Africa.) As a consequence, most of our U.S. government visitors would transit Europe via Brussels, Paris, London, or Madrid, then continue on to Kinshasa. As a junior officer, I spent many hours at the airport in the early hours of the morning waiting to meet an arriving passenger. Frequently, it was not until after a driver took me in an embassy armored car to the airport to pick up a visitor that we would discover that the incoming flight was late. This left us time to kill at the airport. We didn't drive home and then back again because our security officer wanted us to minimize driving after midnight. We tended to wait at the airport bar to avoid the beggars and con men that congregated in the arrival hall. A few times when I was waiting at the bar, I would run into Larry Devlin who was also waiting for an arriving passenger.

Larry was very loquacious and outgoing. I am sure he had been an outstanding CIA case officer because he could rapidly develop rapport with just about anyone. He took a liking to me because we had both attended San Diego State University for a time. Larry was quite open in sharing stories about his experiences when he was the station chief in Leopoldville during the brutal post-colonial struggle for power. Each time we met, he would pick up where he had left off seeming to appreciate my interest in his stories.

One night, Larry told me the story of when he had received orders to assassinate the country's president, Patrice Lumumba. Larry told me that he thought this order was morally wrong and that it would backfire. He told me that he stalled rather than move ahead with the plot. After Patrice Lumumba was assassinated by Congolese political opponents, Larry told me, he threw the poison toothbrush he had been given into the Congo River. We also talked about his role in the coup d'état that brought Mobutu to power. I was surprised that Larry made no secret about his experiences when he was working for the CIA just after independence. I think he was proud of his career. I will not go into more details here because these stories are all in his book.

Larry and I moved in different circles in Kinshasa. His pals were the Belgian and Zairian business elites. I never visited his home or attended any of his parties but, when we met at the airport, we rekindled our conversations from where we had left off. These conversations helped me to understand the tension inside the U.S. embassy between the CIA Station and State Department's political section.

*KENNEDY: Let's talk about the econ job. What were you looking at?*

ZUMWALT: When I arrived in Kinshasa, I was unsure how to be an effective officer. The U.S. embassy in Kinshasa had a decent-sized economic section with five officers. Our economic counselor was Joe Williams, an FS-01, who was very kind and gave me much guidance to help me succeed. The second-in-command was an FS-02 commercial officer named Leonard Lange who had entered laterally into the Foreign Service from a career as a stockbroker. Kinshasa was his first tour also. He was a nice guy, but he was learning the ropes just like me. The third was an FS-03 financial economist named Ronald Roberts who taught me a lot about basic economics, and the fourth was another junior officer named Eleanor Sutter who did a lot of reporting on micro-sectors — Zaire's agricultural and mineral production.

My job duties included being the embassy liaison with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). This could be challenging because USAID Director Norm Sweet, who was quite senior, chafed under chief of mission authority. There was clearly a rivalry between USAID and State that was unhealthy. USAID had a large mission in Zaïre but morale was low because it was difficult to design and manage development projects in such an unstable and corrupt environment. USAID's focus was on agriculture and human resources development but most of their projects were unsuccessful because the political environment was just not right for sustainable projects.

We also had a military aid program; the Zaïrian military was in shambles and wasted a lot of resources. The French had sold Zaïre some Mirage fighter jets which were totally inappropriate because these planes were too sophisticated to be maintained by their air force. Our military aid focused on trying to maintain their C-130 transport aircraft. We provided maintenance kits and sent mechanics to keep their planes flying.

Another duty of mine was to monitor and assist a major U.S. private sector construction project to build a 1,700-mile-long high-voltage power line between the about-to-be-completed Inga II Dam (which is at the point that the Congo River begins its descent from the inland plateau to the coast) and the copper and cobalt mining region on the other side of the country in Shaba province. An American company, Morrison-Knudsen, had won the contract to build this power transmission line. I worked with this company to help them with various issues. I was also the labor officer — Zaïre's labor unions were not really independent but we still did labor reporting.

Finally, I also carried out a monthly wage and price survey and wrote a monthly report that surveyed economic activity in Zaïre drawing from and summarizing embassy reporting. The wage and price survey was interesting — we received about a hundred dollars each month from American companies for our expenses, then we would provide them the results so they could make informed decisions about their own employee benefit packages. Each month, I would receive business-proprietary data about salaries from these companies' HR departments and amalgamate the data into averages that we could share with all of the companies. One of our employees would go to the market to purchase a market basket of goods and we would multiply the prices by a weighted amount in order to determine the overall inflation rate for low-, middle-, and upper-income employees. As I recall, for the low-wage employee market basket, basic foodstuffs like cassava flour, rice, beans, and palm oil dominated the expenditures. But the survey also included things like aspirin, toothpaste, cigarettes, cosmetics, and beer for middle- and high-income employees.

*KENNEDY: Was there much in the way of real labor unions?*

ZUMWALT: There were official labor unions, but they had no power to strike and the leaders had been bought off by the large employers among the Belgian and South African mining companies. On a few occasions, I helped AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations) instructors who came to Kinshasa to train local labor officials. Most of these trainers were Canadian since they needed to teach in French. They were going through the motions in teaching these classes and the union officials were happy to come to enjoy a free lunch, but this training did not really result in stronger labor unions. At the time, I thought this training was important, but thinking back on it, these programs were a waste of time because the Zaïrian labor leaders were not committed to improving working conditions for their members.

Later in my tour, I also began reporting on Zaïre's copper and cobalt mining industry. This responsibility gave me the chance to travel to the copper and cobalt mine region in Shaba, far from Kinshasa. The large copper mines were quite impressive.

*KENNEDY: Were they having the Shaba problems?*

ZUMWALT: My tour in Kinshasa occurred between the two rebellions in Shaba province. In the '70s, there had been insurrections in Shaba that had been suppressed. The region is completely different from Kinshasa — they speak KiSwahili as their lingua franca and are made up of different ethnic groups. Instead of rice and cassava, they eat cornmeal. The inclusion of Shaba into the country was an accident of the colonial mapmakers. When I was assigned to U.S. Embassy Kinshasa, the country was peaceful with troubles below the surface.

*KENNEDY: Mobutu was, as were many of these dictators, good at paying off these people.*

ZUMWALT: Criminal elements and soldiers understood that diplomats were off-limits as shakedown targets. The embassy limited nighttime driving for security and safety reasons but, if we did drive at night, we could encounter military roadblocks where soldiers in uniform would shake people down. Most expats would hand over a few packs of cigarettes and the soldiers would let them through. But we would yell out "Corps diplomatique" through our closed car window and, once the soldiers understood, they would let us through without demanding a payoff. We were instructed not to pay anyone off. If the soldiers did not let us through, we were supposed to radio the RSO (Regional Security Officer) to request help. That never happened to me. My car got broken into once and once a thief took a few things from my home, but I didn't experience any violent physical threats like those that became common in Kinshasa years later.

I did have one scary experience when visiting Congo-Brazzaville on the other side of the river. Some friends and I had taken the ferry across the river and were spending the weekend exploring that city. Walking back to our hotel from a local French restaurant, we were accosted by a Congolese military patrol seeking a handout. We realized that one of our party had forgotten her passport back at the hotel, so we decided that none of us would show the military guards our IDs so that they would not discover that one of our group was traveling without a passport. We had a long conversation, then the guards became surly and began brandishing their weapons. I realized that they were drunk.

At this point, I took aside the sergeant who seemed to be the leader of the group and explained to him that we were visitors from Kinshasa. I said that we had been frightened because we were used to the soldiers in Zaïre who were very "undisciplined." The sergeant agreed with me that the Zaïrian soldiers were quite undisciplined. I told him that we should have been more forthcoming since soldiers in Brazzaville were much better trained and that they would never harm civilians. He agreed with me that the soldiers in his patrol were much better trained. He then told us we could go. We breathed a sigh of relief as we returned to our hotel that night.

These minor annoyances aside, I enjoyed my tour in Kinshasa immensely. My apartment was grander than any embassy housing I had for the next twenty years. The building itself was a dump — the garage floor was covered in slime because it was always wet from the dripping overhead pipes and often the elevator did not work, so I sometimes had to climb six flights of stairs in the dark stairwell (someone had stolen all of the light fixtures), but once inside, my apartment was beautiful. The embassy did a good job of maintaining the aging infrastructure inside my two-bedroom apartment. I could enjoy a large balcony with a view across the Congo

River to the city of Brazzaville in Congo-Brazzaville (the former French Congo). The river is several miles wide at that point and the sunsets over the river were magnificent.

*KENNEDY: You couldn't really travel much there, could you?*

ZUMWALT: Travel outside the city was challenging and costly. Airfares were expensive and the roads were terrible. The main challenge to drivers was lack of gasoline. We simply could not purchase gasoline outside the capital. For travel in our personal vehicles, I was limited to driving as far as a half-tank of gasoline would take me so I could return home without running out of gas in my little Subaru. Through work, I did manage to make some in-country trips.

The ambassador during the first year of my assignment was Robert Oakley. I was a little afraid of Ambassador Oakley because he was not a warm person, but he was an excellent ambassador. I learned a lot from him. When he traveled, he always took along one of the junior officers. Some of my strongest memories of Zaïre were travels with Ambassador Oakley. Seeing and observing him in action provided rich lessons in effective diplomacy. Twice, he took me to the Peace Corps training center in Bukavu on the east side of the country. The Peace Corps center was located in a beautiful part of Africa's Great Rift Valley. I remember the beautiful lakes — Lake Kivu and Lake Edward — and the verdant hills with coffee plantations and fields of bananas, beans, and corn — with volcanic Rwenzori mountains looming behind. The cities of Kivu and Goma, on the south and north shores of Lake Kivu, were vibrant market towns with local fruits, vegetables, and handicrafts. They were also centers of trade in plantation crops, primarily coffee beans and tea leaves. Across the border, Rwanda seemed peaceful; we heard about ethnic tensions between Tutsis and Hutus but could not imagine the horrible genocide that would occur a few years later. I do recall attending a Tutsi celebration where tall lithe men dressed in traditional attire performed an energetic dance accompanied by drums. It is so sad to know that Kivu province later became almost a war zone. But then it was a beautiful and peaceful place. Maybe three or four times, I traveled with Ambassador Oakley and enjoyed seeing how he handled certain situations diplomatically.

In the Foreign Service, one learns by observing senior people. Ambassador Oakley became one of my role models. He was a bit too intense, but extremely professional and committed. Clearly, he was dissatisfied with the Reagan administration's policy of unqualified support for the corrupt Mobutu government, but he kept these thoughts to himself. Our economic section met with him once a week. At first, I was nervous beforehand and relieved when the meeting was over. I tried to say little because I lacked the self-confidence in those days to manage the relationship. What broke the ice was our travel together where he got to know me better as a person during our long plane and car rides.

I remember one trip where we visited a large USAID project in northern Shaba that aimed to improve the economic climate for production of the staple food — corn. It was a complex project that involved constructing agricultural feeder roads, financing loans to businessmen to start trucking companies, strengthening the agricultural extension service, and financing small loans to farmers for seed and fertilizer.

In addition to the ambassador and myself, the consul general from Lubumbashi came to join us. We visited a village where they served us a regional delicacy — a plate of fried flying termites. We did not have much choice, so I began to eat them one by one, trying to convince myself that they tasted a bit like bacon. Their wings kept getting caught between my teeth. Finally, as the

ambassador and I finished our plates, the consul general announced, “Termites, bad for my gout. My doctor told me never to eat termites.” He then took his plate and dumped his termites on my plate and the ambassador’s plate. I was appalled!

During my two-year tour in Kinshasa, we received two high-level American visitors. We hosted United States Ambassador to the United Nations Jeane Kirkpatrick, who was very close to President Ronald Reagan, and later we hosted Vice President George Bush and Barbara Bush. Mobutu regarded these visits as a nod of American approval — and he was right, that was why they came.

From the lead-up to these visits, I learned that there is a huge amount of work involved in organizing a high-level visit. The DCM, Ted McNamara, who was in charge of managing the visit, pulled me out of my job in the economic section and tasked me to sit in his office for a month to assist him full-time on the visit preparations.

This presented a tremendous learning opportunity for me. Ted McNamara had been a political officer in Embassy Paris and was extremely experienced in supporting senior visitors. From Ted, I learned how to organize visit logistics, how to negotiate with the host country, and how to manage expectations from the White House. I was impressed with his attention to details. I was the person taking notes in all of his meetings, so I learned a tremendous amount in preparing for these two visits. Negotiating with the Mobutu regime was challenging because they had certain wants and we also had demands to protect our senior visitors. I was fortunate to have the experience of working with Robert Oakley and Tom McNamara — I learned much from both of them.

*KENNEDY: What was social life like in Kinshasa?*

ZUMWALT: It was hard to make Zaïrian friends because most people — even people who were well-off — were so poor and they regarded Americans as rich. That gap enforced a distance. For example, I had a Zaïrian friend, Professor Kalonji, who taught economics at the university. When I would visit him, he would ask to siphon off the gasoline from my car into his car because he could not afford to purchase gasoline on the black market. Before visiting him, I would ask myself if I really wanted to go through the hassle of waiting in line again at the embassy gas pump to fill up after my visit. Although I did continue to see him from time to time, our resources gap was a disincentive to developing a close relationship.

I discontinued conversing about anything other than work to our embassy economic assistant named Bongola (who had a PhD in Economics from an Austrian university) because when I wished him good night at the end of the workday, he would reply “How can I have a good night when my children are hungry?” This type of comment did not invite a longer or more personal conversation.

When I transferred to the political section, the DCM asked me to follow the mood at the university. So, I began visiting the university and sometimes hosted dinners at my apartment for Zaïrian students. The students were all disgruntled but there was no organized effort to strike or demonstrate. They felt entitled to their scholarships and complained that their scholarship payments were chronically late. I did have some contact with university students and faculty, but there was always a bit of a distance.

I lived in a luxurious sixth-floor apartment. It was probably two thousand square feet, with two large bedrooms, a big living room, a spacious kitchen, and a locked storeroom with plentiful

shelf space and two freezers. My balcony ran the length of the building. The students just could not imagine living like that! They were barely getting enough food to survive in their university dining hall. So, I was always a bit embarrassed that my apartment was so nice and well furnished. Usually the students would start asking me for things — for money or other favors. In their minds, someone who was so rich ought to help his friends financially when they had needs — and they always had needs. When they came over for dinner, I would make huge pots of chili — the students were hungry when they came! I would invite a few embassy staff to engage them in conversations.

But mostly, my social life was with the other young Americans or other young diplomats. Although there were only three State junior officers in the embassy, with the USAID and Peace Corps offices the embassy had altogether nearly twenty young, single employees. We ate out at restaurants and hosted parties at our apartments. We would also go out to wonderful nightclubs to enjoy live music that was really amazing. Two of my best friends were USAID contractors who took a year off from the Fletcher School to come to Kinshasa to work for a year. Tennis was a major social activity — four or five nights a week I played tennis, it was too hot during the day. We could travel locally. We would picnic at a nearby waterfall or lake. But living in Kinshasa was a little bit confining compared to many other African cities.

I also socialized with Peace Corps staff and volunteers. When the volunteers came into town, I would host them in our small American embassy employees' club. The embassy had a policy of not allowing Peace Corps volunteers into the club unless they were the "guests" of a club member. These volunteers were living in challenging conditions in rural parts of the country and they just wanted to have a hamburger and relax at the pool when they came to Kinshasa. Many of us were willing to work around this embassy policy. So, the volunteers would wait outside the gate of the club and when one of us drove up, we would invite them to hop in the car to bring them inside the club grounds as our guests. That way, they could enjoy the rest of the day at the pool and snack bar. The volunteers were generally eager to share their experiences and I learned by hearing stories about their lives in rural Zaïre. Most of them were frustrated by the lack of progress in their villages.

Kinshasa was a real center of music and dancing. The city had many vibrant and inexpensive nightclubs with outstanding live music. For five dollars, one could visit a club to hear world-class music while enjoying a cold beer and perhaps a skewer of meat and roasted peanuts. It was affordable to rent the whole club, hire a band, and invite a hundred friends over for a farewell party. The club would charge fifty cents for a cold beer. The music would start at one in the morning and go until sunrise. I am not a night person, but I enjoyed the music. Therefore, I would go to sleep at eight, set my alarm for 12:30 a.m., then head out to a club at one o'clock in the morning. I could not stay up that late otherwise. Kinshasa had some fantastic bands and singers then: Papa Wemba, Tabu Ley Rochereau, and M'Bila Bel among others. My favorite was Franco Luambo who led the group Le Tout Puissant OK Jazz. He had a large band of ten to fifteen performers with a full brass section and female dancers. Many of these performers lived in Belgium or Paris but would return to Kinshasa for musical inspiration. I was never interested in the well-dressed Zaïrian women who frequented these nightclubs, but they were always lurking outside on the lookout for rich expats who wanted an escort for the evening. Inside, the nightclubs were filled with beautiful young women dancing with older "boyfriends."

We were completely unaware that as we enjoyed these nightclubs, the capital began to be ravaged by AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). In fact, in 1982 and '83, that term for

the disease did not yet exist. The first time I heard of AIDS was on my return to Washington DC from Kinshasa at the end of my tour in 1983. Even then, this disease seemed so distant because the medical community then was focused on Haiti as the origin point. They didn't realize yet that the disease had originated in Central Africa and that Kinshasa was a city at the epicenter. There was a large Haitian community in Kinshasa and they seem to have been the vector from Kinshasa to Haiti for this horrible disease.

Unfortunately, I later heard that three people I knew in the U.S. embassy died of AIDS after their tours in Kinshasa. One was our Peace Corps director — a wonderful man who had received a blood transfusion and later contracted AIDS. Later, there was more awareness about the risks of sexual promiscuity, but when I was in Kinshasa, people did not yet know about the risks of AIDS.

I must say, much like other hardship tours, the U.S. embassy community pulled together. I socialized with single young officers and staff, but families with children socialized together too. Families were busy with birthday parties, Hallowe'en and Easter celebrations, and other activities for their children. They tended to live outside town in a suburb where the school was located rather than in town where the single people lived. Life for them was a little bit like living in a small town.

I remember people who were excited to learn of their onward assignment to a wonderful post like Florence or Paris, but we would hear later that they were unhappy with the community at their new post. We had become accustomed to a warm, friendly, and hospitable community in Kinshasa where people looked out for each other. It sounds odd because Kinshasa was a grimy city and the poverty was overwhelming, but inside the American community bubble, it was a comfortable place.

We could always laugh about funny stories. I remember visiting one of my embassy friends and she said, "Let's get some brochettes from the brochette vendor out front." So, she went outside and bought some skewers of grilled chicken. They were wrapped in scrap paper. We unwrapped the chicken, she started laughing and said, "Oh, that wrapping paper is a page from my *Swarthmore College Review*! I threw that magazine out last week!" My apartment building too had a little market out front. Our housekeepers had first dibs on our trash and they would collect our used toothpaste tubes, scrap paper, pencil stubs, and our plastic and glass containers to sell in this market. The merchants there would then resell these items to eager buyers. It was an efficient recycling system.

On a more sinister level, there was also a vibrant market for car parts. I remember someone once pilfered the driver-side mirror from my Subaru. A friend took me down to the car parts market, where I found a replacement mirror that had been taken from someone else's Subaru. After purchasing it, the seller offered for an extra fee to reattach the mirror back on my car. This experience gave me an appreciation of how fortunate I was being born in the United States.

*KENNEDY: Was there a lot of talk about "After Mobutu, what?"*

ZUMWALT: For the political section, trying to answer that question created tension with the agency. The Political Counselor, an African politics expert named Jennifer Ward, met frequently with opposition figures. She spoke great French and she was single, so she was available to meet these people when they knocked on her door after midnight. She would come to work the next day and report on her conversations. They had some lurid stories about the president, his reliance

on witchcraft, the influence of sorcerers, and his ruthless punishments of his perceived enemies. She also met with human rights and religious organizations and with other non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These groups were quite critical of Mobutu and the political section reporting reflected their stories. This reporting was “inconvenient” for the Reagan administration since Mobutu was on our side in the Cold War struggle, but I am unaware that this reporting was ever suppressed or censored. The CIA, in contrast, maintained direct contacts with Mobutu, his henchmen, and his Israeli bodyguards, but I never saw their cables so I am unaware what they reported.

The “cover” for the CIA station chief was that he was a first secretary in the embassy political section. He chafed at the pretense that he worked for our political minister. He was quite eager to let it be known that he was in fact the CIA station chief. He lived in a big home, almost as nice as the ambassador’s, and he threw lavish well-attended parties there. I was never invited. His unwillingness to maintain his own cover was embarrassing for State officers — we seemed to be the only people in Kinshasa who were maintaining the pretense of his “cover” as the political section’s first secretary. I was asked frequently about him and when I would reply that he was a political officer, I would be met with knowing smiles and kidding from other diplomats.

*KENNEDY: Corruption — one of the problems of an embassy is if you report on corruption which is endemic in so many places, that tends to alienate the Washington office. They begin to dismiss you. Did you find you were downplaying the corruption side of things?*

ZUMWALT: I don’t think we ever received pressure to downplay corruption. I think Ambassador Oakley was honest with our reporting. That maybe was one of the elements of tension with the CIA. But there were tensions between the political section and the CIA Station because combating corruption or promoting human rights and democracy was not their priority.

My own views on Zaïre’s political opposition were more mixed than Jennifer’s. The opposition politicians were on the outs with the president and willing to complain to us about Mobutu’s excesses, but I thought many of them were corrupt as well. I remember once we hosted a lunch with one of these opposition leaders who had formerly been the Minister of Agriculture. His name was Étienne Tshisekedi (long after I left Kinshasa, his son Felix became president of the DRC). I met him at one of our colleagues’ houses for lunch and Tshisekedi began complaining about Mobutu government corruption. As I listened to his complaints, I looked out the window at his sparkling new red Mercedes sedan parked outside. As he was talking, I was thinking, “How can you afford this new Mercedes on your agriculture ministry salary?” His real complaint was that he did not receive enough of the spoils. It was easy to become cynical in Kinshasa.

The major foreign policy interest for the United States (I naively did not realize this at the time though) was maintaining stability by keeping Mobutu in power because he was on our side. There were a few American firms in the country. Gulf Oil was pumping oil off the coast. The copper and cobalt mining was important to the global economy and Zaïre had a huge debt owed to the IMF (International Monetary Fund) that we wanted repaid. But these economic issues were not our main interest, it was keeping Mobutu in power.

One other story I wanted to mention is one of the memorable moments of my tour. I was the junior State Department officer at the embassy in those days. We maintained a constituent post in Lubumbashi down in the south, in the mining district near the Zambia border, about a five-hour plane ride away. There, three State Department officers and two NSA (National Security

Agency) employees worked at the consulate. The consul general and the political-economic officer were monitoring tensions in Shaba. For some reason, all of the State officers were going to be gone at the same time — one was on home leave, one had a medical evacuation — so they asked if I would like to go and hold down the fort for six weeks. I thought that a temporary duty period in Lubumbashi would be exciting. I had never been to that part of the country, so I agreed. Thinking back on the status of this consulate, I think the main reason we had kept it open was to provide a platform for the NSA to monitor communications of the combatants in the Angolan Civil War. Lubumbashi provided an ideal location to monitor radio communications of the three military factions across the border who were contesting for power in that former Portuguese colony.

My stay in Lubumbashi was wonderful. I was just an interim caretaker. The weather was beautiful — much cooler than Kinshasa — the local beer was better than in Kinshasa and there were two or three restaurants in town where I could sit outside, listen to music, and eat Greek or Lebanese food. I enjoyed my six weeks' stay in Lubumbashi.

*KENNEDY: Was that post one that had been overrun or something?*

ZUMWALT: In the 1970s, there had been an insurrection in Shaba and our consulate had to close at that point. When I arrived, however, the consulate was popular because the people in Shaba province did not like the far-away capital and appreciated hosting an official U.S. presence. Security was not particularly tight; I think we had a fence but not a wall around our consulate building. The consul general's residence, where I stayed, had bars on the windows and door, but no compound wall. It did have a safe haven with a heavy steel door where we could shelter in case of an intrusion.

In those days, the consulate was remote from the embassy and the State Department. For example, the consulate didn't have any telephone connection to the embassy. The only way we had to communicate was through telegram or two-way radio, so we sent daily telegrams called "official-informals" with messages such as "we need more office supplies." Once a month, the Defense Attaché Office (DAO) airplane came with supplies and cash replenishments. We would meet the plane on the runway in our armored car, load up the supplies and cash, and return to the consulate where we would lock the cash in our safe. We tried to buy supplies in the local economy where we could, but many supplies we needed were not available locally. In this southern part of Zaïre, the commercial connections with South Africa were much better than with Kinshasa. It was not possible to drive from Kinshasa to Lubumbashi, but refrigerated trucks could drive from Johannesburg up through Zimbabwe and Zambia and arrive in Lubumbashi so many of our groceries came from South Africa.

Our consulate staff included an elegant Luba princess (the daughter of an important chief) who was our receptionist, a stateless person with a UN passport who had fled from South Africa who was our general services assistant, and a former Belgian mercenary named Jacques. He had stayed in Lubumbashi after the Belgians pulled out in 1960 and worked as our senior management employee. Jacques knew everyone in town; he knew how to get things done.

After I had been in Lubumbashi for a couple of weeks, Jacques came to me and said, "We have a problem," because the DAO flight had been canceled and we did not have enough cash to meet our payroll. We depended on the embassy for cash since the banking system did not function. We

paid all our consulate employees in cash and paid most of our bills in cash too. I know that our staff lived payday to payday; no pay meant no food for the family that week.

So I asked, “What do we do?”

He said, “Don’t worry. We will do what we always do.” He took me to the local Greek grocer. I had met him before because he was a prominent local businessman and I had shopped at his store. That day, I learned that he was a naturalized American citizen. We visited his office and told him the consulate needed cash to meet our payroll.

Without hesitation, he asked how much we needed. After we told him (as I recall, we needed about \$2,000 in local currency), he took us to his office, opened his safe, and started filling a cloth bag with cash in local currency. He gave me a blank piece of paper and I wrote “I owe you 66,000 Zaïres” and signed it. He put that scrap of paper in the safe. Thanks to this no-interest loan, we were able to pay our employees that week. When the DAO flight finally landed, we returned to his office to repay the cash loan. He ceremoniously tore up the IOU and offered me a drink to celebrate the loan repayment. Jacques told me “that is how you get things done in Lubumbashi.” Following the rules in the Foreign Affairs Manual would have meant that our staff and their families would go hungry. Our actions were “unconventional,” but they were the right thing to do in those circumstances.

*KENNEDY: It's an interesting thing, the coverage of the Greeks and Lebanese in Africa. It's really remarkable. So many of the merchants are Lebanese.*

ZUMWALT: Kinshasa had many ethnic Lebanese — most of the French *alimentations* (grocery stores) in town were run by Lebanese. Interestingly, while all of the prices were in local currency, the owners were happy to accept my personal check in dollars drawn upon my State Department Federal Credit Union account. They offered me a good exchange rate because they wanted hard currency to procure their French wines and cheeses and frozen goods from Europe and South Africa.

Zaïre then also had a fair number of old Belgians who had some reason to stay after independence in 1960. They might have an illiquid business like a coffee or palm oil plantation. The president at the time, Mobutu, was trying to forge a sense of national identity and the foreigners were obvious political foils so Zaïre wasn't a comfortable place for them. A lot of the Europeans who had settled in the Belgian Congo had left. The Lebanese didn't have the same resettlement options, so that is why many stayed.

In the embassy, about ten percent of our senior locally hired staff were not Zaïrian but from other places. It made me uncomfortable that many of the senior locally engaged staff (LES, formerly Foreign Service Nationals) positions were Caucasian foreigners who lived there. The drivers, gardeners, and warehouse workers were local Zaïrians, but the chief of the warehouse would be someone from Belgium, Lebanon, or Greece.

*KENNEDY: In 1960, I think there were four or five college graduates in the whole country.*

ZUMWALT: The country was ill-prepared at independence. Our economic section and political sections each had one senior local employee. But in the management section which employed the majority of our staff, most of the supervisors were foreign and most of the labor was Zaïrian.

*KENNEDY: You had to deal with what you had.*

ZUMWALT: The shortage of qualified Zaïrians for our senior positions was part of the challenge, but we should have started an internship program to bring along Zaïrians who showed potential.

Our management section did need to deal with endemic corruption. Several times during my tour, I heard about an employee who was fired for theft. Two quick stories about this petty corruption. One of my duties during Vice President Bush's visit was to monitor the motorcade. President Mobutu had offered twenty Mercedes sedans to use in Bush's motorcade. When they showed up with empty gas tanks, someone asked me to escort them to our gas pump and fill them up. I naïvely stood by the pump and watched these cars getting gas one after another. After a while I thought, "I think there has been more than twenty cars filling up." I walked around the corner and saw a car that was siphoning off gas to get back at the end of the line to fill up again! This was how the president's drivers made ends meet in Kinshasa.

Another example — there was a thriving currency black market. The official currency was overvalued and no one could afford to buy things locally by exchanging dollars for local currency at the official rate. The difference between the official and black market rates was about 10:1 when I arrived, but it grew to 30 or 40:1 by the time I left. Our embassy policy was everybody had to exchange \$100 per month at the official rate to maintain the pretense that we were following the rules. However, they didn't ask questions about where else we obtained the majority of our local money. My source of local currency was the spouse of an officer in the Defense Attaché Office. She was an entrepreneurial Vietnamese woman who would take our personal check drawn in dollars and give us local currency in cash. I would send her a check through the interoffice mail and she would come down to my office with a fat envelope of cash in local currency. I assume she was, in turn, selling these dollars to a local merchant and taking a commission on both ends. The embassy management looked the other way.

One of the benefits of this black market was that when I left the country and sold my car, the embassy would convert the sale price of my car from local currency back into dollars at the official exchange rate up to the amount we had converted from dollars to local currency at the official rate. To do this, we had to obtain paperwork from a Greek woman who worked in the General Services Office (GSO). As I was getting ready to leave the country, I walked the four blocks from my office to the GSO compound to fill out the paperwork to sell my car. It could not have taken more than ten minutes for me to return to my office, but by then, I already had two messages from local Greek car dealers offering to buy my car. I had not told anyone I was selling my car except for the clerk in GSO. She clearly was receiving some sort of finder's fee for passing on tips about embassy employees selling their cars. My price was fixed — the purchase price of my car in the United States times the official exchange rate. Since I had multiple buyers, but no way to raise my price to the "market rate," I told each of them, "Here's my price, the first person to provide cash will get the sale — but I'm not giving up my car until the day I leave."

Then I had to go pick up the cash — it was \$10,000 worth of local currency at the official rate. I met the dealer and he began counting out the cash in wads of 25 bills. Since there was a shortage of large bills at the time, he was counting bills that were each only worth one cent or 1/2 cent meaning that each dirty wad of 25 bills was worth 12.5 cents or 25 cents. It was like buying a car using pennies! The large boxes of bulky wads of cash would not even fit into the trunk of my car! I walked out of the dealer's office with boxes and boxes of bills. This trader kindly offered to send his guard to ride in the front seat with me back to our embassy cashier where they would again count out the bills. I finally received my check for \$10,000, which essentially meant that I

had enjoyed the use of my new car for free for two years. That was a financial benefit that equaled the amount of my hardship pay for two years.

That sort of crazy story was common in Kinshasa, everyone had humorous stories because life there was so different and full of adventure. Life was sometimes difficult, sometimes frustrating, but always interesting. Thinking back on my time there, I have mostly positive memories of my tour.

*KENNEDY: These experiences get you ready for working in an imperfect world.*

ZUMWALT: I learned the importance of being flexible. I also learned that humor was an excellent way to overcome frustrations and worries. Sometimes one just had to chuckle about the situation and move on. My tour in Kinshasa was a good Foreign Service entry-level experience. I gained experience working in the political and economic sections, learned how to prepare for high-level visits, and improved my basic French. Because we were not a large post, I benefited from many opportunities not available to officers in larger posts.

## Chapter IV

### Consulate General Osaka-Kobe, 1983–1985

FEBRUARY 7, 2018

*KENNEDY: What did you want for your next post and what happened?*

ZUMWALT: I did not realize how the Foreign Service assignments process actually worked. Fortunately, Ambassador Robert Oakley took an interest in helping me find an assignment in Japan. Before he went to Kinshasa, Ambassador Oakley had been one of the deputy assistant secretaries in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP). Unbeknownst to me — this is before the era of email — he sent a letter to the bureau’s assistant secretary recommending me for a job in that bureau. Then I received a letter from the deputy director of the Japan desk, John Malott, saying “I understand you speak Japanese. Here are a list of jobs coming open in Japan. Let me know which ones you would be interested in.” I was impressed that someone wanted to recruit me! I replied by letter because that was the method we used in the era before email. On the outside of the envelope, we would type the words “official-informal” meaning that the contents were not personal, but they were not a formally approved embassy communication. I told him that I would be happy with any of the jobs on his list.

Eventually I received a notice assigning me as Vice Consul in Consulate General Osaka-Kobe. This position was language-designated, so they needed an officer who spoke Japanese. I was happy with the chance to return to Japan, where I felt confident that I could utilize my Japanese language background to good effect.

After departing Kinshasa, I enjoyed four weeks of home leave visiting my sister in Colorado and my parents in San Diego. Home leave is a wonderful benefit of the Foreign Service, allowing one to become reacquainted with one’s own country after an overseas tour. I remember spending a week driving around the Rocky Mountains for the first time.

On my way to Kobe, I spent two days consulting with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (now Immigration and Customs Enforcement or ICE) in Honolulu and consulted for two more days at our embassy in Tokyo. When I arrived in Honolulu, two immigration officers explained their efforts to identify members of Japanese organized crime groups, Yakuza, in order to block their entry into Hawaii. These two officers were interested in strengthening cooperation with Consulate General Osaka-Kobe because the largest Yakuza gangs were headquartered in our consular district. During my tour, our team in Kobe did spend a lot of effort trying to screen out Japanese criminals during their visa application process.

*KENNEDY: By the time you got in the Foreign Service, had you developed a significant other?*

ZUMWALT: That’s a very timely question because this is precisely when we met. Ann had come into the Foreign Service in November 1980, but I did not know her when I was living in Washington for training prior to my first assignment. I met Ann in 1983 on my way to my assignment in Osaka-Kobe.

*KENNEDY: What was her background?*

ZUMWALT: Ann is Japanese American. Her father immigrated from Japan to Washington State in 1908. Her mother was born in California but returned to Japan for school when she was in

third grade, then lived in Japan until she was eighteen. Her mother then married my father-in-law and returned to the United States together with him. They both spoke Japanese at home and had a rather traditional family in Seattle before the war.

A few months after Pearl Harbor, Ann's parents and sister, like other Japanese and Japanese Americans living on the West Coast, were subject to an exclusion order. Ann had not been born yet, but her parents and her older sister had to relocate quite suddenly because of this government order. Because they were only allowed three days to move, they lost almost all their possessions in the process. Her father had been a railroad employee with decent pay; they had enjoyed a comfortable life in Seattle. Ann's father had a cousin in Colorado who found them work, so her parents and older sister moved to Colorado, where her parents worked on a farm for the next few years. They had a rough experience.

*KENNEDY: It's a blot on our system. The interesting thing is here and on the West Coast, they were interned. Yet, in the Hawaiian Islands which were the vital center of our whole Pacific endeavor, they weren't.*

ZUMWALT: Yes. The Japanese community living in Washington State, Oregon, and California were forced to relocate, but the Japanese American community in Hawaii was not. As a consequence of this decision, Ann was born in Colorado twelve years later in 1955.

*KENNEDY: Where did she go to school?*

ZUMWALT: Ann attended school in Denver, Colorado. When Ann was born, her father worked in a dry cleaner's shop pressing shirts. I don't know how much he got paid, but it wasn't much. Her family always had food, but there was not a lot left over. Her mother took in laundry and mended clothes for extra income. Every evening after she closed her shop, Ann's mom would go to the laundromat and wash, iron, and fold her customers' clothes. Her mom was working almost around the clock.

Ann attended a public school in Denver. Ann was one of only two Asian Americans in her school. They also attended a Japanese Buddhist temple every Sunday; she looked forward to activities with other Japanese Americans at church. Her parents, especially her mother, were very active in this church. Ann was the youngest child; her sister Aki, who is twenty years older than Ann, grew up speaking only Japanese until she went to elementary school. Aki faced so many cultural problems — people making fun of her at school, challenges with homework, and that sort of thing — that by the time Ann was born (she is the fourth child), her family spoke only English at home. They made a real effort to "become American" because being of Japanese heritage wasn't appreciated in American society then. Ann grew up speaking very little Japanese. She learned the language as an adult in college.

*KENNEDY: Where did she go to college?*

ZUMWALT: She went to Colorado College, a small liberal arts school in Colorado Springs, an hour south of Denver. Then she went to Columbia SIPA — the School of International and Public Affairs — for her master's degree in International Relations. She was a French major as an undergraduate student; she participated in a study-abroad program in France and focused more on Europe than Asia in college. At Columbia, since she already had French, she took Japanese.

Ann entered the Foreign Service two classes before me in the 150<sup>th</sup> Foreign Service class. Because she had some Japanese-language ability and they needed people at our consulate in Naha, she was assigned to her first tour in Okinawa. To prepare, she received FSI Japanese-language training. They do not normally give officers a second tour in the same country but there was a staffing gap in Tokyo and they needed someone right away as she was finishing her tour in Okinawa, so they assigned Ann to Tokyo for her second tour. It was during that time that we met. Ann spent the first three and a half years of her Foreign Service career in Japan dividing her time between Okinawa and Tokyo.

Because she was the junior person in the embassy's American Citizen Services (ACS) unit and I was on my way to Kobe to be the ACS officer, the consul general assigned her to show me the ropes during my Tokyo consultations. I learned a lot from Ann in those two days, seeing how the embassy managed Americans renewing passports, seeking reports of birth abroad, and asking for notarial services. One memory of Ann was at lunchtime on my second day of consultations in Tokyo. She invited me to a nearby sushi restaurant. Not only did she buy my lunch, but she left money for one of her consular staff for his next lunch too. I remember being impressed by what a generous person Ann was. My first impression was not wrong!

When I was in Osaka, I only saw Ann once in two years, but we did speak on the phone about work issues from time to time. Her boss in Tokyo and my boss in Kobe did not get along well, so my boss would sometimes ask me to speak to Ann on a work issue. That was a fortunate break for me! Later on when we both returned to Washington, we started dating.

*KENNEDY: Let's talk about Osaka-Kobe. Where did it fit into the scheme of Japan, politically, and what were you doing?*

ZUMWALT: Consulate General Osaka-Kobe was unusual in that it had offices in two different cities. Therefore, we had an odd hyphenated name — U.S. Consulate General Osaka-Kobe. The reason for this was that the original consulate was located in Kobe, the seaport where most foreigners in western Japan lived. The workload of a consulate in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was heavily involved with shipping services that were performed near ports. Over time, however, Osaka emerged as the financial and business center of western Japan, so there was a decision to move the commercial and public affairs offices to Osaka, while keeping the consular and management sections in Kobe. Our two offices were about an hour apart by car or train. The department has since moved and consolidated the consulate operations in Osaka. The majority of my work in Kobe was to manage the American Citizen Services section and help the visa section as time permitted.

Let me say a bit about my ACS work. Two of the services we provided were the Certificate of Witness to Marriage and the Consular Report of Birth Abroad. I believe these services are performed in Korea and China too. Americans require these documents because Japan does not have marriage and birth certificates. Each Japanese citizen is listed on his or her family registry when they are born. When one marries, the woman's name is removed from her family register and entered on her husband's family register as his spouse. For American men who got married (and didn't have a family registry, obviously), the only thing the city hall could do is note on the family registry of the female Japanese spouse that this American person is now part of this Japanese family.

This Japanese family registry document was not accepted in America as a proof of marriage. Therefore, the consulate offered the service of providing a Certificate of Witness to Marriage document which served as a de facto marriage certificate. The bride and groom would come in and we would witness their marriage. This meant that after examining their Japanese family registry, we would provide a separate document in English stating that we had witnessed their marriage. This English-language document served to show that the Consulate General had attested that the couple had been legally married in Japan. Likewise, when a child was born in Japan to an American citizen, we would provide the Consular Report of Birth Abroad, which served as a birth certificate and proof of American citizenship for that child. Providing those services was a happy occasion. We had a lot of people come in to ask about marriages, so we had prepared a checklist of steps they needed to take. They had to go to city hall first to get married, then come in to show us their annotated family registry, and then we would issue the certificate. Sometimes the newlyweds made their visit to our consulate into a part of their wedding ceremony. They would come in dressed up and ask for a picture with the Vice Consul in front of the American flag so they could show their family. My photo is in a lot of wedding albums!

Of the couples that were married, seventy percent were young American men and young Japanese women. About twenty percent were older American men marrying young Japanese women — often a second marriage for the man. Less than ten percent of the couples were an American woman marrying a Japanese man. Of that group, almost all of the couples were an American woman who had come to Japan to marry a Japanese man she had met in the United States. We knew from experience that most of those marriages would prove difficult for the female American spouse. This was especially the case if the couple were going to live in Japan, because Japanese expectations about women's roles were so different than what American women expected. We were aware of a support group established by an American woman married to a Japanese man, so we would tell the new American bride, "Congratulations! Here is some contact information for this organization if you ever need help or advice." Sometimes we would later receive a call from an American wife saying, "I threw that contact information away because I didn't think I'd need it, but could you give me her phone number again?" I am sure these marriages were difficult for the Japanese husbands as well — in the United States they were free, but after returning to Japan, they faced family pressures and long work hours.

*KENNEDY: When I was in Saudi Arabia, it was awful. American women would meet a handsome young wealthy Saudi playboy having a wonderful time and as soon as they went back, wham, they were put in purdah.*

ZUMWALT: The situation for American women marrying Japanese was not that bad. But still there was often a mismatch between the American spouse's expectations and the reality of life as a married woman in Japan.

Let me return to the subject of the Consular Report of Birth Abroad. Japan has since modernized its nationality law, but at that time a Japanese father could transmit nationality to his child but not a Japanese mother married to a foreigner. If a Japanese woman was married to an American, in Japanese eyes that child was an American citizen, not Japanese. However, if the mother were unwed, then she could transmit her Japanese nationality to the child so that the child would not become stateless. We of course didn't make that distinction; the child of either an American woman or a man would be a U.S. citizen. According to U.S. nationality law, an American father

can transmit American nationality to his biological child even if he is not married to the birth mother.

This led to one unusual situation in Kobe. There was an American medical doctor in Kobe who had five children with his Japanese wife. He believed strongly that his children were entitled to dual nationality so that they could decide for themselves on adulthood which nationality they preferred. Each time his wife was about to give birth, he would come into the consulate and fill out a paper that he was getting divorced, making him a single man and making her an unwed mother. The Japanese authorities would then enter their newborn child on her family registry. After the Japanese authorities had processed the paperwork for the child's Japanese nationality (which did not take long), this American doctor would come into the consulate to sign an affidavit that he was the biological father of the child. So, we would process the paperwork — the Consular Report of Birth Abroad — which recognized his newborn child as an American citizen also. He was a nice person and, occasionally when we had a destitute American who needed medical care, he was generous about providing pro bono treatment to the American vagabond.

I also visited with American prisoners in jail and occasionally we helped a destitute American to travel home. We did not have too many Americans in jail in our consular district. If an American were convicted of a crime in Japan, he would be sent to a prison in Tokyo's district to serve out his sentence, so we only had to help Americans who were held in jail awaiting trial. In the vast majority of cases, the Japanese government did not want to hold Americans in prison for long sentences, so for nonviolent crimes the usual result would be a conviction, a suspended sentence, and deportation. We did have one interesting case which was an American con artist who had stolen jewelry from over ten different department stores. Although he had not used violence, the Japanese police were furious that he did not acknowledge his crime or seem sorry for what he had done. We feared that they would sentence him to a lengthy prison term. Checking with our legal attaché, I found out that this individual was also wanted in California for grand larceny. Our legal attaché arranged with the police an understanding that if they were to deport this person after his conviction, the California police would arrest him on arrival in San Francisco for trial in California. The police then recommended that he receive a suspended sentence. This way, we avoided another American in Japanese prison.

When I was in consular training in Washington DC, the instructor announced that no one had to take the shipping services unit unless they were assigned to Hamburg or Kobe. Of course, this meant me and I was told I had to study this unit because officers in Kobe still performed seamen services. I learned some arcane rules about consular work with American ships and American seamen. These rules mainly stemmed from outdated concern over American sailors who could be discharged and left penniless in a foreign port. To protect these Americans, a system was developed where an agent of the shipping company and the seaman had to visit a consulate together to "sign off" the ship. Our job was to certify that the seaman was willingly being discharged, had been paid for his work, and was provided money for transportation home. With the decline in American-flagged shipping (American President Lines and Sealand were the only two American-flagged shipping companies with scheduled service to the Kobe port), this shipping services workload had shrunk to almost nothing. I don't recall more than a handful of times I needed to do this sort of work.

Once, I was asked to inspect the radio of a U.S.-flagged vessel in lieu of the Coast Guard inspection. The ship that I "inspected" was an LNG (liquid natural gas) tanker sailing between

Japan and Indonesia. These ships never entered a U.S. port to schedule a Coast Guard inspection. One evening, I visited such a tanker about ten o'clock at night as it was lingering offshore in Osaka Harbor waiting to dock at the Osaka Gas Company's LNG terminal. It was raining quite hard when a small motorboat picked me up at the dock to ferry me to the ship half an hour offshore. When we arrived at the side of the huge LNG tanker vessel, one of the crew threw a rope ladder overboard to our boat which was bobbing in the waves about forty feet below the ship's deck. I was clutching a small bag with my consular seal and the paperwork in one hand as I used my other hand to slowly climb up the ladder. My face was lashed with rain as the rope ladder swayed in the wind. I did not look up or down as I concentrated on holding on to the ropes for dear life. Finally, I reached a spot on the ladder where a member of the crew could reach down and help me up the last few rungs onto the ship. Once aboard the ship, the captain and radioman were quite hospitable. They showed me the radio, verified that it worked, and I completed my paperwork that said they had passed their "inspection."

*KENNEDY: Was there much tourism in your area?*

ZUMWALT: We provided assistance to many American travelers to our consular district. The old Japanese capital of Kyoto was a tourist magnet. A lot of Americans visiting Japan would come to Kyoto on the bullet train. Hiroshima was also in our district. So, we did see a fair number of people going to Hiroshima because of the atomic bomb memorial and museum there. Many Japanese Americans had ancestors from our consular district, so we saw a fair number of Americans visiting relatives. Our district also included Aichi Prefecture where Toyota Motor Corporation is headquartered. There were a fair number of Americans living in Nagoya and Hiroshima, so every two or three months, we took a day trip to those cities to provide services to American residents such as passport renewals, reports of birth, and notarial services. In Hiroshima, Ford had a partnership with Mazda so there were probably fifty Ford employees there. And there were a fair number of American missionaries in Hiroshima also. Also, there were a few American doctors and scientists working at the Radiation Effects Research Foundation where Japanese medical personnel were monitoring the long-term effects of radiation exposure to A-bomb victims.

*KENNEDY: What was your visa work like?*

ZUMWALT: The Osaka-Kobe visa section was quite busy — that was an era when Japanese tourism to the United States was expanding rapidly. With Japan's relaxation of Japanese foreign currency controls and its growing wealth, Japanese outbound tourism exploded in the late 1970s. Japanese tourists discovered Hawaii, Guam, Las Vegas, and Disneyland!

When I arrived in Japan as a consular officer in 1983, Osaka-Kobe had become the third-largest visa-issuing post in the world after Tokyo and London. We issued over 280,000 visas per year because there was so much pent-up demand from first-time Japanese travelers.

*KENNEDY: There was no particular problem, was there?*

ZUMWALT: The challenges of issuing so many visas were primarily logistical. This was before the adoption of computer databases — we worked in an analog world with everything on paper documents. We tried to streamline the process for checking names and stamping passports. We had a very low refusal rate, less than one percent. Since few Japanese nationals were refused visas, there was no incentive to falsify the application, so fraud was quite low.

We reduced our workload by outsourcing most of the repetitive work to Japanese travel agents who served as agents for Japanese visa applicants. Most Japanese were too busy to come to the consulate on a workday and they were willing to pay a travel agent a modest fee (I think it was maybe \$20) to obtain their visa. The agents made their money selling a volume of package tours to the United States, so they were eager to work with us to streamline our process so we could issue the visas efficiently. We used to run training sessions for the travel agents so they could learn how to meet our requirements. This was only possible because there was such a relationship of trust between the consulate and the travel agents. Only once did we catch a travel agent helping an intending immigrant to obtain a tourist visa. The Japan Association of Travel Agents was furious with that agent too and they offered to publish an article in their magazine to shame that company. The company manager came in to beg me to ask the association not to publish this article. Instead, he voluntarily agreed to give up his visa agent business. We realized that peer pressure and public shaming could be a powerful enforcement tool.

Part of our agreement with the travel agents was that they would report to us if a Japanese tourist who had obtained a visa to travel on a group tour did not depart the United States as scheduled. This only happened three or four times in the two years I served in Kobe. The agent would send us a letter which they called an “Escape from Party Report” to inform us of the incident.

Five or six of the bigger travel agents would arrive daily with shopping baskets full of passports and visa application forms. They would drop off the new applications and pick up the previous day’s passports with the U.S. visas inside. We would process about one to two thousand visas per day. We didn’t require the travel agents to screen the applications for us but, as they were interested in developing smooth working relations with us, they might come in with three hundred applications and say “You might want to interview these two.” They had figured out the kind of people we screened carefully.

There were only three main categories of people that we might interview if we were concerned that they might be intending immigrants rather than tourists. (We referred to non-immigrant visa applicants who really wanted to go live in the United States as “intending immigrants.”) One group were young single Japanese women who were members of the Unification Church (known colloquially as Moonies). Reverend Sun Myung Moon had staged several mass weddings in the United States and there had been several hundred Japanese women who had gone to the United States as tourists only to marry an American believer at one of these mass ceremonies. Another category was young Japanese men who intended to go work in an American sushi restaurant. Sushi was booming in the United States and many new restaurants were looking for Japanese labor, but these visa applicants needed a work visa not a tourist visa.

Finally, the other category of applicant we would refuse was a member of a Japanese criminal gang. From the application form, it was sometimes difficult to spot a Yakuza, but sometimes a travel agent would tip us off, saying “you might want to call this person in for an interview.” Other times, based on the physical description, the address, or profession, we might ask a suspicious applicant to appear for an interview. When that happened, we generally could tell right away by their swagger and bullying speech pattern that they were a Yakuza. When they appeared in person, we could also check for missing little fingers and tattoos. I remember asking one visa applicant about a missing digit on his little finger and he claimed it was from a mining accident. (He did not obtain his visa that day.) A few applicants cursed me at the counter when they were refused, but Japanese Yakuza had no interest in harming a diplomat which would only have invited a police crackdown. The consulate maintained an excellent “unofficial” relationship

with the Kobe police department and we could secretly submit the name, address, and date of birth of an applicant to them and they would then tell us if that person had a Japanese criminal record. We asked the police to check on perhaps five to ten names per week. About half of these name checks came back with criminal records and we then refused the applicants visas for having lied on their application form. The Yakuza usually had convictions for loan sharking or other criminal activities. In this manner, we would refuse about 75 Yakuza applicants per year, but I am sure that others passed through our system and went to Hawaii and Las Vegas on their vacations. I don't think it has ever been shown that Yakuza attempted to establish criminal organizations in the United States — they seemed to be going on vacation like other Japanese tourists.

There were of course also walk-in applicants — perhaps fifty or so per day. Tokyo had many more walk-ins and many more third-country national applicants than we did. The only exceptions were the days a cruise ship would come into port, when we might see an additional fifty to a hundred cruise ship employees seeking U.S. visas. We might see a Colombian waiter, an Italian violinist, a Sri Lankan boiler operator, and a Filipino seaman all in the same day. These visa applications were tough to adjudicate because they did not have ties to Japan, so it was difficult to judge if they were intending immigrants.

Kobe's visa section employed fourteen LES and they had to check each applicant's name against a visa lookout list. This list would include names of people who had previously been deported from the United States, people who had already been refused a visa at another post, and people who we knew were ineligible (for example, because they had a criminal record). That process took most of the morning. These days, this name-check work is all automated, but in that analog world, our staff performed this tedious chore manually.

The State Department did have a system called AVLOS (Automated Visa Look Out System) but it was very primitive. In theory, one could type in a name along with the date and place of birth, and AVLOS would reply with a "hit" or clearance. If one got a "hit," one had to then check as to why that name was on the list. The problem for posts in Japan was the large volume of Japanese applicants. If we entered all of our applicants' names into AVLOS, the large volume of name checks might have crashed the global AVLOS system. Therefore, instead of using AVLOS for Japanese names, every week Embassy Tokyo would review AVLOS and pull out every single Japanese name to make its own written list of Japanese names. Tokyo would then send this list of names to us. Our job was to compare visually the names on each visa application against this written lookout list. We only used AVLOS to name-check our non-Japanese visa applicants. It was tedious and time-consuming work for our local staff.

At the end of the day, after all of the names had been checked and after we had interviewed all of the walk-in visa applicants, one or two local staff would stamp visas in the passports. This work was also tedious as they had to open each passport, find a blank page, and insert the page into the Burroughs machine where it would get stamped. Some local staff got so fast at this process that the machine would overheat! We would be visited frequently by the Burroughs maintenance man who would tune up or repair our machines. The consulate general consular section had five or six of these machines and one of the jobs of the officers was to remove the visa plate from each machine at the end of the day and lock the plate in our safe. I am sure that young consular officers today would be amazed at the lack of automation in our office in 1983.

*KENNEDY: Did you have a name problem? I went through this in Korea where 55 percent of people were named Kim and Lee is spelled five or six different ways — you had about five family names.*

ZUMWALT: That's a less serious problem in Japan. With name, date and place of birth, and sex, we could usually distinguish among Japanese individuals. If we were in doubt and someone was on the lookout list, we would call them in for an interview. Sometimes we would discover that the applicant was a different person from the one with the same name on the lookout list.

While we did process visa applications for third-country nationals, this constituted less than five percent of our numbers, but over ten percent of our time. The largest number of foreign applicants were ethnic Korean permanent residents of Japan. Perhaps two-thirds of the ethnic Koreans living in Japan resided in our consular district. These Korean residents were mostly descendants of Koreans who had come to Japan prior to 1945. They were born in Japan and most spoke fluent Japanese. Japanese law does not convey citizenship by birth in Japan, so they had three choices — to naturalize as a Japanese (and take a Japanese name), to visit a South Korean diplomatic facility and apply for a South Korean passport, or to live in Japan with a Japanese Ministry of Justice–issued identity document that attested that they were permanent residents of Japan. Many of these ethnic Koreans had families living in North Korea and were sympathetic to the north. (This has changed over time but was the case in 1983.)

It is important to acknowledge that these Korean nationals living in Japan faced tremendous discrimination in employment, schooling, access to banking, and other areas. Most of the ethnic organizations that could help them — including fraternal associations, mutual aid societies, cultural groups, banks, and schools — were run by North Korean–affiliated groups. Some people therefore did not want to go to the South Korean embassy to obtain a passport because of their relationships with these ethnic organizations. However, they still wanted to visit the United States. We accepted the Japanese Ministry of Justice–issued identity document because the bearer had the right to re-enter Japan after travel to the United States. These travelers were good visa risks because they had strong ties to their communities in Japan, so we would generally issue them tourist visas.

However, we had to conduct individual interviews with each applicant because we considered them to be North Koreans. We interviewed maybe four hundred of these people a year using a set list of questions. We spoke to them in Japanese asking questions, like “What do you think of Kim Il Sung?” (At the time, he was the leader of North Korea.) “Have you ever traveled to North Korea? Why did you go? Are you a member of or have you donated money to an organization on this list?” We then showed them a list of organizations that were affiliated with North Korea. They included schools, banks, cultural or fraternal organizations, and mutual aid societies.

Usually, the answers were “no,” “I don’t care,” or “I don’t know.” But I also remember some interesting answers. Once I asked a young teenager, “Why do you want to go to the United States?” “I want to go to Disneyland,” she replied. I remember asking her, “What do you think of Kim Il Sung?” and she asked, “Who is that?” We were placing her in the category of “North Korean” as she (or probably her parents) chose not to be South Korean but she was not a North Korean in the sense of her ideology or identity. She was a teenager bored with global politics!

We would always ask “Are you a member of Chosen Soren?” That was the umbrella organization of these North Korean–affiliated organizations in Japan. Sometimes an applicant would reply “yes.” When we asked the reason, they would often reply “My father signed me up

and pays the dues.” Or sometimes “The man who helped my father with a financial loan came by and we felt an obligation, so we pay dues when he comes to collect them. We give him \$20.” Another time, I asked a young boy if he had ever visited North Korea. He replied, “Yes, my father made me go during summer vacation. I hated it; it was boring. I wanted to stay in Japan with my friends.” Another teenager derisively referred to Kim Il Sung as “fat man.”

Before issuing the tourist visa, we had to send in a telegram to Washington called a “Visas Donkey” cable. We would send in all of the information from the interview and in almost every case, after the State Department vetted the information with the FBI, the person would be granted a single-entry, three-month-duration visa. (For Japanese nationals, we were issuing five-year multiple-entry visas in those days.)

I thought that this vetting process was necessary. However, it seemed to me that we were making a mistake in categorizing anyone who did not apply for an South Korean (ROK) passport to be a North Korean sympathizer. There was a lot of prejudice in Japan against Koreans. Those who went to Korean schools wore distinctive Korean uniforms and often would get harassed on trains. I began to see that this ethnic community was clinging to each other because they did not have many other options in a somewhat hostile society. They could not get a loan at a Japanese bank or study Korean at a Japanese school. I always tried to treat them politely.

I thought it was good if they were going to the United States to learn about us and come back and influence their communities. (In the time since 1983, the number of ethnic Koreans in Japan without ROK passports has declined as more information about North Korea and its human rights abuses emerged.)

We also received many visa applications from permanent residents holding ROK passports. Our studies determined that these applicants were just as good a risk as Japanese travelers because they had strong ties to Japan. The term of the visa was shorter because of reciprocity issues, but they were processed efficiently and we did not require in-person interviews for ROK passport holders who were permanent residents in Japan.

Another unusual aspect of our visa work in Osaka-Kobe and Tokyo were the large numbers of applicants for E visas (treaty trader/treaty investor visas). Citizens of countries with which we have a treaty — there are not that many, Germany and a few others — can get this visa if they have invested a certain amount of money in the United States. This was the era where Japanese investment in the United States was taking off. Companies in our district like Toyota, Mazda, Sanyo, Kubota, Komatsu, and Matsushita (later renamed to Panasonic) were building factories in the United States and they wanted to send executives and engineers to manage these new ventures. This was during a period of trade tensions and we were scrutinizing applicants carefully — we thought, “Why don’t you hire Americans to do this work?” We spent a lot of time with companies like Toyota and Matsushita to understand their needs. While I was in Kobe, we probably processed eighty visas for Toyota managers and engineers going for various purposes — either a manager or someone with a skill that was not available in the United States. If they tried to send the secretary to the manager or an interpreter, we would refuse and say you can hire a secretary or interpreter in the United States, you do not need to send someone to perform that job from here. We would look at all this criteria — how many years of engineering background do you have? How long have you been an employee of this company? Tokyo and Osaka-Kobe combined issued over 80% of the E visas from the entire world during the years I was assigned there.

*KENNEDY: Wasn't Guam popular for honeymoons?*

ZUMWALT: Yes. Roughly a third of our tourist visa applicants visited Guam. Many were going on their honeymoon and often they would travel with their parents. Guam was popular because it was close to Japan and short visits were possible. About a third of our visa applicants traveled to Hawaii and about a third wanted to visit the U.S. mainland to places like Disneyland, Las Vegas, and New York. There were other visa applicants as well — students, skilled workers, and journalists for example.

About ten years after I left Kobe, the U.S. government concluded a visa waiver program with Japan, eliminating the need to issue visas to Japanese tourists and business travelers. When I was in Kobe, the visa section had fourteen local staff, but after the visa waiver program was implemented, the staff was reduced to four employees because we no longer needed all these people to process tourist visas. We had high morale in our section. Of its fourteen employees, we had three men and eleven women. We employed a lot of over-qualified women in our section because they did not have the same access to jobs in Japan and so we were considered to be a good employer.

*KENNEDY: This is the thing. When I was in Korea, we were getting the equivalent of Smith or Vassar graduates to be secretaries because for one thing, we had a five-day workweek. We let the people out, we didn't harass them —*

ZUMWALT: The State Department was considered to be a good employer in Japan too.

*KENNEDY: It was a good job and the Koreans didn't appreciate the women they had.*

ZUMWALT: In the 1980s in Japan, the situation was similar.

*KENNEDY: Who was the consul general?*

ZUMWALT: The consul general during my tour (he has sadly since passed away) was named Dalton Killian. He had come from Tokyo where he had been in the political section. He was rather reticent and did not get involved at all in the consular work at the post even though we constituted over half of its employees. I think he only visited our offices one time in the two years I was there. I was a junior officer, so I did not understand how things should work really and did not think his lack of interest in our work was strange at the time.

In hindsight, I realized there could have been more oversight at the consulate general. We received no visits from the ambassador, the DCM, or the consul general from Tokyo during my two years at post. Much later, when I became DCM in Tokyo, I made it a practice to visit each constituent post annually and made sure our consul general visited every post's consular section annually as well. I had a great tour in Kobe but did miss the direct interaction with more senior officers in the embassy that I had enjoyed in Kinshasa.

*KENNEDY: Was there Chinese influence? How did China play at that time?*

ZUMWALT: Yes. Kobe was a very international city, so it had a large Korean population. There was also a fairly large, not as big as the Korean, Chinese population. Many were of Taiwanese origin, people who had come to Japan when Taiwan had been part of Japan. During that period, many Taiwanese would come to college in Japan and some remained.

*KENNEDY: Wasn't it the usual colonial...?*

ZUMWALT: Taiwan had been considered a part of Japan until the end of World War II in 1945. In Kobe, there was a small but vibrant Chinese community. Many of the ethnic Chinese families there were fairly well-off, often merchants involved in trade using their Chinese and Japanese language skills doing various commercial activities. One of my friends there named Yu was one of three brothers who ran a family trading business. Yu became a Japanese citizen, one brother kept his Republic of China (Taiwan) passport, and the other brother became a PRC national. So, the three brothers had covered all aspects of the family business trading among China, Taiwan, and Japan! Kobe's small Chinatown was very close to our consulate general. I used to visit Chinese restaurants there a lot; there were probably sixty Chinese restaurants and several thousand ethnic Chinese living in this little enclave near the port.

There was also a heavy PRC diplomatic presence. The PRC had more consulates than we did — they had a consulate general in Osaka and consulates in Kobe and Nagoya. So, we would run into one or another of their diplomats at various functions. In those days, Japan was experiencing a China boom with increasing numbers of Japanese tourists visiting China. To Japan, China is the origin of their culture — their writing system, the tea ceremony, Buddhism, calligraphy, pottery, bonsai — all these things that are part of Japanese culture came from China. Chinese efforts at public diplomacy were resonating with the Japanese because China had just opened up; it was new and exciting. China was very poor in those days, so the country was not seen as threatening. We did not see many PRC travelers in Japan in those days; most of the Chinese-speaking tourists were from Taiwan or Hong Kong.

*KENNEDY: Was this the period when the business method of the Japanese was highly touted in the United States?*

ZUMWALT: Yes. The Japanese economy had been growing rapidly. Ezra Vogel had written his book, *Japan as Number One*, predicting that Japan's economy would overtake the United States by the year 2000 — which obviously didn't happen. There was a lot of interest in Japanese management techniques such as Toyota's "just-in-time" inventory management system and its *kaizen* (continuous improvement) production system. Companies like Motorola were adopting various efficiency methods from Japan. Interestingly, many aspects of Japanese management theory came from U.S. management practices from the 1950s. Every year, the Union of Japanese Scientists and Engineers awards a private company the Deming Prize for outstanding contributions to the field of Total Quality Management. This prize is named after Dr. W.E. Deming, an American quality control expert who came to Japan in 1950 to lecture on modern American management techniques. There were Japanese innovations and improvements to these foreign ideas, but much of what people thought of as Japanese-style management was not uniquely Japanese.

The consulate hosted a fair number of official visitors and many wanted to visit a Toyota factory. I accompanied a high-level American visitor to various Toyota factories five or six times. Toyota was always a gracious host. I was fascinated to see these huge facilities with thousands of parts and equipment coming together on the assembly line. It was amazing to see how Toyota had eliminated redundancy and waste. A lot of the painting and welding was done by robots rather than people. I visited other production facilities as well — I visited two Kobe steel plants and saw steel being forged in a blast furnace. I went to these factories with visitors from Congress and U.S. government agencies.

*KENNEDY: Of course, Japan is full of universities. How were the students? Were they a force to be reckoned with or not?*

ZUMWALT: There were many Japanese universities in our consular district and certainly the consulate general maintained connections with them. Our public affairs section worked with many professors, including many Japanese and American professors who had participated in the Fulbright exchange program. Many Japanese students were applying for student visas to study in the United States. We had a fair number of American students on third-year abroad or graduate programs living in our district. Our consular and public affairs sections combined to organize programs to help Japanese students understand the student visa process and study-abroad opportunities in the United States. Our public affairs section also organized programs at local universities and they often asked me to give a talk on the U.S. political system or elections in Japanese. I was happy to get out of the office and give a talk at a university even though preparing for these talks was time-intensive.

Many Japanese students, knowing that they would not enjoy long vacations once they started working, would take advantage of their college senior year summer vacation to visit the United States for six or eight weeks. Many would purchase a Visit USA pass on Greyhound which offered unlimited bus travel for thirty days. These students were good visa risks. These young students would cover a lot of ground in six weeks, from the West Coast to the East Coast and back on buses. The United States was a very popular place for young Japanese to visit in those days.

*KENNEDY: Did you get any feel for the work of the young up-and-coming salaryman? It sounded like drudgery.*

ZUMWALT: While in Kobe, I took a French conversation class and most of my classmates were working. It was interesting to see them in class and talk in French about their careers and lives in Japan. My French conversation class colleagues were peers in age and at the same point in our careers but in 1983 my pay was much higher than theirs. And my work hours were a lot shorter too. I remember thinking that I was fortunate in this career; people might complain about our jobs, but compared to Japanese peers, I thought I was doing well.

*KENNEDY: What kind of social life did you have?*

ZUMWALT: It was very different than in Kinshasa because Japan was so much better off. I could date someone without needing to support their entire family.

My social life was good. The consulate general was so small, we had thirteen Americans and probably seven were married with children — they were friendly but I was not their social peer. At Thanksgiving and Christmas, I was invited over to join a family dinner, but most of my socializing was outside the consulate — unlike in Kinshasa. I preferred going out and doing things on my own. I found Japanese friends to travel or go out with. Kobe had a vibrant nightlife: it had all kinds of places to go and one could listen to music, visit nice restaurants, or attend baseball games. In the summer, there were beaches nearby.

*KENNEDY: Did you get any feel for what the young Japanese college students were getting as a picture of the United States?*

ZUMWALT: Generally, young Japanese college students knew a lot more about the United States than American students knew about Japan. Japanese students had absorbed a lot through American popular culture — movies and music. But they also harbored exaggerated images based on news reports. For example, they harbored an image of America as a lawless place where people shoot each other with guns. Fear of gun violence in the United States was exaggerated though not completely unfounded. Many Japanese also had an image of the United States as a country beset by severe racial tensions and problems.

Some Japanese — not just students — had more contacts with Americans due to the large American military presence in Japan. Most Japanese who had been alive during the occupation had had some contact with Americans. Their experiences were varied. Most Japanese people had positive experiences. For example, my Japanese host mother mentioned that when the war ended, she was terrified of American soldiers; she had been told to hide because they would rape and beat her. But she remembered getting a piece of chocolate from a soldier; she was shocked this person had given her something and she still remembered that act years later. On the other hand, my English teacher told me a story of being mocked by some American GIs when he was a teenager. These encounters, positive and negative, affected Japanese perceptions of Americans.

*KENNEDY: Did you find yourself being used as a translator for these people? Trying to explain if they had a misconception about our society?*

ZUMWALT: Yes. But the role of intermediary can become tiresome. Sometimes, I found myself becoming too defensive. Often these Japanese perceptions were based on some element of truth even if they were exaggerated. But I could not say “We don’t have a gun problem in the United States” because that wasn’t true. I *could* say “I think your daughter will be safe. The key is to be sure she takes safety precautions such as avoiding walking alone down deserted streets.”

That said, overall Japanese attitudes towards the United States were positive — they wanted to go to Disneyland or Las Vegas, they were interested in American popular culture, and they admired the United States’ democratic values.

*KENNEDY: To me, one of the interesting things — I watched this because I was a teenager in Annapolis, which is a Navy town, very much pointed towards the Pacific war, and had the “only good Jap is a dead Jap” attitude. But soon as the war was over, it almost flipped — this is an exotic beautiful country, the girls are cute, et cetera. Obviously there are places of prejudice, but in the United States there wasn’t the same anti-Japanese attitude that prevailed during the war.*

ZUMWALT: Exactly right. The same transformation occurred in Japan. Japanese attitudes towards the United States in the 1930s and 1940s — partly because of government propaganda — were very hostile, but their attitudes changed soon after the war ended. There is an excellent book by John W. Dower called *Embracing Defeat*. He explains how a society that was mobilized to support the military effort against the United States in such a short time embraced American values — democracy and human rights. He posited that the Japanese militarist leaders were so discredited by the horrible outcome of the war that Japanese civilians were ready for change. So, there was a wholesale embrace of new concepts such as democracy and women’s rights. I don’t think anyone at the end of the war could have foreseen the tremendous changes in Japanese society.

*KENNEDY: How was your relationship with the consulate general staff?*

ZUMWALT: When I arrived, I was 27 and still quite inexperienced. Most of the Japanese staff were about my age, but the four senior staff were quite a bit older. It was a situation similar to the military where a young lieutenant must learn to work with the senior staff sergeants. Likewise, the consular section senior Japanese staff had seen many American junior officers come and go during their long careers working at the consulate. One good piece of advice the consul gave me was “If you listen to their advice, you will look good.” That approach worked. I remember on the very first day meeting the senior visa clerk, Kay Hirose. I am 5' 9" but she towered over me in her heels. I remember when I came into the office, Hirose-san’s very first question before all the staff was “How old are you?”

I was taken by surprise. After a brief hesitation, I replied, “I’m 27.”

She then said sharply, “I’ve been working here since three years before you were born!” and then abruptly turned around and walked away. It was clear I wasn’t going to be ordering this woman around! As I would soon learn, however, she shared the same goals that I did. She was proud of her work processing visas; she knew that Consulate General Osaka-Kobe issued more visas per capita than any State Department post in the world and she wanted the post to be successful, just as I did. Once I made it clear that I respected her experience and appreciated her advice, we got along fine and, in turn, she respected my authority.

Frequently, I would seek her thoughts about an odd case; she loved being consulted because it showed that I valued her expertise. In those days, the Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) was printed — we didn’t have computers, so we had to consult fat, heavy volumes with pages and pages of rules on visas. Hirose-san kept her own annotated copy of the FAM that she would not let anyone touch. Instead of two volumes, her FAM had grown to about six because, over thirty years, she had added many cables and annotations to the text. If I came to her for advice, she would pull out her own version of the FAM and show me something similar from another case years ago. Hirose-san had seen her share of young junior officers and I think some of them had not treated her well. Despite that inauspicious start on my first day, we rapidly developed a positive working relationship.

Some of the younger women in the section were closer to me in age. We were more friendly and would sometimes go out together for lunch. They introduced me to many wonderful places to eat. Kobe was known for its Western, Chinese, and Indian food. We could select from many lunch options within walking distance from the consulate. These outings were always in a group; I didn’t want to date people in the office. But we sometimes went skating or hiking together. I think the consulate staff appreciated having an American along in their group. It was a friendly office. And they were very motivated, understanding their important role in our mission.

My tour in Kobe helped me improve my language skills because I spoke Japanese all day long with the local staff for two years. That language practice was extremely helpful.

*KENNEDY: Was the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki a topic that came up?*

ZUMWALT: Hiroshima was an issue every August on the anniversary of the use of atomic weapons. Japanese and Americans had different historical assessments about the decision to use an atomic weapon against civilians. In Japan, the very common view was that this was an inhumane act, but Japan was defeated so should move on. I didn’t experience much animosity despite our different historical memories. Every year in August on the anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bomb, Hiroshima would hold a memorial service for those who were

killed. Other embassies would participate but although we were invited, we would not attend. There were Japanese who took the bombing out of its historical context — particularly in Hiroshima itself. Their narrative was essentially “We poor civilians were here and suddenly the Americans dropped this horrible weapon and killed a lot of people.” That would be their entire story. At this time, rather than engaging, we chose to hunker down each August and let the issue pass.

*KENNEDY: I had just turned eighteen when that happened and was finishing high school. I knew we were getting ready to invade the main islands and there were stories about horrendous casualties. I can't describe the relief people of my age felt to have that war ended. Our experience in Okinawa was so awful.*

ZUMWALT: My father was a marine and was training for a beach landing. That's what he told me when he heard the news; he felt relief that the war was going to end. I went to Hiroshima — never on August 6<sup>th</sup>, we would go at another time. I did not visit the museum as an American diplomat, but rather as someone who was interested in this history. It is a moving exhibit.

My tour in Osaka-Kobe came to an end in the summer of 1985 when I moved back to Washington DC. Over these two years, I consolidated my knowledge of the Japanese language, gained valuable experience in personnel management, and learned much about consular work that would help me later in my career. Most importantly, it was during this tour that I first met Ann.

## Chapter V

### Working in Washington: U.S.-Japan Trade and the Fall of Marcos, 1985–1989

MARCH 5, 2018

*KENNEDY: After Kobe, where did you go?*

ZUMWALT: After two tours abroad, it was a good time to return to Washington DC. Many mentors advised me that I needed to gain Washington experience. So even though I enjoyed overseas life, I asked for an assignment back home.

After my consular tour in Kobe, I enrolled in a six-month intensive economics course at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI). In those days, the National Foreign Affairs Training Center had not yet opened, so our class of thirty students was held in an office building in Rosslyn, Virginia. This course was a good opportunity for me as I was an economic officer who lacked a solid academic background in the subject.

For six months, we attended six hours a day of lectures with several hours of reading and homework every night — the beginning was especially challenging when we were reviewing mathematics and learning microeconomics. I remember working late into each night with our microeconomic problem sets. We had units on Micro and Macroeconomics, Calculus, Statistics, Econometrics, Money and Banking, International Finance, the History of Economic Thought, and Development Economics among others. At the end of the six months, we all took the GREs (graduate record examinations) and performed well. I think I scored in the top 10% of all test-takers, as did many of my classmates. I think this class-wide achievement reflected well on our teachers, but it also reflected on the quality of my classmates, who were dedicated to learning the economic theory that could help them in their State Department careers.

That course prepared me with a basic understanding of economic theory. It was the equivalent of an undergraduate degree in economics. Most of our professors were from local colleges like The George Washington University, the University of Maryland, and Georgetown University. The instructors were of very high quality. Most of these professors said they enjoyed teaching us because we had more life experience than their college students. For example, I had a classmate who had served in China and, during our unit on command economies, he shared wonderful insights on Chinese efforts to increase efficiency in a command economy. Our professor, who was an expert on the Soviet Union, was as interested as we were in my classmate's insights about Chinese economic management.

*KENNEDY: I've experienced it too that these courses are very good for teaching you things, but the point is you've got time to talk to other people and really make contacts. Here are your peers. You might be at an embassy and each of you is so engulfed in your own work that you don't really spread out very much usually.*

ZUMWALT: Exactly. This course was an excellent chance to learn the subject matter and provided an academic framework for my economic work later in my career. It was also an outstanding opportunity to expand my peer group. All these students were still early in their career. They were Foreign Service 04s and 03s, equivalent to lieutenants in the military. Out of thirty people, about 28 were economic officers, so I suddenly developed a strong network of peers that was helpful throughout my career.

*KENNEDY: Then what did you do?*

ZUMWALT: Because the economics course ended in December and there weren't many jobs open in the winter assignment cycle, our career counselors encouraged us to look for short-term assignments. For the first six months of 1986, I worked for the Office of Japanese Affairs at the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) on a training detail.

*KENNEDY: What was the situation for American-Japanese trade at that time?*

ZUMWALT: Bilateral trade relations were contentious. On the U.S. side, there was enormous political pressure to redress the bilateral trade imbalance. Some of this pressure was caused by fear that Japan was going to overtake us. There were also people, particularly in the White House and the Defense Department, who were concerned about the impact on our security alliance if we failed to manage the politics of trade. My time at USTR was during the Reagan administration when the Republican Party was pro-free trade. But the Democratic Congress was more skeptical. Our ambassador to Japan, Mike Mansfield, had been appointed by Jimmy Carter, but President Reagan retained him because he thought that Congress would listen to Mansfield, a respected former senator.

Our USTR office was busy with trade talks in various areas — restricting steel imports from Japan, restricting machine tool imports, a voluntary restraint agreement on autos — we were engaging in many managed-trade solutions. There was also an effort to open Japan's markets in sectors like semiconductors and agricultural products where it was felt the United States ought to have a bigger market share in Japan.

The biggest source of the trade deficit was autos. We dealt with those issues by seeking to restrict imports of cars from Japan. We negotiated a so-called voluntary restraint agreement on Japan's exports of autos, but this agreement was not really voluntary. The result was to raise the price of Japanese autos in our market, so U.S. consumers had to pay more, to the benefit of U.S. and Japanese auto producers and auto dealers. We also negotiated restraints on Japan's exports of steel and machine tools. The Japanese went along reluctantly because their government was interested in managing the politics by resolving these trade frictions.

The Japanese resented this U.S. pressure. But some Japanese recognized that Japan needed to accommodate the United States to dissipate political tensions. Both sides engaged in a lot of posturing, but then at the deadline, suddenly the two sides would reach an agreement.

Our office had two paid full-time positions and also a civil servant on a detail from the International Trade Commission and me. We worked long hours as it was busy. The differences between USTR and State were striking: USTR was less bureaucratic and much smaller — only two hundred people worked in the whole agency. Clayton Yeutter was our trade representative. I remember several times briefing him; he cared a lot about Japan.

*KENNEDY: President Trump criticizes our lack of follow-through on U.S. trade agreements. Was that happening?*

ZUMWALT: Trade agreements are usually not self-enforcing. The government learns about problems from companies that bring complaints to their attention. USTR did not have the resources to monitor implementation of all of its trade agreements. USTR worked closely with the Commerce Department on some issues and with the Department of Agriculture (USDA) on

agricultural trade issues, but at the end of the day, it was the U.S. companies or business associations that would request government help on trade agreement enforcement.

When I was at USTR (this was before the creation of the World Trade Organization), the United States was a party to the GATT, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. The GATT did have a dispute-settlement mechanism. One issue I worked on was our formal complaint against Japanese import restrictions on twelve agricultural commodities (that included products like citrus fruit and orange juice). The USTR Japan office, its Office of Agricultural Affairs, and its Office of the General Counsel were busy preparing our legal briefs to present in Geneva for this dispute-settlement process. They worked closely with the USDA and trade associations. The GATT had set up a dispute-settlement panel of three people (neither Japanese nor American) to rule on this case. Each side had to prepare legal arguments to support its position. Our claim was that Japan was in violation of its commitments under the GATT. The Japanese attorneys came up with a clever argument that they were allowed to restrict imports when a GATT member had a domestic program in place to restrict overproduction. For example, Japan claimed that its program to restrict production of domestically produced citrus fruits allowed it to also restrict imports of oranges which were a substitute product. At the end of the day, Japan lost the case. Once Japan lost, they were eager to move on. At that point, we started negotiations with Japan on how to implement this ruling. We negotiated some tariff-rate quotas and some other market access for these commodities. It was one example of how the dispute-settlement process in the precursor organization to the WTO actually worked.

USTR had excellent attorneys presenting our case, but a lot of their information came from U.S. industry research. After the first round of the dispute-settlement process where the Japanese claimed they had production restraints in place, our industry provided many counterexamples to dispute Japan's claim. USTR worked closely with U.S. industry to win this dispute-settlement case.

I thought it was exciting to work at USTR. One reason was that USTR was a flat organization where I could send an email directly to U.S. Trade Representative Clayton Yeutter. At the State Department, we wrote memos with a long clearance process to present an issue to the secretary of state for a decision. The work at USTR was interesting but, at the end of the day, I was not sure how much my work there really made a difference. I realized that even if every single one of our trade disputes with Japan were resolved, it still would not eliminate our bilateral trade deficit. Our friends at the Department of the Treasury and Council of Economic Advisers were explaining that our global trade deficit was a macroeconomic problem — the size of the deficit is not a function of trade restrictions, it is a result of our savings/investment imbalance. In Japan, savings exceeded investment, so it was going to have a trade surplus with the world whereas the United States had more investment than savings, so we were going to have a global trade deficit.

I realized that I preferred to work at the State Department because of its broader scope of issues. USTR's work was useful for managing the politics of trade. But our efforts would not resolve the fundamental issues that caused our global trade imbalance. I also did not support our many trade-restricting agreements.

*KENNEDY: It gave you a feel what was to...*

ZUMWALT: I developed a lot of admiration for Treasury and the Council of Economic Advisers who were always on the inside. They were arguing for rational economic policies as opposed to

the politically popular policies. They did not win every argument, but they at least they had some positive influence over U.S. government actions.

*KENNEDY: In that period, it was a particularly major issue in political life.*

ZUMWALT: It was. A Democratic Congress was criticizing the Republican president on trade because this issue would resonate politically. The Reagan administration was trying to find a safety valve to minimize political problems. There were negotiations with the Japanese but there were also negotiations inside the U.S. government. I was the junior person at USTR, so I never participated in these internal meetings, but I would hear stories about the internal policy fights. I decided that I did not want a career working on issues that could promote bad economic policy in order to assuage domestic political pressures.

*KENNEDY: The wind was blowing over your head.*

ZUMWALT: Yes. Sometimes the easier negotiation was with the foreign country, while the more difficult one was inside our own government. During my time at USTR, I learned a lot about the policy formulation process inside the U.S. government, but I was glad at the end of the six months to return to the State Department.

USTR was a great place to make connections. Because they had so few staff, USTR hired a lot of interns. Two young interns working there went on to illustrious careers in the Japan policy world. One was Mike Green, who is now a professor at Georgetown and the Japan chair at CSIS (Center for Strategic and International Studies). He has written many books about U.S.-Japan security issues. The other was Matthew Goodman, who later worked for the Treasury Department and then at the White House where he was responsible for APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) and Asia economic policy. Matthew is now a chair at CSIS covering the Asian economy. They were both graduate students at in those days. Both are nice people and we stayed in touch. Mike Green was the president's senior advisor for Asia during the Bush 2 administration. I was then in Embassy Tokyo, when he was the one deciding the White House's Asia policy, so it was good to be on friendly terms.

On a personal note, I began dating my wife-to-be during this period. I mentioned that I had met her when I was in Kobe, but we were not romantically involved when we both lived in Japan. But when I came back to Washington, through a mutual friend (another FSO) we were reintroduced.

*KENNEDY: What was she doing here?*

ZUMWALT: Ann was working in the State Department's Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, dealing with energy issues. One reason I have positive memories of my time in the economics course and at USTR was that was the period of my budding love interest. Ann and I became engaged as I finished my time at USTR.

*KENNEDY: Did she have family here?*

ZUMWALT: We got married in Los Angeles. It was challenging to plan a remote wedding. We decided to do this because neither of us were from Washington DC and we had not yet set down roots. Ann is from Colorado but her brother and sister had both moved to Los Angeles, so she had nieces and nephews on the West Coast. I appreciated that our wedding was not far from my

hometown of San Diego, so I could invite a few of my San Diego relatives and friends. Another reason for us to be married in Los Angeles is that Ann is Buddhist and her uncle had been a Buddhist priest in Los Angeles. Ann's elder brother and sister-in-law had been married at the Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple in Los Angeles, so we chose that locale for our wedding ceremony too.

I knew a little about Buddhism but wanted to learn more. So, we started attending a class at a Buddhist temple in the Virginia suburbs. It was taught by a really excellent priest, Reverend Kenryu Takashi Tsuji, who was Japanese-Canadian. He taught a class every Saturday for a year. It was really helpful for me to understand this religion since I was going to be married in a Buddhist temple.

*KENNEDY: Is there a difference between Chinese and Japanese Buddhist temples?*

ZUMWALT: There are many Buddhist traditions. This temple followed the Pure Land tradition which is a common form of Mahayana Buddhism in Japan. The majority of Buddhist temples in the United States are affiliated with this church and many of its priests come from Japan. For example, the priest who married us in Los Angeles was American (his name was Russ), but the other priests were Buddhist missionaries from Japan. The temple in Los Angeles was fairly large, with four priests.

My parents were very understanding. They are both Christian, so they may have thought it was odd to get married in a Buddhist temple, but they were so happy I was getting married. In Japan, people do not marry in Buddhist temples but at Shinto shrines. When I tell a Japanese person that I was married at a Buddhist temple, they are usually quite surprised. Buddhism in Japan focuses on the afterlife. Celebrations of events in the present life — births, coming of age, and marriage — are generally performed in Shinto shrines in Japan.

*KENNEDY: Are Shinto priests Buddhists?*

ZUMWALT: Japan is unique in the sense that most Japanese do not see a conflict between going to a Shinto shrine for life celebrations and to a Buddhist temple to remember deceased ancestors. Shintoism does not mention death or the afterlife, while Buddhism is the only major world religion that does not have a creation story. Christians find it hard to imagine being Christian and some other religion because they see them as conflicting. But Buddhism is concerned with the afterlife and Shintoism is concerned with our origin and celebrations of the present life. So, the Japanese do not see any inherent conflict between these two religions. Japan is a secular society, but most Buddhists also go to a Shinto shrine for life celebrations.

Ann and I got married in Little Tokyo in downtown Los Angeles. It was a nice ceremony. We kept it fairly small as we were paying for the wedding ourselves and our budget was limited. I think we had 120 guests. Ann invited two Foreign Service friends as well.

Our wedding marked the end of my first year in Washington. I had come a long way from the days of A-100 when I wanted to minimize the amount of time assigned in Washington DC.

*KENNEDY: Our generation of foreign service officers wanted to serve overseas.*

ZUMWALT: At the end of our first year in Washington DC, Ann and I found a nice place to live — a cute little house, less than a thousand square feet, in the Palisades area under a canopy of trees close to the Potomac River. We could drive to work in fifteen minutes to Columbia Plaza,

where we rented a parking place walking distance from the State Department. At the end of the day, I would change into running gear and leave my work clothes with Ann. She would drive home and I would run the four-mile distance home. We made a lot of friends, so life in Washington was more appealing than I had imagined it would be.

My next assignment was as the staff assistant in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP). Many people warned me “it’s a terrible job, you’re just photocopying paper.” They were right that this was not a job with a lot of intellectual stimulation — but being a witness to senior leaders was a great training and I am so glad I did it for a year.

*KENNEDY: I noticed people who become ambassadors usually have been in these staff assistant jobs. I never was and I was never an ambassador! It's a training exercise.*

ZUMWALT: My job was to organize the information flow to the assistant secretary, Paul Wolfowitz, and to the four deputy assistant secretaries — John Cameron Monjo, who covered Southeast Asia, was the principal DAS. The office also included three other DASes: William C. Sherman, who covered Japan and Korea; James Lilly, who covered China, Taiwan, Mongolia, and Oceania; and Bill Piez, who covered economic issues for the entire region. Ambassador Sherman had been an ambassador at the U.S. mission in New York previously and he was the godfather of the Japan/Japanese policy Foreign Service community at the time. James Lilly, who came from the CIA, was a really smart guy who knew so much about China and later became U.S. Ambassador to Korea. John Monjo was a thoughtful person who later became U.S. Ambassador to Malaysia. It was a strong front office. Just being around these people daily and seeing how they operated and treated the office directors was an outstanding experience for me. I could learn from the office directors how to operate effectively in a bureaucratic environment. The job also provided an excellent overview of key policy issues in East Asia.

My job content, however, was mundane. It was essentially to organize Paul Wolfowitz’s inbox each day and then to disseminate his outbox back to the people who needed to know. In those days, we had to do a lot of photocopying because there was no email and no electronic distribution of documents. For example, for memos from our bureau to the secretary or one of the undersecretaries, we had to make seven copies and then walk the paper upstairs to the Executive Secretariat Office. Before returning to our office, we would check our bureau mailbox, collect the contents, and then walk back to our office and make copies of these papers for the people who needed to see them. We had a high-volume copier just outside my office and I spent a lot of time in that room making photocopies.

Being a staff assistant really was a paper-pushing job. But the access to senior people and seeing their interactions was a learning experience. For example, I would be sitting in a meeting with Paul Wolfowitz when Congressman Steven Solarz would call to discuss issues related to the Marcos government in the Philippines. That access was quite educational.

Paul Wolfowitz was a heavyweight assistant secretary, more influential than many. He worked closely with Gaston J. Sigur, Jr., who was Senior Director at the NSC for Asia, and Rich Armitage, who was Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asia. The three of them got along well. They would assemble once a week in the State Department’s East Asian and Pacific Affairs Bureau conference room for a meeting they called the EAP Informal. There, they would hash out the interagency issues. They were friends who believed in a strong role for the United States in Asia. I was impressed to see what one could accomplish with strong interagency collaboration.

The role of technology in the State Department has changed dramatically. I already mentioned making photocopies of memos and hand-delivering them to the seventh floor. Our secure phones were also quite primitive. For the morning shift, I had to arrive by six a.m. and the first thing I would do is “key” the secure phone. We had unique punch cards for each day locked in our safe. The punch cards had random holes as the key that day for scrambling the phone conversations, which went over non-secure lines. We would put the card into the machine, located in a closet the size of a public phone booth, and make a test call to the Operations Center to make sure we could establish a secure connection. That way, the secure phone would be ready when someone in the office needed to use it. The staff assistant working the evening shift would remove and shred the card at the end of the day. Every month, we would get a call from the Operations Center to pick up the new set of cards, one for each day of the following month.

Thinking back, this system was primitive, but that was how we operated. The phone itself was a massive machine, about as tall as I was. Now those tasks are automated, but in 1986 things were different.

The other main task for the morning shift was to distribute important incoming telegrams. Now this process is automated, but in those days, we would pick up paper copies of important telegrams that had limited distribution. The most restricted messages were called NODIS (no distribution) messages. We usually had three or four of those each morning. Embassy Manila and Embassy Beijing used this channel the most, but other embassies would also send in NODIS messages if the ambassador wanted to speak directly to the secretary of state. There were also EXDIS (executive distribution) messages that received a slightly wider distribution. After keying the phones, I would walk upstairs and pick up one paper copy of each of these messages, return to my desk and read the message, then decide who in the bureau needed to see them. I would mark the upper right corner of the paper copy of the telegram with the initials of the people who should see it — PW for Assistant Secretary Wolfowitz, JM for John Monjo, or PHL for the Philippine desk, etc. My secretary, who arrived around seven a.m., would take all of these messages from my outbox, make the appropriate number of copies, and place them in each person’s mailbox in my office. That way, around 7:30 when the DASes and office directors arrived for work, they would come to my office and take their telegrams from their mailboxes. The office directors were not allowed to take NODIS messages downstairs, so they had to read those in my office.

In some ways, my office was like the village well. When DASes and office directors came to collect their morning message traffic, they would often chat with each other about how to handle an issue or converse directly with me. I overheard a lot of interesting conversations which taught me about the reputations of various ambassadors or the informal networking related to the assignment process, for example.

Twice during my year as staff assistant, I traveled with Assistant Secretary Wolfowitz. In September, I went with him to New York for a week during the UN General Assembly to support him there. During the General Assembly session, the operations of the State Department became compressed because, instead of being separated by stairwells, long corridors, and guarded entrances, the secretary’s office was now located just down the hall of the Waldorf Astoria Hotel from where we had set up our offices. Also, because we were all traveling, there were more opportunities to interact with the secretary’s staff and department senior officials. Our bureau interests were not in the business of the General Assembly, but rather in the side meetings that went on between national leaders and foreign ministers. During the week, our bureau might have

supported three presidential meetings and five or six secretary of state-level meetings with their foreign counterparts who had come to New York for the opening of the UN General Assembly.

Once I traveled with Secretary Wolfowitz to Manila for a meeting called the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian States) Dialogue Plus — the ASEAN nations and their dialogue partners. In those days, there were six ASEAN nations (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Brunei, and Singapore). I think there were six dialogue partners as well, including the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Korea, and Japan. I do not believe that China or Russia were there. I remember being excited to travel to Manila for my first visit to the Philippines. I arrived on a commercial flight and was driven to the hotel where we were staying. But we were so busy that I did not leave the hotel again until it was time to fly out four days later. So, my view of Manila was the drive in from the airport and the inside of a very luxurious hotel.

We had in those days a very primitive secure laptop computer called a GRID. There is one now on display in the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum since it traveled on an Apollo spacecraft mission! According to this Smithsonian exhibit, this computer has about one-tenth the memory of today's smartphones, but at the time we thought it was amazing that we could fold a computer in half to take in our suitcase. There were only a few of these primitive laptop computers in the entire department so we could only borrow one from the Operations Center to use on this trip.

But one reason we were so busy was that Paul Wolfowitz had rewritten his speech and we were supposed to retype it with all the changes and print it out by the next morning. We did not know how to use this computer and the printer interface was balky. There was no technical support in those days! I was working on the issue with a secretary and we were up until about 4:30 in the morning trying to print out his speech. The speech was eighteen pages long and the printer would jam partway through printing. Nobody had shown us how to start printing from the middle of a document so we needed to start over from the beginning. Each time, we never got to the end — something in the primitive printer would jam and we had to start over again.

*KENNEDY: When we started out, the quill pen was more...*

ZUMWALT: Exactly. This problem is not new or unique. FSOs today cannot imagine a world without computers, but for me, computer skills were something to learn mid-career.

On the way home from Manila, Secretary of State George Shultz stopped in Koror, the capital of Palau. I had no role in this visit but hitched a ride home because there was an empty seat on his airplane. Prior to landing in Koror, the plane flew over the island of Peleliu where Secretary Shultz had landed as a young marine in 1944. The plane circled around so we could see White Beach, Orange Beach, and other battlefields.

Then Secretary Shultz's airplane landed at Koror in Palau. This was a memorable stop. Palau is a tiny country with just over twenty thousand people and five hundred islands. A secretary of state visit was a major event. There was no airport customs and immigration building on Koror then, just a runway.

The Palau government had arranged for an outdoor welcome ceremony to greet the secretary. A band was playing welcome songs and every dignitary in Palau, including President Lazarus Salii, was present. Our motorcade was lined up to take us to the hotel for a reception. As I began disembarking from the back of the airplane, the arrival ceremony was already underway. Just

then, the skies opened up and it began to pour. This tropical shower was one of the heaviest rains I have ever experienced. I remember seeing Pat Kennedy, the Secretariat's executive director, handing out golf umbrellas, so the secretary's wife, O'Bie, and the secretary at least had some cover. That was my first encounter with Pat Kennedy and I remember thinking, "That guy is resourceful. He will go far."

The rest of us ran to our buses, but not before becoming totally soaked. My socks felt like sponges that made squishing sounds when I walked and my dress shirt was soaked under my suit. Soaking wet, we boarded our bus and drove to the Pan Pacific Hotel where we were going to have a reception.

When the skies cleared, we could see that the island was simply beautiful, but we were soaking wet. We were in the back of the motorcade, of course, and the secretary and Mrs. Shultz were in the front. We stopped at one of the upscale tourism hotels where there was a reception for all the elites of Palau. I spent most of the time trying to dry my clothes for the long airplane ride to California. I remember hearing on the radio one of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) agents saying, "No, no, let him in — he's the president!" Somehow, President Salii of Palau had gotten behind our motorcade and the security detail was wondering about the strange wet guy who appeared to be trying to crash the party. It was a memorable stop.

On our way home from Palau, the secretary and his party stopped in the Bay Area for an overnight. Secretary Shultz lived in a nice house on Stanford University property. He graciously hosted a backyard barbecue party for the entire traveling party of perhaps sixty people. All of us were invited and he mingled with us in his polo shirt and chino slacks. It seemed that he enjoyed interacting with us in a less formal setting. Secretary Shultz especially appeared to enjoy conversing with younger people on his staff. At the department, we might see him disappear into his office with security guards and memos would come out with his 'yes' or 'no' on them, but to see him at home in a casual setting was a treat. He gave us an encouraging talk thanking us for our help in making the trip successful. He also mentioned the importance of teamwork — he showed that quality himself.

There were a few times later that I was a note-taker for meetings in his office. One of the impressive things Secretary Shultz did was to show off his "chairs." He had wooden chairs with the seals of the Secretary of Labor, the Office of Management and Budget, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Secretary of State to commemorate his four cabinet positions. He would ask his visitors "Which chair do you think I'm the proudest of?" He would point to a fifth chair with the Marine Corps seal and say "That's the one I'm most proud of." He never forgot that he had laid his life on the line for his country and he was proud to have served.

*KENNEDY: Were there any issues that came up that stick in your mind?*

ZUMWALT: China was not in the top group of issues in East Asia then. We felt the Chinese presence, but it was not nearly as important a regional presence as today. There were issues like arms sales to Taiwan, of course. But the two biggest issues for the front office in 1986 were managing our economic relationship with Japan and managing the transition away from the Marcos government in the Philippines. With Japan, EAP was concerned about the security relationship and our bureau was aligned with the NSC and the Pentagon in opposing drastic trade measures out of fear of damage to the bilateral security relationship. In 1986, we usually lost those arguments.

*KENNEDY: This is often a criticism laid against the department by others, that we tend to think economic things just get in our way.*

ZUMWALT: In those days, that was certainly true. I must say the Pentagon was the same. The State Department Economics Bureau and EAP often disagreed, so there were often internal fights on Japan trade policy. The other set of issues that was really fascinating (and that is why I requested my next assignment to the Philippines desk) was the collapse of the Marcos regime. Everyone could see it coming, but we weren't prepared for this transition yet.

*KENNEDY: Had Aquino been...*

ZUMWALT: When I arrived in EAP, Benigno Aquino had been assassinated, but Ferdinand Marcos had not yet left Manila. To be honest, President Reagan got along with and liked Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos. This was an issue where Paul Wolfowitz worked closely with the Defense Department and NSC to manage the congressional pressure and to ease our president away from his rock-solid support for Marcos. Stephen Solarz, who chaired the United States House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs' East Asia Subcommittee, was convinced that we needed to ease Marcos out. U.S. Philippine policy had inertia like a battleship — we had been supporting Marcos and even though almost everyone recognized that Marcos' rule was coming to an end, it was hard to change our policy. Paul Wolfowitz (a Republican) and Steve Solarz (a Democrat) were good friends who had worked together in the past on the issue of emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union. This personal connection helped them overcome policy differences between the administration and Congress to work together. Even though they disagreed on certain policy issues, the two were friendly and talked frequently. If Solarz planned to criticize the Reagan administration, then he would call Wolfowitz in advance and they would talk over issues. I think Solarz understood that it was hard for the Reagan administration to shift our longstanding approach, so he was playing the role of the outside catalyst, poking and prodding us. But he would not want to embarrass his friend Paul Wolfowitz, so he would provide a heads-up about an upcoming speech or new resolution. Wolfowitz would sometimes talk Solarz out of an action, sometimes not.

The challenge on this issue was President Reagan. I think Secretary Shultz saw the writing on the wall, but to move forward with helping to ease Marcos out of office, we needed to bring President Reagan along with the decision. For this reason, someone came up with the idea to send President Reagan's good friend, Nevada Senator Paul Laxalt to the Philippines. We thought that once Senator Laxalt understood Marcos' tenuous situation in Manila, he could talk President Reagan into shifting gears. There was a lot of work briefing Laxalt prior to his trip to Manila. There were a lot of papers to prepare.

*KENNEDY: It's one of these things where one can almost describe it as a battle for the president's soul.*

ZUMWALT: Exactly. The gambit worked. Senator Laxalt reported to the president that it would be a disaster if we continued to stand by Marcos. He reported that at some point, the Marcos regime was going to implode and we would be on the wrong side of history. The Philippine opposition consisted of many different elements, but most seemed to want good relations with the United States. Marcos' opponents were mainly also Philippine elites — politicians, business leaders, and religious figures — who were begging us to pull back from our support for Marcos.

*KENNEDY: We were a key element in their cause.*

ZUMWALT: These opposition figures had friends in the United States, including people like Stephen Solarz. While I was a staff assistant, I would see many memos coming up. We had two different Philippines office directors during my time there. The first was John Maisto, who had been involved with Philippines policy for twenty years. He was married to a Filipina and well-connected to the Philippine opposition. The second director was named Charlie Salmon, an outstanding officer and also a great guy who became one of my Foreign Service mentors. Salmon also wanted to change our pro-Marcos policies. There were a lot of briefing memos describing developments in Manila as well as telegrams from Embassy Manila reporting on the situation. Sometimes the front office would tone down their comments, but by and large, Secretary Shultz was receiving this information. My impression was that Secretary Shultz too supported moving away from Marcos, but that the opposition was coming more from President Reagan.

The Philippine presidential election took up much of the bureau's bandwidth at that time. The fractured opposition had coalesced around Corazon Aquino, the widow of the assassinated opposition leader Ninoy Aquino, as their candidate. Marcos was using his connections to purchase support and there were physical threats and some violence. Embassy Manila did a lot of reporting on the potential for fraud in counting votes.

Within the U.S. government, there was a lot of sympathy for Cory Aquino. She was a good election campaigner. I remember her reply to President Marcos whose message was "Who is this housewife? What does she know?" She had this brilliant reply: "The president is right — I don't have much experience. I don't have any experience in lying, I don't have experience in cheating, I don't have experience in stealing. So, if you want experience, vote for Marcos!" Marcos was also paying off many local surrogates, so Aquino urged Philippine voters to "Take his money but vote for me!" Her campaign strategy was brilliant. She gained the backing of much of the Philippine business elite, and the Catholic Church, led by the ironically-named Cardinal Jaime Sin, went all-in to support her. Estimates are that she won the popular vote, but Marcos' cronies stuffed the ballot boxes, so the election outcome was contested. Most Filipinos concluded that Aquino won, but that Marcos had stolen the election.

The big crisis broke on a Saturday morning in Washington, February 22, 1986.

I was on duty that morning in the EAP front office. Most Saturdays, our work was more relaxed and people came in dressed in a shirt and slacks — no suit, no necktie. On Saturdays, I could arrive at eight a.m. rather than six and most of the office directors showed up around nine a.m. Saturdays were the time when Paul Wolfowitz had the most desk time to consider various decision memos. Consequently, many office directors would come to the front office hoping to grab a moment with him to force a decision on an issue. On workdays, one staff assistant worked mornings and the other afternoons, either six a.m. to three p.m. or two p.m. to ten p.m. On Saturday, only one came in. Usually we would arrive at eight on a Saturday morning and finish when Paul Wolfowitz left — sometimes that was late, perhaps between six or eight p.m. — so for the staff assistant on duty, Saturday was a long day.

That Saturday, I arrived in the office early because we had been receiving reports from Embassy Manila of plans for massive street demonstrations in a show of civil disobedience to protest election fraud. They called it the EDSA Revolution after the name of the avenue where crowds assembled. The embassy reported from Malacañang Palace and Philippine Army sources that

President Marcos had ordered the army to suppress the demonstrations. The embassy reported that there was not much violence despite the huge crowds and that the demonstrators enjoyed massive public support.

Our defense attaché had great contacts with the Armed Forces of the Philippines and Philippine Constabulary leaders. The head of the police was a West Point graduate named Fidel “Eddie” Valdez Ramos. Many leaders of the army of the Philippines had also received extensive military training in the United States.

That Saturday was a blur. Many people from our embassy and from our Defense Attaché Office were calling Philippine military and constabulary leaders, urging them not to fire on the demonstrators. The Embassy Manila team was reaching out at all levels, urging the opposition to refrain from violence, telling Marcos his time was up, and urging the military not to shoot. The army did deploy its tanks, but people on the street were handing the soldiers flowers. I opened a phone line with the Embassy Manila duty officer so that we could hear instant updates from their sources all day long over the telephone. We could also see on television that there was a tense standoff between the crowds in the street and the armored vehicles.

At this point, people from Washington began calling Marcos, telling him that it was time to go. They told him that President Reagan supported this advice. We promised to help Marcos get out by providing U.S. military transport. Our ambassador was actively working on this departure process.

The atmosphere in the EAP front office was electric. Because it was a Saturday, most of the bureau was not in the office. Of course, the entire Philippine desk came in as well as the Philippine hands in our Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM) and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR). DAS John Monjo and Paul Wolfowitz were there. It was a very top-heavy group of officers that day, with me as the only junior person providing logistical support to the front office and running back and forth between our sixth-floor office and the Operations Center on the seventh floor. I remember, for example, typing a telegram as John Monjo dictated a message to me. But it was exciting to be present and to see history being made.

There is always a risk of exaggerating one’s own role and most credit for the peaceful transition of power should go to the Philippine people themselves for standing up to the threats of violence. However, I do think that the United States helped tip the balance in favor of democracy that weekend. Once President Marcos realized we were no longer supporting him, the conversation shifted to how he would leave.

That began another negotiation: Who goes on the evacuation plane? How much luggage can they take? Where will the plane go? These were all questions that needed to be resolved. These were contentious issues and this process took time. A military transport plane eventually took Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos and a small entourage to Hickam Air Force Base in Honolulu. Marcos later claimed that he thought he was being flown to Ilocos Norte, his home province, but that was never something we considered seriously. Flying him to Ilocos Norte, where he still had a lot of support, would have been a terrible idea because then he would have been able to undermine the new government from his base in the north. By removing him from the country, his remaining support collapsed.

When Marcos landed at Hickam Air Force Base, there were still many issues to resolve — many passengers arrived with only their clothes on their back and needed to be housed, clothed, and

fed. The Air Force was suddenly hosting many unexpected guests (I cannot recall the exact number). Some of Marcos' close associates and his bodyguards were quite demanding. There were questions of who would pay the bills for food and lodging. There was also a large commissary bill as the entourage purchased clothing and other items on the base. Some in the new Philippine government wanted to put Marcos on trial for crimes and began issuing subpoenas for information from Marcos' banks and financial advisors. The Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs was handling these issues in the aftermath.

*KENNEDY: Was Imelda Marcos still a subject of interest?*

ZUMWALT: Our ambassador Stephen W. Bosworth sent in a fascinating cable about his private dinner with Imelda Marcos early in my time in the front office. He wrote a wonderful story of their dinner, describing her as charming and charismatic. When I read his report, I thought "Wow, what great insight." But John Maisto burst my bubble when he said, "Oh, the ambassador's Imelda Marcos cable." He told me that every U.S. ambassador to Manila had had the same experience of Imelda trying to charm them and that they had then written Imelda insights cables with a Marie Antoinette feel. For me, the insights were new, but for the veteran office director, this description of Imelda Marcos was old news. It was interesting to realize how little I knew about the Philippines. My knowledge base was three months old and experts like John Maisto had been working these issues for decades. This incident taught me the value of country expertise.

*KENNEDY: This is one thing we are suffering from at the State Department now because many people are leaving. These experts are not easily replaceable.*

ZUMWALT: I respected many of the political appointees with whom I was working such as Paul Wolfowitz, Gaston Sigur, Rich Armitage, and Jim Lilley. Also, I could see that my work was pushing the needle in a slightly better direction. I had not voted for President Reagan, but I had taken an oath to the constitution and believed that as long as I could do some good in the Foreign Service — even if the policy is not precisely what I would support — I would have a worthwhile career. The fall of Marcos was one example where I felt proud of the work we had done to position ourselves by moving our president away from his loyalty to Marcos.

*KENNEDY: I have to say, my mother thought Franklin Roosevelt was a god. I was brought up in a Democratic household and Ronald Reagan was not my man. I've come to have much greater appreciation for him; I think he had pretty good foreign policy reflexes.*

ZUMWALT: He did and he was a master communicator, of course, which is important because after making a policy decision, it's important to bring the public along. President Reagan was good at that. Also, I have tremendous admiration for George Shultz. I think much of Reagan's foreign policy success was due to George Shultz steering him in a good direction.

*KENNEDY: I know in these oral histories, George Shultz stands out as the preeminent secretary of state.*

ZUMWALT: Some of the best secretaries of state have military backgrounds. I put George Marshall, Colin Powell, and George Shultz in this group. One function of the secretary of state is to manage the employees in the department. Those with military training understand this aspect of leadership.

*KENNEDY: I realize this is hard but did you get any feel for what we the State Department thought about Cory Aquino?*

ZUMWALT: She was a sympathetic figure because her husband had been assassinated. She was well-educated and she had graduated from a Catholic college in the United States, so she understood Americans. She was from the Philippine elite; she grew up in a privileged family. She was sophisticated. I did not know her personally — still, I believe she never wanted to be president but saw that role as an obligation to her country. This quality is what made Aquino so endearing to many Filipinos. She had been thrust into this role because the opposition needed a unifying candidate in order to unseat Marcos. Aquino was everyone's second choice as opposition leader, after themselves. I think a lot of the macho Filipino men thought they could manipulate or control her because they saw her as a "housewife." They underestimated her.

I wasn't privy to all the conversations, but I think there was a lot of optimism and hope in the department when she came to power. I recall hearing that Secretary Shultz was impressed when he met Cory Aquino. Virtually everyone thought that she was an improvement over the corrupt Marcos. Aquino also had some good advisors like Harvard Business School graduate Jaime Ongpin, who became her minister of finance, and Eddie Ramos, who was her secretary of defense.

Over time, the U.S. government came to recognize that Aquino had her own flaws, one being that she was indecisive. The disillusionment was not about her personally; she was honest, a good person, and had a moral compass. But she was not fully prepared for the rough and tumble world of Philippine politics. I know Aquino had a good relationship with Ambassador Bosworth and later with Ambassador Nick Platt. They provided very good insights into her thinking and her decision-making process.

In those days, the telegram channel called NODIS was meant to be a message from the ambassador directly to the secretary of state. One was not allowed to photocopy these messages and the bureau was only allowed one paper copy to read and store in our files. Of course, we ignored that rule — we didn't make many, but we made copies for the assistant secretary and the DAS and we kept the original in my office for the office director to come up to read. Only the office director was allowed to read it but then he could ask me to add others to the message.

Virtually every day, there would be a couple of these NODIS messages from the region; probably two-thirds of the NODIS messages that arrived in that period were from Embassy Manila.

Embassy Manila's NODIS messages were often "my conversation with Cory Aquino," or with one of her key advisors, from the ambassador. We joked that NODIS (which stands for "no distribution") really meant "Notice" because everyone really wanted to read these telegrams when they arrived. Most of these messages could have been just a confidential telegram, but Ambassador Bosworth understood that the department paid more attention to NODIS messages. Although a junior officer, I could read these telegrams because my job was to put a cover sheet on the message and mark who was authorized to read it. I got to know the Philippine office director very well because he was in my office almost daily, reading a telegram that could not be copied and sent down to him.

*KENNEDY: A very difficult thing.*

ZUMWALT: There were also many messages regarding conversations with Fidel Ramos, who became the new head of the Philippine armed forces. He was from the People's Armed Police, but early on he had sided with Aquino against Marcos.

*KENNEDY: A West Point graduate.*

ZUMWALT: Yes. He had attended West Point. Later, Ramos became the Philippines president. We enjoyed great connections with Ramos. One of the big challenges in those days was the Philippine communist insurgency. There were an estimated 24,000 armed communist insurgents in the country. A lot of areas in the Philippines were off-limits to embassy employees due to the danger of an ambush. I think one of the reasons Reagan finally turned was the recognition that the Philippine communist insurgency could not be defeated as long as Marcos remained in power. The insurgents were capitalizing on disillusionment with their government. There was also a Muslim insurgency on the island of Mindanao in the south. There were actually two or three armed Muslim groups. By the time of the EDSA Revolution, it was generally accepted in Washington that if we continued with Marcos, the Philippines would become even more unstable.

The bureau was relieved when Cory Aquino became president — she was so much better than the alternatives. People were willing to cut her a lot of slack, but there were concerns about her leadership abilities. There were many coup threats against her government. But she served her term and was an important transitional figure from the Marcos dictatorship to a democratic form of government. Then there was another election and Ramos came in as president and he was someone more prepared to lead the country.

I guess the experience of working on the Marcos to Aquino transition is what cemented my decision to stay in the Foreign Service. It was a heady time. I would listen in on high-level calls to take notes. I felt as if I was a part of history. I was not the decision-maker but I was facilitating the process. I was young and I did not want to be anywhere else right then.

*KENNEDY: This is the thing. The Foreign Service is a trap. People come in and say “I'll try it for a couple of years and then go and do something else.” But then that something else seems so pedestrian compared to what you can do in the Foreign Service. And quite frankly, I wouldn't be doing over a thousand of these interviews with people who had been bankers or businessmen.*

ZUMWALT: I have nothing against bankers and businessmen because they fill an important role in our economy. But after I retired, I received a few feelers from business consulting firms. That job never appealed to me. If making money were my goal, I would not have stayed in the Foreign Service.

*KENNEDY: Foreign Service is full of people who are not motivated particularly by money.*

ZUMWALT: My EAP front office time was a learning experience that helped build my career. My other staff assistant colleagues all became ambassadors: Larry Dinger later became our ambassador in Micronesia and then in Myanmar and Niels Marquardt later became our ambassador to Cameroon and Madagascar then retired as consul general in Sydney.

One piece of advice Larry gave me when I started was “You will call these office directors asking them for an overdue paper. But always remember you may be asking them for a job someday.” His point was, while I was in a position of power, not to forget to be nice to others.

My goal as staff assistant was to be the facilitator, not the problem-creator. After six months into the job, when I began looking for an onward assignment, I wanted to stay in the bureau. I had several job options because I had developed a good reputation by following Larry's advice. I decided even though I really liked Japan, I wanted to work on the Philippine desk because that was an exciting place. Also, I really respected the office director, Charlie Salmon.

Charlie was an excellent office director. He had completed multiple tours in the Philippines, Vietnam, and Thailand and was quite the Southeast Asia expert. I knew very little about the region, so the prospect of learning from Charlie was appealing. When I arrived on the Philippine desk, I had a lot to learn about the country. Charlie had the right balance as a supervisor. Every morning, I would sit down in his office and he would give me a ten-minute talk on developments overnight in the Philippines and my priorities for that workday. Then I would go to my office and do it. I had enough freedom in performing my job, but also sufficient guidance and advice. One of my roles was to write press guidance for the department's daily press briefing at noon. In the early days of the Aquino presidency, there was a newsworthy event almost daily — a communist insurgency raid, a labor strike, or a setback in negotiations for continuing access to U.S. military bases. Under Charlie's tutelage, I learned many desk officer skills — such as press guidance drafting, clearing papers through the interagency process, concise but persuasive oral briefings — that served me well throughout my Foreign Service career.

*KENNEDY: What was the attitude of base negotiations at the time?*

ZUMWALT: We had two big military bases in the Philippines, Subic Bay Navy Base and Clark Air Force Base. They had served important roles during the Vietnam War. I forgot the exact terms but the basing agreement we had was expiring so we wanted a new ten-year agreement to retain access to these facilities. This is where people became frustrated with Cory Aquino — she was not weighing in on one side or another but was letting her team talk to us. The Philippine Senate would need to ratify any agreement with a two-thirds vote. There were only 24 senators, meaning that we needed seventeen yes votes. That was a high bar to jump. These 24 senators all seemed to want to be the next president, so our base negotiations provided a wonderful grandstanding opportunity for many of them. There were perhaps five senators who would oppose any deal, so we needed to garner the support of virtually all the rest. The math of this senate vote provided the Philippine negotiator with a lot of leverage. But thinking back on it, we were trying to negotiate a renewed agreement on the cheap. We were not offering a huge aid package or other incentives for the Philippines to sustain our military presence there.

The department decided to appoint our Ambassador to the Philippines concurrently as our chief base negotiator. Nick Platt was our ambassador then. He had been the department's executive secretary and had a lot of clout. George Shultz knew him very well. Platt wanted to run the base negotiations himself; he didn't want an outside negotiator. I think in hindsight that arrangement was a mistake; we would have improved the negotiating dynamic if we had had a U.S. ambassador in Manila as the good cop and a tough negotiator as the bad cop. Also, we needed someone back in Washington to manage the interagency process to garner support for the U.S. negotiating position. Ambassador Platt was U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines but the Filipinos came to see him as the base negotiator driving a hard bargain. I learned from this lesson later in my career when I was U.S. Ambassador to Senegal in our status-of-forces agreement (SOFA) negotiations. I was very happy to have a Bureau of Political-Military Affairs lead negotiator and I could be the good cop behind the scenes explaining things and trying to work things out.

It's easy in hindsight for me to say that the decision to make Ambassador Platt dual-hatted was a mistake. At the time, Ambassador Platt felt strongly that he did not want another negotiator coming in and making his life difficult. The problem is a lot of the interagency work is done in Washington and he was in Manila, so he had to be awake at two in the morning on conference calls and talking to Defense Department lawyers. It was a tough period in U.S.-Philippine relations.

During these long and contentious negotiations, Cory Aquino was reluctant to intervene. We were hoping she would use some political capital to bring along some of the senators. So, particularly at the Defense Department, there was more and more frustration with her "indecisiveness." (I am not sure she was indecisive; she might have decided to let our basing agreement expire but just did not tell us.) Negotiations dragged on and got nastier and nastier. Our economic officer on the desk — Geraldine Chester — had been an attorney herself and had been involved in the Panama Canal treaty negotiations, so she had many creative ideas for inducements to offer. I worked a lot with Gerry because the base negotiations had a big economic component and I could help her with those issues.

We never did conclude these negotiations. When I left the desk, they were still underway. When Mount Pinatubo erupted, spewing large quantities of volcanic ash on Clark Air Force Base, the attitude of the U.S. military shifted and we decided to let the agreement expire and withdraw from both of our military bases in the Philippines. Much later, we negotiated a visiting forces agreement that allowed our two militaries to continue to train together in the Philippines. Frankly, I think that this was a good outcome. The U.S. military presence in the Philippines was a vestige of the colonial period and was resented by many Filipinos.

Charlie Salmon ran a very collegial desk; there were just five officers and two support staff. Other desks in EAP were bigger — the China desk had fourteen people — but we were much busier. I loved the work and the atmosphere. I was young and had a lot of time and it felt heady and important to attend interagency meetings and to visit the SCIF (sensitive compartmented information facility) upstairs for classified discussions.

*KENNEDY: And it was the top of the news.*

ZUMWALT: Yes. I could tell my friends and relatives that I was working on the Philippines and they appreciated the importance of my work. There were many interesting moments during that tour. For example, Marcos' team had loaded boxes and boxes of documents on the airplane when he fled Manila. Not knowing the contents, the Philippine government demanded them back. We were caught in the middle. Were these legitimately his personal papers, as he claimed? Or were they government secrets we should return to the Philippine government? Someone brought all these boxes of documents to the Philippines desk and asked us to sort them out by the following morning. The contents included a letter from Marcos to his mother, but most of the papers were stock certificates and inventories of assets he or Imelda owned. Those documents, we returned to the Philippine government. We had to review the documents first because nobody knew if the documents contained privileged information.

Since we only had a few hours to go through all these documents, we organized a pizza party and invited other Philippine experts — colleagues from INR and PM — to help us with our document review task. As I recall, we spent four hours after work hours until we finished reviewing all these papers. We would hear "Hey, look at this, which pile does this go in?" The

task was kind of fun. My conclusion was that there was no rhyme or reason why these particular documents had been brought, it was just people panicking and loading up whatever papers were lying around Marcos' office. I'm sure there were other documents of more interest that had been left behind.

Morale was high on the Philippine desk. Charlie, even though the work was stressful and he faced many demands from the front office and the secretary of state, always made us feel as if we were important players on the team. We had our share of office birthday parties and celebrations. Charlie hosted a nice holiday dinner for us all at his house. He was single, but he brought in a cook and someone to serve that evening. I felt an incredible loyalty to Charlie because he was good to me. I learned that a good boss takes care of his subordinates; people respond better to praise and guidance than to someone screaming orders. I learned that from Charlie.

I was newly married then and was happy not to have to work most nights and weekends anymore. This left me with time to explore Washington DC and the region with Ann. We rented a parking space in Columbia Plaza because we decided the quick commute to work was worth the cost; it was a fifteen-minute drive to get into the office. Up the street from us lived an A-100 classmate named Shari Villarosa (who also became an ambassador). She was on the Singapore desk, so we gave her rides in every day. My wife was working on the Pacific Islands desk in the same bureau; I think she covered nine countries because they were tiny. I remember joking with her that she had to clear more human rights reports than anyone else in the department! It was interesting talking to her because the Pacific Islands were a completely different kind of place. Her office director Russell Surber was also very kind and capable.

*KENNEDY: I remember when I went out after retirement in the late '80s to the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). It was like going to the poorer parts of West Virginia.*

ZUMWALT: Yes, the office situation for Ann was a vestige of history, but when she was working on the Pacific Islands desk, FSM was covered by a separate office. Until the Compact of Free Association was signed between the United States and the three newly independent states in Micronesia, they had been the responsibility of the Department of the Interior as U.S.-administered UN Trust Territories. When the compact was signed and they became independent states, the office in Interior moved over to the State Department. Ann's office covered South Pacific island states including Papua New Guinea, Fiji, and other parts of Melanesia and Polynesia, but not the Micronesian states in the North Pacific.

The two offices were housed together in a suite and, at the time, I thought that the Micronesia office was overstaffed. They had eight people to cover three small countries in the North Pacific (Micronesia) whereas Ann's Pacific Island desk had four people to cover nine countries (including two much larger ones) in the South Pacific. I enjoyed visiting her suite and I must say that relations between the two offices were excellent.

Ann and I enjoyed our tours in Washington DC. We came to appreciate life in the nation's capital and our jobs in the State Department helped us develop professional skills and connections that would further our Foreign Service careers. However, after four years in Washington, we looked forward to going overseas again. One challenge was to identify two job openings in the same foreign post. We were not interested in separate assignments, so this desire to remain co-located limited our overseas assignment options. The State Department did its best to work with couples

like us, recognizing the morale benefits and cost savings, but we were limited to assignments in large posts with job openings for each of us.

## Chapter VI

### Embassy Tokyo Economic Section, 1989–1993

MARCH 26, 2018

*KENNEDY: Where did you go after your tour in Washington DC?*

ZUMWALT: By this point, Ann and I started thinking we wanted to return to Japan, so we talked to the Japan desk about onward assignments in Embassy Tokyo. Because many jobs in the economic and political sections require the Japanese language, officers who already have Japanese can be assigned two years in advance since they do not require two years of language training. This means that language officers need to begin lobbying for a language-designated position early. Almost immediately after starting on the Philippine desk in 1987, I began talking to the Japan desk about an 03 Economic Officer job in Embassy Tokyo. I sought an assignment in the economic section since I was an economic officer who had not yet done an economic tour. In those days, Japan was hot — over forty officers expressed interest in this job. But I had tested at the 4/3+ level in Japanese and was known from my time in the EAP front office, so they hired me.

Ann also received an assignment in Tokyo. Her Japanese was at the 2+ level, so she was assigned to a job via one year of Japanese-language training at the State Department language school in Yokohama. We were happy to share our first experience as a tandem couple (two officers married to each other) in the same country. As soon as I arrived in Tokyo, I applied for an extension of my tour because Ann was scheduled to finish one year after me because of her year of language training. The Deputy Chief of Mission was supportive of this arrangement and thus it worked out.

After her language training, Ann became Assistant Labor Officer at the embassy, a position that has since been abolished. Her main task was to report on the labor-based opposition parties, the Socialist and Democratic Socialist parties. She was essentially a part of the political section's internal politics unit. Nobody else focused on these Japanese political parties because they were small and had never been in power.

Years later in 2009, when the opposition parties did form a government, we became much more interested in these politicians. At that time, Ann was the FSO who knew all these new government ministers because she had developed relationships with them as young Diet members when she was the Assistant Labor Officer. Ann discovered that even the politicians who were a bit anti-American in political tone were thrilled to receive a U.S. embassy visitor.

*KENNEDY: This is one of the things again in relations with countries — you really have to have people who have continuity and know the persons involved in the relationship. It's not something you can do with a quick visit; it takes years.*

ZUMWALT: That is true. I was fortunate to work in a place like Japan which is very accessible and where people are open and honest. I remember a few times being visited by someone from our CIA station. They might come down to my office to say “We have access to this report, but we are not sure how valuable it is for our customers. If you could get access to the report through your open channels, we will not bother to translate it and send it in.” I would then visit someone in the relevant economic ministry (without mentioning that I knew about the report) and often

they would just hand the report to us. The agency folks were happy not to have to translate the report because they were busy with other tasks and they agreed that if we could obtain information through open channels, they would focus on other matters.

We had a collegial relationship with the CIA station in Tokyo. We benefited from a robust analyst-abroad program where CIA civil servants who were based in Washington would be sent out to Tokyo for two years to work in a section of the embassy under one hundred percent State Department cover. During their tours, they performed no work for the station at all, but they worked for us as a State Department economic or political officer. These analysts were valuable assets to the section. Sometimes it was hard to push them out the door because they were used to remaining at their desk, reading and analyzing information and then writing reports. However, they were excellent analysts and writers and understood how to shape a logical presentation. We learned from them how to confirm information using multiple sources, to explore low-probability but high-impact scenarios, and to be careful to avoid assertions without proof. These civil servants had strong analytical training and deep backgrounds in Japan. There were some excellent synergies among us and we learned from each other. They would tell me “We’re surprised you go out of the office frequently to meet people!” In the Embassy Tokyo economic section, we always wanted one of the CIA analysts because their contributions enriched our analytical reporting.

*KENNEDY: Who was the ambassador?*

ZUMWALT: Ambassador Mike Armacost arrived in Tokyo a week before I did. He had already been Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs and U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines. He was demanding in a positive sense, expecting good work from his staff. He gave a lot of speeches and each had to have a unique new message, so a lot of embassy staff spent many hours writing speeches for him.

Because I had fairly good Japanese, the day I arrived at post, my boss, Economic Counselor David Brown told me, “You will be one of the ambassador’s two interpreters.” David was very aware of how much of my time was spent interpreting for the ambassador. Rather than seeing that as a problem, he saw it as a benefit; he thought my interpreting work gave our section better access and greater understanding of the ambassador’s thinking.

Being good at speaking Japanese and interpreting are two very different things, so I felt unprepared for this task. Mostly, I interpreted the ambassador’s statements from English into Japanese and the other side had an interpreter to render the Japanese into English. However, for meetings with senior politicians, I often had to interpret both ways. The embassy arranged for me to attend interpreter school from six to nine p.m. two evenings a week during my first year in Tokyo. I was the only American and the only male in the advanced interpreting class, alongside thirty Japanese women. Even though interpreting was a bit of a struggle at first, I became more and more comfortable in that role. Perhaps between a quarter and a third of my time during that tour in Tokyo was working directly with the ambassador, interpreting for him at meetings.

Most of my interpreting for Ambassador Armacost was political work. I would accompany him to meet senior Japanese politicians in their offices or to go to a government ministry to call on a minister. By interpreting for the ambassador, I met with Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) faction leaders like Noboru Takeshita, Yasuhiro Nakasone, Michio Watanabe, Takeo Miki, and Ichiro Ozawa. The only faction leader that I did not meet with the ambassador was Kiichi Miyazawa,

who spoke fluent English. During my time on this tour, I also interpreted for a few senior American political figures: USTR Clayton Yeutter, Secretary of Commerce Robert Mosbacher, and Congressman Norman Mineta. U.S. Forces Japan had an excellent Japanese interpreter at Yokota Air Force Base who had a security clearance, so I never needed to interpret for the U.S. military or the Defense Department.

Interpreting was time-intensive because before every meeting I needed to spend an hour or so reviewing the talking points and learning the issues. Then I would accompany the ambassador to interpret, then return to the political section to provide them a meeting readout. So, a half-hour meeting for the ambassador might involve two and a half hours of my time. But for me, this was time well spent. Mike Armacost was a consummate professional; he knew how to work relationships and how to frame an issue. I learned much from observing him in these meetings. Also, my foreign and trade ministry counterparts began seeing me as someone who was close to the ambassador and they may well have held exaggerated opinions on my importance in the embassy due to this visibility. I am sure this gave me greater access to foreign and trade ministry office directors as my economic section colleagues usually met their deputies.

*KENNEDY: Speaking as somebody coming out of the system, I'd think you being an economic officer, there'd be some jealousy or concern from people in the political section.*

ZUMWALT: The other person who interpreted for the ambassador, Jason Hyland, was from the political section. Other officers were not raising their hands and saying "I want to interpret too!" I was not usurping someone's role. I never felt any jealousy from others. Jason and I got along well and we would coordinate frequently to decide who would accompany the ambassador on any particular call.

*KENNEDY: With bureaucratic struggles, information is your major tool. Here, you had access to a major source of information because of your language skills and there might have been some envy from others.*

ZUMWALT: I tried to get around that by sharing the information. I was not interested in taking time to write up the meeting report because I had my economic section job. I was quite happy to provide an oral debrief, hand over my notes, and leave the meeting report to someone else. Usually, the officer writing up the cable would show me the draft to make sure that our report reflected my memory of the ambassador's conversation. Also, my wife worked in the political section, so that helped me get to know the political officers. Also, the head of the internal political unit, Jim Foster, was a real team player. He used to invite me over to his dinner parties for Japanese politicians because he wanted to include American guests who spoke Japanese. We worked together well and became close friends.

*KENNEDY: From the experience as an interpreter, do you have any rules you want to pass on?*

ZUMWALT: Many people do not know how to use an interpreter. When speaking with an interpreter, it is important to divide comments into bite-sized pieces; memories are not perfect and if the speaker continues too long, the interpreter will not do as good a job rendering these remarks into a foreign language. Also the audience will begin to drift away with a long monologue that they do not understand. Avoid puns or culturally specific jokes, which generally do not translate well. Understand that saying something in Japanese takes longer than saying the same thing in English. (Once in a while, someone would say to me, "Gee, did I say all that?")

Another best practice is helping the interpreter by giving him or her a preview. I appreciated receiving Ambassador Armacost's talking points ahead of time so I could review them and think about how to interpret an important point into Japanese. After about six months, I would joke "To save time, just let me interpret — I know what you're going to say!" I think Ambassador Armacost appreciated that I was not only the interpreter, but I was also trying to make his meeting go well.

*KENNEDY: Did you find yourself running across the thing I've heard said of people coming to Japan from anywhere after a deal, that after they present their thing, they come out of a meeting and say, "That went well" and somebody would say, "Actually, they didn't agree with you"?*

ZUMWALT: There clearly are misinterpretations and misunderstandings. The famous case was when President Richard Nixon was talking to Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka in the early 1970s and Nixon thought he had reached a deal on textiles, but the interpreter had misunderstood a vague comment by the prime minister. Nixon later became furious when he thought Tanaka had reneged on their understanding, when Tanaka never thought he had agreed to limit Japan's textile exports in the first place. Interpreters have a lot of responsibility. Obviously, for those high-level conversations, one really should use a professional interpreter. The State Department now has funded a position for a cleared American citizen interpreter in Tokyo. She is worth her weight in gold.

*KENNEDY: You were an economic officer?*

ZUMWALT: I was an economic officer in the Trade Policy Unit. I think we had an economic section of fourteen officers, two office managers, and six Japanese staff. In those days, we were the busiest section of the embassy. Jim Foster gave me some good advice when I started this tour. He said, "Don't ever talk to your counterparts in English because your Japanese is good enough. Once you start talking in English, you'll never switch to Japanese." I had to struggle a little at the beginning, especially with some of the trade terminology. My Japanese counterparts who spoke perfect English would humor me and speak in Japanese. But they liked me because they saw I was making an effort to speak their language. After a few months, it became natural to talk to my counterparts exclusively in Japanese.

Most of the section's focus was on our bilateral trade, but I was asked to cover the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations. This was a challenging assignment for me because there was no expertise at post. Once in a while, I would receive an instruction by cable to demarche the Japanese about a certain subject, but I didn't know the background of our negotiations because they occurred in Geneva, not Tokyo. But I would dutifully print up the talking points before visiting my Japanese government counterparts.

Once, I visited the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) on some point about proposed restrictions on trade-related investment measures, one of the subjects of the Uruguay Round. After I read my talking points, a nice Japanese office director said, "Jim, before I explain our position to you, let me first explain your position." He reviewed the history of the negotiations, the U.S. negotiating position, the Japanese position, and why we didn't agree. That meeting was a bit humiliating, since he dropped the pretense that I understood what I was talking about, but it resulted in an excellent report back to Washington because, thanks to this kind Japanese diplomat, I now understood the issue.

In future meetings, I dropped the pretense that I understood the Uruguay Round talks and the multilateral trade offices at the Japanese foreign and trade ministries adopted me as a well-meaning, if uninformed, conduit of information back to Washington DC. In those days, the MOFA was open and I didn't need a pass to get in, so I could just drop in on the multilateral trade office a few times per week and have some tea with them. They would then explain some of the background on current negotiations in Geneva. That information allowed me to draft some nice reporting on the evolution of Japanese thinking about the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations.

Once in a while, they would also pass me tips on how to influence Japan's ruling party's decision-making process. The foreign and trade ministry officials would suggest that we should meet a certain politician, for example, saying he was more open-minded and had political influence. Then I would report that suggestion to the ambassador, who was eager to engage. The people in the foreign and trade ministries in particular were trying to help us influence Japan's decision-making process because they believed it was in Japan's interest to conclude the Uruguay Round and they realized that as a major trader, Japan had to open its own agricultural markets for the round to succeed.

Towards the end of the Uruguay Round in late 1992, suddenly we started receiving more visitors to Tokyo. U.S. Trade Representative Clayton Yeutter visited a few times to talk to the Japanese and try to conclude some of the difficult parts of our agreements. Since I was the only person in the embassy who had followed these multilateral trade talks, our ambassador, Mike Armacost, became interested in soliciting my views on the status of our bilateral talks with Japan that were a part of the Uruguay Round.

The most difficult issue for Japan in these multilateral negotiations was rice imports. This issue was symbolically important because Japan would be a major beneficiary of the Uruguay Round, but it maintained a complete ban on imported rice. In 1992, USTR Clayton Yeutter came to Tokyo to strike a deal on Japan's rice imports and I needed to interpret for him. We met people like the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, but the real decision-maker was a shadowy senior LDP politician named Shin Kanemaru, who controlled the largest political faction in the ruling political party. This meeting was important because if we could bring Kanemaru on board, then the LDP would fall in line with our demand that Japan open its rice market.

USTR Yeutter and I flew in a helicopter to the slopes of Mount Fuji to meet him. We were met at the helipad and taken by a chauffeured limousine to Kanemaru's remote mountain cabin a few kilometers away. We all knew that Kanemaru was fabulously wealthy (nobody at the time could pinpoint the source of his wealth), but he enjoyed weekend retreats in this simple rustic cabin. His wife served us tea and then left the small room. Kanemaru and Yeutter started a conversation with me as the interpreter, the only other person present. I remember being nervous that I would misinterpret something and create an incident that would undermine the Uruguay Round as Prime Minister Tanaka's interpreter had done with textile talks twenty years earlier!

The approach that Clayton Yeutter adopted for this meeting was successful. He dropped all pretense and sought to talk "politician to politician." There was no pretense on either side. Yeutter explained that it was important to both sides to reach a deal and that Japan's ban on rice imports was a stumbling block. He then laid out the parameters where Japan could maintain an import quota on rice to replace its import ban. Much to our relief, Kanemaru replied, "I

understand.” He left the details to USTR and the Japanese government to work out. (I think he had been briefed that the Uruguay Round would collapse unless Japan made this concession.) Yeutter left the meeting with the understanding that we would obtain a concession on this issue from Japan. Prior to this meeting, the official LDP position had been “Japan will never import even a single grain of rice.”

Upon my return to Tokyo, I could finally repay my contacts at MOFA’s Bureau of Economic Affairs multilateral trade office who had been so kind to me with information. They had no idea what Kanemaru would say and were nervous about the outcome of our meeting. When I returned to my office (we did not have cellphones in those days), I called them with a report on the meeting. They were relieved that Kanemaru said he understood the need for Japan to make a concession on rice imports and were grateful to me for the briefing. That was one of my greatest adventures as a non-professional interpreter in Japan.

Later, I briefed Jim Foster about this meeting. Jim was always extremely open and friendly. He respected my work as an interpreter because he himself spoke excellent Japanese. He was interested less in the substance of our discussion on rice imports than on the details of Kanemaru and his mountain cabin. Unlike most other Japanese politicians, we knew little about Shin Kanemaru. I remember Jim joking with me, asking if I had seen any gold bars in Kanemaru’s cabin. I replied that my Japanese host mother had taught me it would be rude to look under the seat cushions when being served tea! A year later, Kanemaru was convicted of tax evasion on kickbacks he had received from construction companies. The authorities found \$51 million in bearer bonds and hundreds of pounds of gold stored in his home.

*KENNEDY: Did they use the excuse that Japanese stomachs couldn’t take imported rice?*

ZUMWALT: The politicians had all kinds of excuses for impeding imports, but I must say the educated bureaucrats understood that Japan had to make its contributions in the form of market-opening steps in order to benefit from an open multilateral trading system. The MOFA officials wanted to cut a deal and were quite happy to make a concession on rice but could not do it without high-level political support. This Kanemaru-Yeutter meeting provided the signal they needed to work on the arrangements. Rice was not the only issue to work out on the Uruguay Round; it was a very complex negotiation.

*KENNEDY: Well, there were oranges too, weren’t there?*

ZUMWALT: There were many agricultural issues, but none as difficult for Japan as rice. As a result of the Uruguay Round, Japan lowered tariffs on many agricultural products — beef, pork, oranges, grapefruit, table grapes, cherries, whiskey, wine, ice cream, cheese, almonds, raisins, and many other high-value agricultural products. This agreement was particularly valuable for states that produce value-added agricultural products like California. Liberalization of orange imports later devastated Japan’s mandarin orange industry. Companies like Coca-Cola began importing juice oranges from Brazil and Japanese consumers preferred this product to domestic mandarin orange juice.

*KENNEDY: Do you want to talk about the trade environment between Japan and the United States at that time?*

ZUMWALT: Japan enjoyed a large trade surplus with the United States. There was a fear of Japan as a rapidly growing superpower. On the U.S. side, Congress was pushing the Republican

administration to be tougher on Japan and to negotiate better deals. Embassy Tokyo was working very closely with the U.S. Trade Representative in Washington. I dealt much more with USTR than with the State Department during this tour; USTR did not have an office in Tokyo so they counted on the Embassy Tokyo economic section.

One other interesting facet of this tour was that I became friendly with Masako Owada, an employee in MOFA's North American Economic Affairs Division. She was an extremely serious, capable, and diligent ministry official who spoke excellent English. Most of our conversations revolved around logistics — appointment requests for visiting American officials, requests to delay the start of negotiations for a short period, coordination of press releases on our trade talks, topics like that. We probably spoke 3–4 times a week and saw each other in meetings weekly. Owada was the consummate professional, but I always thought that she was under extreme pressure because she was a female in a male-dominated ministry and her father was the Vice Foreign Minister. We socialized a bit — for example, she visited our apartment on the embassy housing compound for a New Year's party and attended a few of our lunches where the economic section hosted our counterparts in the North American Affairs Division. At the time, our political section told me about rumors that the Crown Prince was interested romantically in Masako Owada, but I would not have believed it then if someone had told me she would become the Empress of Japan. The only contact I have had with her since her engagement to the Crown Prince (now Emperor) was years later at the annual imperial garden party with thousands of guests, where she strolled through the garden with the then-Crown Prince and recognized Ann and I standing along the side of the path. This was a very formal and stilted situation — we had been instructed not to speak unless spoken to — but Princess Masako (now Her Majesty the Empress) nodded to us and we nodded back, then she and the Crown Prince continued their walk down the path.

*KENNEDY: What was the government of Japan like?*

ZUMWALT: It was a parliamentary system with a prime minister who was also president of the LDP. This party had been in power for all but about nine months since 1955. The LDP stayed in power so long because they were flexible — if the opposition had a popular idea, the LDP would co-opt that policy. The LDP was a bedrock supporter of the U.S.-Japan security alliance. In those days, they didn't want to spend a lot of resources on national defense but focused instead on Japan's economic development. Therefore, the LDP was willing to provide base access for the Americans who in turn provided security to Japan. We were happy with this LDP government and our security arrangements.

*KENNEDY: How stood things with the Kuril Islands?*

ZUMWALT: The Japanese call those islands the Northern Territories and the Russians call them the Southern Kurils. The islands are disputed between Japan and the Soviet Union (later Russia). We supported Japan rhetorically by recognizing Japan's claim to the islands. But our security treaty only covered "territories under the administration of Japan," making it clear that we were not obligated to provide military assistance to Japan to dislodge the Russians.

*KENNEDY: It was a great benefit to us.*

ZUMWALT: In that time, the Japanese did not like the Russians at all. Stalin had made a huge mistake in 1945 — the Red Army captured over eight hundred thousand Japanese civilians and

soldiers in Manchuria. Many were harshly treated and over sixty thousand died. A large number of Japanese prisoners were moved to labor camps in Siberia and forced to work in logging or construction jobs under harsh conditions for years. I met many Japanese who knew someone who had been forced to work in a Soviet labor camp. I have heard from many older Japanese that they were glad it was the Americans and not the Russians who occupied Japan! I would hear these comments from the wartime generation, who hated the Soviet Union. I think being the Soviet/Russian ambassador must have been one of the hardest diplomatic jobs in Tokyo. Life for an American diplomat was much better because our Japanese counterparts were open and friendly.

*KENNEDY: How did you and your wife find social activity?*

ZUMWALT: Tokyo was a great place to live and we enjoyed a wonderful four years in Japan's capital. Every chance we had, we traveled around the country. We had many Japanese friends. Ann's contacts at labor unions were nice people and more down-to-earth than bureaucrats, so we enjoyed activities with them.

The first year when I was in Tokyo, Ann was studying at our language school in Yokohama about an hour-and-fifteen-minute train ride away. During that year, Friday after work, I would take the train to Yokohama and spend the weekend in Ann's apartment, then Monday morning, I would return to Tokyo on the six a.m. train. Ann's school was located in a nice part of Yokohama (a much more pleasant neighborhood than where I had lived when I was in high school) and her apartment was a ten-minute walk away from school. Every weekend, we explored a new part of Yokohama. We enjoyed visiting Yokohama's Chinatown for its excellent and inexpensive restaurants. Ann had a lot of homework, so I helped her with that on the weekends.

As a consequence, I did not do much socializing with embassy people my first year because I was never in Tokyo on the weekends. We made many friends among young foreign diplomats. Ann's language school had foreign students from New Zealand, Canada, and Australia. Ann became good friends with them during her year in Yokohama, so we did a lot of socializing with these foreign diplomats. We also had a lot of Japanese friends. Ann had served in Tokyo five years before and had stayed in touch with many of the employees who had worked with her in the consular section. I had Japanese friends from my time as a college student in Tokyo, including my two host families from when I was in high school and a grad student.

*KENNEDY: Could you afford to live there? Was this a problem?*

ZUMWALT: I think cost was a constraint for a family with children. Train tickets for an entire family would be expensive. But we were two adults with two incomes and no children. We couldn't afford fancy French and Italian restaurants, but there were plenty of reasonable places to eat out. We weren't staying at Western-style five-star hotels; we stayed at *minshuku* (Japanese bed and breakfasts) for perhaps \$80/night for two, including a nice dinner and breakfast. We did not find that finances constrained our travel in Japan.

*KENNEDY: What were your favorite places to visit?*

ZUMWALT: It's hard to say because there were so many. When our families visited, we traveled to Kyoto and Nara. I tried to take visitors to Hiroshima because I thought it was important for people to see the peace park. When Ann's parents and her brother's family came, we took them to a small island called Mukaejima in the Seto Inland Sea to visit Ann's aunt and uncle who lived

there. In terms of our personal travel, we loved the mountains and countryside and spending the weekend at hot springs.

*KENNEDY: I've heard that — maybe this reflects a different era — that the Japanese were not preserving the old buildings.*

ZUMWALT: That was and is a problem. In Tokyo, not many old buildings had survived the firebombs of 1944 and 1945. In Kyoto, there is more of an effort to preserve old buildings. Old temples and shrines are preserved, but in terms of urban areas, Japan has not done as well as Budapest or Paris in preserving historical buildings. But we still found plenty of places to visit. We did not have a car so we usually traveled on trains and rural buses. Those trips were fun. For example, on the local bus we might sit near two old ladies who had been picking wild herbs all day in the mountains. Once in a while, we would misread the bus schedule and have to spend several hours at a bus stop, but often as not, we would meet someone who would invite us for tea or offer us a gift like freshly picked peaches. People were so friendly in rural Japan. I cannot remember a single incident of hostility or anti-Americanism.

*KENNEDY: What else do you remember about this time in Japan?*

ZUMWALT: Ambassador Armacost faced some difficult issues. The final year of my assignment coincided with the first Gulf War. The United States was quite unhappy that Japan was not contributing armed forces to the international coalition. A military officer came to Japan to brief the Japanese on Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. It was a classified briefing with secret satellite photos and message intercepts, so they could not hire an uncleared professional interpreter for this briefing. I didn't know a lot of the military terms, so I was really sweating as I interpreted his briefing. There were maybe sixty people in the briefing room. I had made myself a vocabulary list, but the U.S. Army briefer moved quickly through some dense slides. I figured out quickly that many Japanese in the room who were military experts understood the English professional vocabulary. When I would struggle for a word, they would rescue me from my predicament by stating the Japanese equivalent out loud. The Gulf War was a traumatic experience for the Japanese, and also for us in Tokyo, because of the feeling in Washington that Japan was not pulling its weight.

*KENNEDY: I thought they sent some ships?*

ZUMWALT: After the conflict was over, Japan sent two minesweepers to clear shipping lanes, but during the conflict, they could not contribute forces due to constitutional limits on the use of force. Instead, the Japanese decided they would contribute money. They settled on four billion dollars — a not insignificant amount. But Ambassador Armacost was instructed to say that this amount was insufficient. Japan then agreed to an additional ten billion dollars for the coalition — which is serious money. Japan planned to pro rate the contributions to the entire coalition in accord with the size of each nation's contribution. I remember Ambassador Armacost was embarrassed when he was later instructed to tell Japan that the United States wanted all of the Japanese \$14 billion contribution with none left for the U.S. coalition allies. We drove a hard bargain even at the expense of our allies in the coalition. Sometimes an ambassador must deliver bad news; Ambassador Armacost did his duty, but I think he was quite embarrassed by this U.S. demand.

*KENNEDY: The Gulf War, the first one, the overhead shots of missiles hitting the windows was extremely impressive. How did that go over in Japan?*

ZUMWALT: There was no love for Saddam Hussein in Japan. I think their biggest concern, however, was about oil flows out of the Persian Gulf because Japan was so dependent on imported oil. There was also admiration and respect for the U.S. capabilities. Had this war occurred in a place closer to home, there might have been more concern about the humanitarian aspects, but I did not notice that much in 1990.

*KENNEDY: This might be a good place to talk a bit about style between Americans and Japanese and what you've learned.*

ZUMWALT: Most of our Japanese interlocutors, particularly from more international ministries like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Defense Agency, and Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), knew the United States well and understood Americans from living in Washington. (Later in 2001, MITI was merged with the Economic Planning Agency to form a new ministry known as the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry or METI.) Most of the actual negotiations do not occur in meetings with the other side in big rooms; most of the bilateral negotiations occurred in small meetings before or after the formal talks.

When I had arrived in Tokyo, the U.S. government had exercised its Super 301 trade authority and self-initiated trade cases claiming Japan was engaging in unfair trade practices in three areas: satellites, supercomputers, and wood products. I was the U.S. embassy officer in charge of wood products talks, products used in building construction like hardwood lumber, two-by-fours, and plywood. We were negotiating about issues like construction standards and fire codes, but the most important issue was Japanese tariffs on imported wood products. At the end of an entire year of negotiations, when we were facing a looming deadline, our trade negotiator from USTR, Don Phillips, talked to the head of the Japanese Forestry Agency in a one-on-one meeting. I accompanied Don as the interpreter. In twenty minutes, they cut a deal. "This tariff is fifteen percent, it should be five percent." "No, let's settle on twelve percent." Etc. The U.S. side realized our leverage would disappear if the deadline passed without an agreement and the Japanese side didn't want talks to break down because that would create more political pressure in Washington. We spent a year talking for hours and hours about less consequential issues, but as the deadline loomed, I was amazed at how fast the tariff negotiations actually went.

*KENNEDY: Where are tariffs set in the Japanese and American systems?*

ZUMWALT: American tariffs are approved by Congress, but in the GATT, the predecessor to the World Trade Organization, the United States and Japan (and others) had agreed to "bind" their tariffs. This means that neither side could raise its tariffs above the levels that had been promised in the GATT. Later in various trade "rounds," GATT members agreed mutually to reduce tariffs to lower levels to spur global trade. Japan's wood products tariffs were consistent with its GATT obligations. Furthermore, Japan's tariffs on U.S. wood products were no different than those imposed on Canadian or New Zealand products; these two countries were the other two big exporters of temperate-climate forestry products.

With a big bilateral trade deficit, this was an area where the United States could be exporting more and we wanted Japan to cut its tariffs further. For example, one of our big complaints was that Japan's tariff on softwood and temperate hardwood logs was zero percent so we exported a lot of raw materials, but we wanted to export more value-added products like plywood and glued

laminated timber (or glulam). Japanese tariffs on those items were in the range of fifteen or twenty percent. Our talks didn't cover tropical hardwoods which were of interest to countries like Malaysia.

*KENNEDY: On lumber, for example, I imagine Canada was a competitor.*

ZUMWALT: Yes. A lot of these products were from the west of North America — whether it came from Montana or Alberta, it was essentially the same product.

*KENNEDY: Was Canada a player? You had to be looking over each other's shoulders.*

ZUMWALT: We were. Japan was not going to have a lower tariff on a U.S. product than a Canadian product because they had most-favored-nation obligations in the GATT. Essentially, whatever we could negotiate would be applied to Canadian and New Zealand products too. Canada benefited as well from our negotiation.

*KENNEDY: Was there much contact outside of negotiations? Take your shoes off and talk informally?*

ZUMWALT: Yes. To be honest, I didn't see what happened on the U.S. side because we didn't have a budget to send me back to negotiations in Washington. State Department colleagues would participate and I would read their reports. On the Japanese side, they recognized that when you need to cut a deal, goodwill is important. For example, one issue was Japanese fire codes. The U.S. position was that Japanese fire codes were too restrictive and those rules reduced demand for wood products used in housing construction. We considered this to be a non-tariff barrier, whereas Japan saw it as a safety measure.

*KENNEDY: They'd been really designed to exclude...*

ZUMWALT: I do not think that Japan's fire codes were designed for the purpose of excluding imported wood products, but their unintended impact was to reduce overall demand for wood construction materials. Japan experienced many catastrophic fires in its crowded cities. Consequently, their building codes favored steel and ferro-concrete structures over flammable wooden ones. Their position was that these codes were necessary due to crowded urban conditions in Japan. They took us to places in the city to see how fire codes were implemented with fire breaks. Then they would host a dinner at a hot spring and we would drink sake together. Those activities would help build our human relationships.

*KENNEDY: Let's talk about rice. Did their farmers produce enough rice to meet the demand?*

ZUMWALT: Rice is the main Japanese staple food and the Shinto religion developed around the cycle of rice production with ceremonies for planting and harvesting. There is a religious and cultural aspect to rice in Japan. At the end of the war, two million Japanese were repatriated from Manchuria and Korea, so with this huge increase in population, the country experienced food shortages. At that time, the government implemented policies to stimulate rice production, but these policies were so successful that by the 1980s, Japanese farmers produced a rice surplus. Japan then started a program to pay farmers to leave rice paddies fallow, while sustaining a high domestic price of rice. This meant that U.S. farmers saw Japan as an attractive rice export market since the retail price was so high.

Political leaders on both sides recognized our relationship was too important to break down over something like rice imports. Once the politicians decided it was time to cut a deal, there was a sprint to the final Uruguay Round agreements. On rice, Japan agreed that the government itself would import a fixed quantity each year at a rather high price.

*KENNEDY: Was there any movement among the Japanese political sphere that was against the United States?*

ZUMWALT: The Japanese media began using the term *gaiatsu* — foreign pressure. There was resentment of this U.S. pressure. The people I talked to, the professionals, understood this political pressure was part of the decision-making process. They would much rather that Japan were the free-trading country that unilaterally opened its markets, but they realized that Japan (in those days) would be the last one to move after seeing the commitments from everybody else in the negotiations. In terms of my personal interactions with the trade and foreign and agriculture ministries, they never became angry with me, they saw me as someone who could help them arrive at a solution.

*KENNEDY: Did you have people like Senator Jesse Helms come over and talk on the issues? And were you involved?*

ZUMWALT: I do not recall Senator Helms visiting, but I do recall groups of congressmen and senators and congressional staff who would visit to learn about the situation. We would bring them to talk to Japanese counterparts and the Japanese would complain that USTR was being too tough. They realized that this approach would help USTR convince the Congress that it was negotiating the best deal possible with Japan. At the end of the day, we were successful — we concluded the Uruguay Round and our bilateral trade talks. I am proud of the small part I played in these negotiations.

*KENNEDY: Did you get representatives from American steel or others come out?*

ZUMWALT: Yes. Another trade issue I was working on was our voluntary restraint agreements (VRA) where Japan was “voluntarily” restricting exports of steel and machine tools. MITI would report to us on Japan’s steel exports in certain categories and we would have a discussion. I thought this approach was very inefficient because governments should not determine how much steel American customers could buy. Because of these trade pressures, however, those were the agreements that were made.

When there were negotiations, on steel for example, an industry delegation would come to Tokyo. Our negotiator was Don Phillips from USTR. He would talk to the Japanese, then come out and talk to the U.S. industry delegation in a nearby hotel. We called it “the industry,” but they were mostly government-relations people and lawyers from industry associations and representatives of big firms. Labor union representatives were sometimes present too. The industry would tell Don “That’s unreasonable. You have to ask for more.” On the Japanese side as well — their bureaucrats would brief the Japanese industry, saying we have to make more concessions, and they would reply “No, you can’t do that!” I recall one incident after a year-long negotiation about Japan implementing voluntary restraints on exports of machine tools. After we finally reached an agreement, the Japanese industry hosted a dinner for MITI officials and the U.S. delegation. Before the dinner started, the MITI trade negotiator told Don, “I’m in trouble, the industry is really unhappy with me, they think I made too many concessions — so could you

please complain about me over dinner? Don't look too happy." Over dinner, Don complained to the Japanese industry how unreasonable MITI had been. I think he was convincing.

*KENNEDY: Like union negotiations, I'm told, they all wait to the last night then let their beards grow out and get sweaty and ties undone and come out after an exhausting night — when they knew where they were going to end up.*

ZUMWALT: I also realized that I am not a good negotiator. I enjoyed supporting our negotiators, doing research, talking to the Japanese side, finding out what politicians to target — all that work I relished. But I am not a poker player and I realized I didn't want to work in a place like USTR because that sort of tough negotiation is not my forte.

The entire economic section became involved in what was called the Structural Impediments Initiative (SII) talks. These talks were not about specific products, but rather about systematic aspects of Japan's economy that reduced Japan's appetite for imported goods. We had bilateral talks on Japan's savings/investment imbalance, on intercompany cross-shareholding (*keiretsu*), on land use policies, on the distribution system, and on reasons for high Japanese prices for imported goods. The goal of these discussions was to address systemic aspects of Japan's economy that depressed imports. These talks required a great deal of research about Japanese economic conditions which kept the economic section quite busy for the two-year duration of our talks.

*KENNEDY: Did you see the change in manufacturing methods?*

ZUMWALT: Yes, we saw many changes. The Toyota model was lean manufacturing with a "just-in-time" system to deliver inputs from suppliers to the factory so there was very little inventory. One reason there was so much American interest in learning about Japan was the belief that Japanese manufacturing was advanced. We hosted teams from the U.S. Commerce Department to visit Tokyo to study lessons for U.S. manufacturing. Many times, I visited a steel plant with American delegations to see how they manufactured steel. Those mills were hot! We would walk along high catwalks over the factory, looking down at the blast furnace (it was too dangerous for us to be on the floor) and see the molten steel being forged. There was hardly a person on the mill's floor because the process was almost completely automated. At the end of our tour, we needed to change our clothes and take a shower because we were drenched in sweat.

*KENNEDY: As a plain economic officer, non-interpreter, what else did you have on your plate?*

ZUMWALT: In addition to the Uruguay Round, the wood products Super 301 case, and VRAs on steel and machine tools, I also had what I called the "sin portfolio" — cigarettes, distilled spirits, slot machines, wine, and beer. There were various restrictions — every country has them, we have our own — but that was an area where U.S. firms were doing quite well, with spirits like Jack Daniel's and Wild Turkey becoming popular in Japan. Philip Morris was just coming into Japan in a big way, so we were working hard to reduce restrictions on distribution of their products.

*KENNEDY: Tell me... here you are, the sin officer, pushing Philip Morris cigarettes. We were going through the process of saying, "Hey, these things kill people — let's restrict it." Did you feel queasy on this?*

ZUMWALT: The way we rationalized our approach was to claim that we were not encouraging people to smoke more cigarettes, only asking Japan to treat the American product the same as the Japanese product. For example, Philip Morris did not have access to cigarette vending machines, only the government-owned monopoly tobacco company did. The government-owned monopoly did not want their competitor's products inside their vending machines. We addressed those sorts of market access issues.

*KENNEDY: How did that work out?*

ZUMWALT: Philip Morris and the other foreign tobacco companies grew their market share substantially from about 2% to over 10% of the Japanese market. But then Mickey Kantor came in to USTR and decided to discontinue any support for American tobacco companies, so we dropped this issue from our trade agenda. We still worked on issues related to distilled spirits, slot machines, wine, and beer.

*KENNEDY: How stood the liquor market? I served in Korea back in the 1970s — Korean men would go to a kisaeng house and one guy would be designated to get the other guys home but they'd really get quite drunk. Was that going on in Japan?*

ZUMWALT: I don't know if overall alcohol consumption was more than in the United States, but Japan was an attractive market for U.S. spirits exporters. Companies like Jack Daniel's, Jim Beam, and Wild Turkey started marketing themselves as the hip young product. They were using young singers and famous American actors to sell their spirits. They ended up doing well and some of their success was due to our work to eliminate restrictions on imported distilled spirits.

*KENNEDY: How did Japanese hosts deal with visitors from other countries, yourself included? Would you go to the equivalent of geisha houses?*

ZUMWALT: By the time I worked in Japan, geisha houses were a relic of the past. With visiting trade delegations, often the Japanese companies would host some kind of party in a restaurant. They would serve alcohol and nice food, but there was nothing untoward.

I supported my share of congressional delegations. Most of my tour was under the Reagan and Bush administrations, but in the final six months, our president was Bill Clinton. The Japanese were anxious because they were comfortable with the Republicans on both security and trade policy and they worried about President Clinton's campaign rhetoric that criticized the Republicans for being too soft on Japan. President Clinton visited Japan and, before his visit, there were a lot of cabinet-level visitors, so the embassy became involved in high-level visit support. The first year of the Clinton administration, our bilateral economic relationship was strained; the new administration had unrealistic expectations and the Japanese were unhappy with our attempts to redesign our trade relationship. That is one reason why the economic section was in some ways the busiest in the embassy — we supported many, many visiting delegations.

I did perform a small amount of translation once for President Clinton. At the end of his visit to Tokyo, just before their joint press conference at the Hotel Okura Tokyo, the Japanese government gave us a Japanese-language copy of Prime Minister Miyazawa's statement. For some reason, the White House staff could not locate the president's interpreter in the minutes before this event and they were desperate to learn what the prime minister planned to say. In the confusion, Ambassador Armacost found me in the crowd at the hotel and handed me the statement in Japanese, asking me to follow him and to translate this text. Ambassador Armacost

is a tall man, so I could not see where I was going as I followed closely behind him through the hotel lobby crowd while reading this text. When I looked up, President Clinton was standing right in front of me. I was so startled that I stopped translating. I think the president recognized my moment of confusion. Ambassador Armacost eased the situation by taking a moment to introduce me. President Clinton, as soon as he heard my name, asked if I were related to Admiral Zumwalt. When I replied that he was my uncle, the president said that they were good friends. This brief conversation allowed me to collect my wits and continue the translation of Miyazawa's statement. Both the president and Mike Armacost were relieved to learn that the prime minister would be stressing the positive in this joint statement and that he would avoid mentioning some of the contentious issues where the two leaders had not agreed.

*KENNEDY: Did you sense that women were assuming a different or more positive role in society?*

ZUMWALT: Things were gradually changing in Japan. Women had gained more equal educational opportunities. Roughly half of the student bodies of the best universities were female. In that time, however, most women working in big companies would resign either when they got married or when they gave birth to their first child. There were still very few women at senior levels of major Japanese companies.

*KENNEDY: Did you see at that time any reflection of the Japanese going abroad and traveling around? Were you seeing more of...?*

ZUMWALT: Yes, starting in the late 1970s, Japan experienced a travel boom. We encountered more and more Japanese who had traveled to or worked in the United States. Many of our embassy local hires had U.S. student experience.

*KENNEDY: That was my experience in Seoul at our embassy. We also offered a pretty good deal. The Koreans' office hours are half-a-day on Saturday; women didn't like working for Korean firms, especially if they were well-educated because they were kept down, whereas Americans treated them well. They knew their business and we accepted them.*

ZUMWALT: That was my experience in Japan also. The only caveat I would add is shorter work hours are appealing to men also, but Japanese men had more career options than women, so the quality of female job applicants for our positions tended to be much higher.

*KENNEDY: This is true. We were getting top-rate people. How did you find relations with Korea?*

ZUMWALT: Later in my career, I spent a lot of time on Japan-Korea relations but not at this time.

*KENNEDY: What about China?*

ZUMWALT: In those days, there was a China euphoria in Japan. Deng Xiaoping was opening the country and welcoming Japanese tourists. People saw China as a good partner for Japan. Not many Chinese tourists were coming to Japan, but Japanese tourists traveled to China. Many Japanese companies like Panasonic started opening factories in China because they could produce products like televisions and radios in greater volume and at lower cost. Japan-China relations were quite positive and people were optimistic about the future of their relationship.

*KENNEDY: How did you see the ambassador's job, being a political appointee usually? Did you see much of a future for yourself there?*

ZUMWALT: That was not a problem for me. Ambassador Armacost spent a lot of time on economic issues. He recognized the politics of the United States required the American ambassador to become involved in economic and commercial issues. The ambassador was interested in my opinions and treated me as a person who might return to Japan in a more senior role.

Ann and I both thought that this tour in Japan helped us make the transition from junior to mid-level officers. I could work on some important bilateral issues and also develop contacts in the Japanese government and business community that would help me later in my career.

## Chapter VII

### Return to Washington: U.S.-Korea Relations and International Economics, 1993–1998

MARCH 26, 2018

*KENNEDY: Let's talk about your return from Japan.*

ZUMWALT: After four years in Tokyo, Ann and I returned to Washington. We chose domestic assignments because each of us could find a good job there. Many tandem couples spend a large portion of their careers in Washington DC, where jobs are plentiful; finding two positions with the right timing at an overseas embassy can be challenging.

I began working on the Bureau of East Asia and Pacific Affairs' Korea desk as the senior economic officer. The Korea desk was led by a director and a deputy director, who supervised three political officers, two economic officers, and two office managers. Director David Brown and Deputy Director Lynn Turk were both extremely nice, but they had no time for the economic issues, being quite busy with South Korean domestic politics, U.S.-ROK security relations, and North Korea.

The ROK was a young democracy and there were still issues about consolidation of democracy while sustaining our security alliance. Our relationship with the Roh Tae-woo government was not strong, since many officials in that government blamed the United States for past support of Park Chung-hee's undemocratic rule. North Korea was frequently making trouble even as we were pursuing Agreed Framework talks on denuclearization. The director and deputy just did not have time to concern themselves with U.S.-ROK economic issues. Lynn did spend a lot of time explaining Korean politics to me and his insights were extremely helpful.

The other economic officer on the desk, an FS-04 named Bill Heidt, and I were essentially on our own to manage the bilateral economic issues. (Bill, by the way, was extremely talented and we worked together well. He later became U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia.) By this point in my career, I had a much better understanding of how to work effectively in the bureaucracy, so I relished our office director's light management touch which gave me the opportunity to flourish. I worked closely with Embassy Seoul's economic section, in daily touch by email — with John Hoog, Steve Wickman, and Jean Bonilla in particular. They were collegial counterparts across the Pacific. Because of the time zone difference, in some ways our relationship was like an extended rally in a tennis game. Each morning, I would come to the office to find a series of emails from these officers and, by the end of our day, I would send them answers to their questions or send Washington reactions to their proposals.

*KENNEDY: What were some of the major issues you were dealing with?*

ZUMWALT: South Korea was in transition from a developing to a developed country. Korea was growing so rapidly that restrictions that made sense in the 1960s no longer made sense in the 1990s. Korea had just joined the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), but political and societal changes lagged its economic growth so we were pushing them to move faster on trade liberalization and intellectual property protection. The Korean government was somewhat hostile to foreign cultural influences like TV programming and movies and banned or limited the population's access to American television shows and motion pictures. We were explaining that "You are no longer a developing country, so it's time to start

taking on the responsibilities of openness of other developed countries.” Because Korea depended on U.S. security protection, we had leverage in these talks. We made some progress.

One example was inadequate protection of American intellectual property in Korea. Small Korean firms produced many knock-off consumer products — I remember we worked on Patrick Ewing–branded basketball shoes. His supplier made the shoes in Korea but was also manufacturing shoes with the Ewing trademark and selling them very cheaply in Korea, undermining the brand’s value. We talked about intellectual property rights (IPR) violations of pharmaceutical products or copyrights on music, and patent protections, as well as access to movie theaters for Hollywood motion pictures, a whole range of issues.

When a country is developing and does not have much intellectual property of its own, they tend to not understand the value of protecting foreign intellectual property. This was true of the United States in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when we were young and using European technology. The developing countries in Asia thought they could not afford high-priced drugs or books, so they did not see the merit in paying the American publisher for the rights to reprint the book rather than allowing domestic publishers to sell pirated copies of these books at a lower price. But once countries start developing their own intellectual property, then local industries begin to seek protection from their governments for their own intellectual property. This was true in Korea as well. For example, many good Korean singers were losing revenue from pirated recordings of their work. We would partner with these singers as local champions to promote greater respect for IP protections for everyone in Korea.

*KENNEDY: On the Korean side, did you find your Japanese was helpful in talking to the Koreans?*

ZUMWALT: Koreans harbored resentment of Japan, stemming from their long history of conflict and Japanese colonial rule. I did not often advertise my Japan background when working with Koreans because I sensed that would be counterproductive. I never learned to speak Korean, unfortunately.

*KENNEDY: I picked up on that resentment when I was in Korea. Many Japanese would not acknowledge the fact that Korea had considerable influence on the development of Japan.*

ZUMWALT: I enjoyed a really good relationship with the economic section of the Korean embassy. Korean diplomats were consummate professionals.

Korean embassy officers visited us frequently to coordinate visits and work out how to manage upcoming negotiations. They would invite us to lunch and to a New Year’s party at the economic counselor’s house. We enjoyed more than just a professional relationship; they made efforts to get to know us.

*KENNEDY: My understanding is that Park Chung-hee, the Korean dictator up through the late 1970s, placed a great deal of emphasis on economics and made some profound decisions such as rice farmers getting a fair market price rather than being oppressed to subsidize cheaper rice for the cities.*

ZUMWALT: I think any fair assessment of Park’s role would be that he played a positive role in spurring Korea’s rapid economic development. He made the pragmatic decision to resolve political issues with Japan in exchange for the capital needed to grow the economy. Under Park,

Korea negotiated an agreement with Japan that settled the historic claims and, in return, Japan provided a massive amount of economic aid. Korea used this aid to finance steel plants and shipyards. The World Bank and Asian Development Bank also provided a lot of capital that was used to finance roads, airports, and other basic infrastructure. Of course, open U.S. markets also helped Korea develop export-oriented industries.

Korean foreign and economic ministries and the Korean business community were pragmatic. Korean shipyards produced oil tankers, but many of the components and key technologies came from Japan. I didn't hear Korean ship companies complaining about Japan, considering they had important business relationships with Japanese suppliers.

When I was on the Korean desk, the Korean government forbade Japanese cultural imports. Koreans could not watch Japanese TV shows or animated films. All those restrictions were later lifted and I think that cultural exchange has also helped Koreans become more familiar with Japan. Last year, over ten percent of the Korean population visited Japan as tourists. I'm optimistic about an improvement in Japan-Korea relations over time.

When I arrived on the Korea desk, the United States had just begun an economic dialogue with Korea and the assistant secretary for the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs (EB) was in charge of that effort. Bill Heidt and I ended up working closely with him, much more so than with our own front office in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. This assistant secretary was a political appointee named Dan Tarullo, who later went on to serve on the Federal Reserve's Board of Governors for many years. Dan had taught at Harvard Law School and he was brilliant. After a year as assistant secretary, he invited me to become his special assistant. I saw this job offer as a real opportunity to work in an environment where economic issues were paramount. I transferred from the Korea desk to the EB front office in 1995.

When I arrived in EB to begin my new job as Special Assistant to the assistant secretary, I learned that Dan was having difficulty adapting to the State Department bureaucratic culture. His experience was as a Harvard University professor and as a lawyer for a high-powered law firm. He did not understand how to lead a bureaucracy or manage a large staff. He brought me on to be his interface with the bureau — to translate his vision to the foreign service officers working for him.

Officers in the bureau wanted to help him succeed. They wanted to provide what he needed, but the channels of communication with the EB front office had not been working prior to my arrival. A big part of my job was to serve as the interface between Dan and the others in the bureau. I would call the five deputy assistant secretaries and thirteen office directors and say "Dan wants this done right away" or "Dan has some concerns about this. Why don't you come up to see him? He's free now." I don't think I drafted a single paper in my two years in the EB front office, but I had a hand in almost everything that came through Dan's office by making sure to explain Dan's priorities or his thinking to those at the working level who did not have direct contact with Dan. A lot of my role was smoothing out the rough patches between Dan and the bureau. I was a bit like the oil in the engine — almost invisible but at the same time indispensable. I think most of the DAses and office directors saw me in this light also. They certainly always returned my phone calls.

*KENNEDY: What were some of the issues you were involved in?*

ZUMWALT: The economics bureau was responsible for five major policies — international finance, international trade, civil aviation, telecommunications, and energy. The area of telecommunications was busy. The U.S. government had just implemented a new telecommunications act and there was a lot of work to implement the new rules governing our telecommunications industry while at the same time remaining compliant with our international obligations. The issues as they related to international affairs included allocating radio spectrum for cellphones in a fair way that maximized the benefit to the economy. The Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration was designing new regulations, but State was interested because these new rules affected our international obligations.

Energy — particularly oil and gas — was another important area. The bureau worked on issues like coordinating management of the government's petroleum stockpile with other countries who also maintained stockpiles. If there were an unexpected energy shortage, we would arrange with the Japanese and Europeans for a coordinated release of petroleum stockpiles to calm the market.

Another major issue was civil aviation. Foreign and U.S. carriers each wanted to fly to and from the United States. Their governments would negotiate these access issues. Previously, civil aviation had been a highly regulated sector with tight government controls on airlines. The United States deregulated domestic air travel, allowing carriers to set their own prices and expand routes as they wanted. This resulted in the creation of new carriers, a reduction in ticket prices, and declining profits for carriers on domestic air routes. Our bureau worked closely with the Department of Transportation to formulate our negotiating positions in international negotiations on civil aviation and also to formulate our positions for the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the international body governing international air travel.

The United States had at the time five major international passenger carriers (United, Delta, American, Northwest, and Continental) and two major international cargo carriers (FedEx and UPS), whereas most countries only had one national carrier. This meant that our appetite for more foreign air routes tended to be much larger than other countries because we had more companies to accommodate. U.S. carriers were usually disappointed that we could not negotiate sufficient access for everyone to enter promising markets.

The United States had just shifted its policies to try to pursue what we called "Open Skies" agreements. This meant that government would no longer limit the number of routes that carriers could fly, but that it would let the marketplace determine those decisions. This policy would benefit strong companies but was a threat to weak carriers who sought government protection. When I arrived in EB, Open Skies was still an innovative concept and the office that handled these negotiations was extremely busy with many negotiations. Some countries like Canada saw the advantages right away. Other countries who wanted to develop their airports into regional hubs like the Netherlands and United Arab Emirates (Dubai) also quickly concluded Open Skies agreements with the United States. These agreements benefited air passengers. For example, prior to the U.S.-Canada Open Skies agreement, there were no direct flights between Washington DC and Ottawa. After the agreement was reached, both American and Canadian carriers began daily flights linking our two nations' capitals. The Department of State shared negotiating authority for these aviation agreements with the Department of Transportation.

Despite the success of these international civil aviation liberalization agreements, when I came to EB there still were many important markets, including Japan, who did not want to loosen

government controls. During my two years in EB, I think we negotiated over twenty new Open Skies agreements with partners. This work did lead to a dramatic growth in international aviation and a decline in prices for travelers. It also stimulated demand for aircraft which was good for Boeing (and Airbus).

EB also had an international finance and development office working on issues like rescheduling debts of developing countries owed to the IMF and other concessional lenders. An informal organization called the Paris Club was the venue for lenders to negotiate debt rescheduling to allocate the losses among lenders. The departments of Treasury and State shared this negotiating responsibility. We also worked closely with the Treasury Department on other international finance issues such as replenishing the assets of the multilateral development banks like the World Bank and Asian Development Bank.

The other major financial issue was international investment. We worked closely with the Treasury and Commerce departments to screen inbound investments in areas that might have national security implications for the United States. The body that screens investments for national security implications is called CFIUS, the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States. My boss was on that committee; Treasury is the chair and many other agencies are members. The government held many internal discussions about proposed international acquisitions, whether they posed a national security problem, and if so, whether the government should block the acquisition or propose some mitigation of the national security risk. Mitigation, for example, might require the company to have American citizens on its board or to sell off certain assets.

On many of these international economic issues, the State Department's Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs is hamstrung by not having the lead on these issues. We were often a participant in a decision-making process that was led by USTR or the Treasury or Commerce departments.

*KENNEDY: This is after the end of the Cold War, but certain industries were considered significant national interests and we didn't want other countries to have control.*

ZUMWALT: Yes. For example, there was a firm from Venezuela that wanted to buy a company that makes voting machines. There was concern that foreign ownership of the company making voting machines could threaten the integrity of U.S. elections. The CFIUS committee discussed whether the government could build in safeguards to mitigate the risk as an alternative to blocking the investment. Treasury and State were on the side of allowing the investment with safeguards. Commerce and others wanted to block the investment.

*KENNEDY: You were there at the beginning of the internet, weren't you?*

ZUMWALT: Yes. This period coincides with Vice President Al Gore's promotion of the internet. I remember when EB received its first internet-connected computer so our economists could conduct research online. The technology we were using then were "dumb word processors" that had an internal email system but no links outside. But yes, there were internet policy issues that our telecommunications team worked on.

*KENNEDY: I was wondering if you got into discussions about who controls this or that?*

ZUMWALT: Yes, we attempted to promote the U.S. position on "net neutrality" in the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). The United States thought that the network

providers should not discriminate among content providers, so as to let the marketplace determine the success or failure of companies. Other less free-market oriented countries had their own points of view. There were also issues like privacy protection. As I recall, the European Union was more concerned about privacy protection than was the United States.

The office that handled telecommunications would work with interagency counterparts to formulate a U.S. position before some international meeting. My boss would get involved and occasionally would sign a memo with our recommended position, asking for a final decision from the State Department's Under Secretary for Economic, Business, and Agricultural Affairs, Joan E. Spero. Usually, she would be the arbiter of State's position. Occasionally, the agencies couldn't agree on a policy, so Bowman Cutter, a deputy at the National Economic Council, would call an interagency meeting. Joan would attend, along with Treasury Department Under Secretary for International Affairs Larry Summers, Council of Economic Advisers Deputy Lael Brainard, Deputy U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky, and relevant officials from the departments of commerce, labor, and transportation. They would meet at the White House to formulate a U.S. position on the issue. If Joan were unavailable, then Dan would attend to represent the State Department.

*KENNEDY: Was the attitude more towards freedom or control?*

ZUMWALT: The State position was usually closely aligned with Treasury and the Council of Economic Advisers. We tended to be more market-oriented and concerned about the economic costs of regulation. But there were plenty of people — after all, this was a Democratic administration — with more comfort with government regulation.

I didn't agree with every decision that was made, but I appreciated the healthy policy debate. At least the decision-makers were presented with options and the costs and benefits prior to making a decision. Certainly, the telecommunications companies had their own views and they visited us to lobby extensively. Dan Tarullo had a healthy skepticism toward business and didn't just accept what companies told him. He had been schooled in the Socratic method and asked lots of tough questions. I would warn foreign service officers in our bureau "If you go in to see Dan, he will ask you a lot of tough, skeptical questions. That doesn't mean he's against what you're saying but that he wants to make sure you've thought through all of the implications."

I admired Dan's willingness to nurture promising women. He was married to a psychiatrist and had two daughters whom he adored. He was very committed to promoting the careers of promising professional women. He worked closely with the Office of the Legal Adviser, who had many young, smart female lawyers working on economic issues. Among them was Julie Oettinger, who covered civil aviation, and Meg Pickering, who covered the finance portfolio. I remember sitting in on meetings with these two lawyers and Dan would grill them with tough questions about their legal recommendations. They both loved these sessions, which they told me reminded them of their law school classes. I think that Dan helped them sharpen their legal minds in this process and we also came out with stronger briefs in support of our positions. Dan also worked closely with Anne Pence, who was a really smart young PhD economist. Later, when Dan went to the White House, he brought Anne with him to work on his staff there.

*KENNEDY: You were there during the Clinton administration. Did you find a real change in attitudes on the economic side?*

ZUMWALT: Yes. Our oath as foreign service officers is to the constitution, not to an individual leader. I saw my role as making sure the new political appointees had the best information and advice available and, after they had made a decision, my job was to implement their decision. I didn't agree with every decision made, but I did think my role helped improve policy outcomes, so I was satisfied with my job. I also learned an incredible amount — I did not know anything about telecommunications policy or international civil aviation negotiations before this experience. My time in EB really helped me prepare for a more generalist leadership position where I began supervising officers with different policy portfolios.

*KENNEDY: What was your wife doing at this time?*

ZUMWALT: When I moved from the Korea desk to EB, the Korea desk needed a new economic officer — Ann moved over and worked on the Korea desk for two years as the senior economic officer. Since Ann replaced me in my previous job, I continued to hear from her about the Korea desk's work; she made more progress on bilateral economic issues with South Korea than I did when I was there.

One nice thing about being Special Assistant to an assistant secretary is the boost in the campaign for an onward assignment. I knew I could return to Tokyo, but I saw this moment as a chance to branch out and learn more about China. So, I landed a good job in Embassy Beijing's economic section and Ann found a good job in the political section. We had good reputations in EAP, but I also had a good tailwind coming off this special assistant job. First, however, I was selected for senior training and attended the National War College at Fort McNair for a year.

That student experience was professionally rewarding. Of the approximately 220 students in my class, there were 23 foreign service officers at the FS-01 level, perhaps ten civil service employees from foreign policy agencies such as the Defense Department, intelligence community, and USAID, as well as about twenty foreign military officers, mostly from allies like Japan and Korea or friendly countries like Egypt and Singapore. The U.S. military officers were all newly promoted colonels and captains from the four military branches. Many were subsequently promoted to flag rank.

Each day, we attended about four hours of classes, special lectures, and electives. The course of study was similar to the international relations courses one might take to obtain a master's degree in International Relations at Georgetown University, the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, or at the Johns Hopkins University Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). We took classes in international relations theory, the use of the military as a strategic instrument, civil-military relations, military history, regional studies, and in the working of U.S. government.

The National War College attracted many distinguished guest speakers. During my year, we heard Senator John McCain speak to us about the functioning of the Senate and the work of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Colin Powell spoke to us about leadership, and Justice Antonin Scalia gave us a lecture on the constitution. Other distinguished speakers included Larry Eagleburger, General Norman Schwarzkopf, Strobe Talbot, General John Shalikashvili, and Henry Kissinger. All of the military service chiefs (many of whom were National War College graduates) also came to talk to us and much of the discussion was about leadership and ethics.

Each student also took an area studies course; I chose to focus on the Middle East, culminating in a trip to Egypt, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates in May 1997. It was stimulating to learn

about issues in a new region of the world. My year at the War College was an enlightening experience which helped me in the transition away from my narrow focus on economic issues to a more comprehensive focus on overall U.S. national security interests.

## Chapter VIII

### Embassy Beijing: U.S.-China Economic Relations, 1998–2002

APRIL 3, 2018

*KENNEDY: We are off to Beijing, is that right?*

ZUMWALT: Prior to our assignments in Embassy Beijing, in the summer of 1998 Ann and I started two years of full-time Chinese-language training. The first year, we studied at the Foreign Service Institute's National Foreign Affairs Training Center in Arlington, Virginia. State Department training programs had come a long way compared to when Ann and I joined the service. Instead of studying in sterile and crowded high-rise office buildings in Rosslyn, we could now study Chinese at a beautiful campus with a nice library, lounge areas, and plentiful computer terminals. When the weather was nice, we could eat outside on picnic tables under shade trees to enjoy the beautifully landscaped grounds. The new educational setting resembled a small liberal arts college campus.

The challenge of learning Chinese was one reason for deciding to work in China at that point in our careers. We thought that if we didn't study Chinese then, we were never going to learn that challenging language. Our experience at FSI Washington was pleasant. The Chinese department was large — I think there were thirty or so first-year students, five second-year students, and perhaps ten to twelve faculty. The teachers were very dedicated.

*KENNEDY: Out of curiosity — you had fluent Japanese — how did that translate as far as learning Chinese? I've taken both Russian and Serbian and, at a certain point, they melted together.*

ZUMWALT: Japanese is a very different language from Chinese. Chinese grammar is closer to English than it is to Japanese. The one benefit of knowing Japanese was that the Japanese had borrowed China's written language, so we already knew the meanings of about two thousand Chinese written characters.

*KENNEDY: Same characters meaning two different words?*

ZUMWALT: The characters in Chinese have the same meaning as they do in Japanese, but the pronunciation of each character is different. For example, the very first class we had to learn characters, our teacher spent an hour teaching us the characters for the numbers one through ten. We marched down to our linguist and said, "We will not make much progress in a class like this." FSI put Ann and me in a separate reading class so we could forge ahead by building upon what we already knew. By the end of our first year of Chinese training, I tested at a strong 2+ score in reading. With that base, during my second year of language study, I could focus more on speaking, which was my area of relative weakness.

*KENNEDY: My understanding is that Japanese is similar to Korean: grammar depends on who's speaking, with different vocabulary depending on the relationship between the speaker and the listener. Is Chinese in the same socio-linguistic family?*

ZUMWALT: Chinese is a completely different language from Japanese and Korean. Japanese is related closely to Korean and also related to Central Asian languages like Tibetan, Mongolian, and Uighur. Chinese is on a different linguistic branch.

*KENNEDY: When you get over the written language, Chinese actually is rather straightforward?*

ZUMWALT: Yes. Chinese grammar is straightforward, but the pronunciation is difficult for English speakers. To speak the language well, one must learn many historical references and sayings. A lot of people have asked me which language is more difficult, Chinese or Japanese. Drawing from my own personal experience, I reply that Japanese at age seventeen was easier than Chinese at age forty. But I suspect the reverse would also be true. My challenge was that as I got older, it was taking more effort to memorize new vocabulary words. My wife and I were among the older students in class and learning Chinese was challenging. But we had good Chinese teachers. The FSI Chinese language program was growing rapidly because the government was expanding our diplomatic presence in China and needed more Chinese language officers. I enjoyed the year at FSI.

*KENNEDY: We'll come to see how you used it. You were there from when to when?*

ZUMWALT: We arrived in Beijing in the summer of 1998. Our first year there, we continued to study Chinese. Previously all the FSI Chinese students went to the State Department language school in Taipei to learn Chinese in Taiwan, but FSI had set up a small school in Beijing one year before we arrived and there were just four of us. We thought that since we were going to be assigned to American Embassy Beijing, it made sense to go to school there also.

Our linguist in Beijing was named Tom Madden. He was outstanding. He began teaching our Chinese teachers modern foreign-language teaching techniques as they were teaching us Chinese. For example, our homework our first night was "Take this sentence in Chinese and write it on a piece of paper fifty times." Our linguist began working with our teachers to move them away from their emphasis on rote memorization. Over the course of time, he fired some of the teachers who were unwilling to adopt the FSI style and worked with others who were willing to learn new teaching techniques.

Overall, I would say it was a good experience for us to be in Beijing even if the quality of teachers was more uneven than at the Taipei language school. We took advantage of living in the city where we were going to be working, making friends and getting to know China's capital city.

*KENNEDY: What were living conditions in Beijing like at that time?*

ZUMWALT: Beijing was a city in transition. When we arrived, all of the embassy employee housing was provided by a government-run company associated with the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The apartments were luxurious by Chinese standards, but they did not measure up to American standards. We were assigned a big apartment in an old brick building on a diplomatic housing compound called Qijiayuan. Sometimes the showers were cold because the building management would cut off the hot water for repairs that took a week. These repairs always seemed to be scheduled in the middle of winter. Sometimes the elevator did not work and when it did, the person who mopped the floors would store her mop and the bucket with dirty water inside the elevator so that she could just press the button and the elevator would bring the mop to her. There was graffiti spray-painted on the walls of our hallways.

Over the course of our four-year assignment, private real estate investors from Hong Kong began to build private housing to rent to foreign diplomats and expatriates. During our Beijing assignment, the embassy moved many of its staff out of Chinese government diplomatic housing into these modern Hong Kong-style high-rise apartments. We never moved, because we liked our apartment location — we lived two blocks from the embassy. But by the time we left, almost all embassy employees had moved out of this substandard Chinese government housing.

*KENNEDY: Your job was going to be what?*

ZUMWALT: I was assigned to the economic section as the deputy chief in charge of external affairs; Ann was assigned to be a political-military officer.

*KENNEDY: When you first arrived, how would you put Chinese-American relations and problems?*

ZUMWALT: We arrived in 1998, before many people began regarding China as a peer-competitor or near-competitor to the United States. China's economy, while growing rapidly, was still quite small compared to the United States. My unit's main focus was to manage bilateral trade and investment issues, including China's accession to the World Trade Organization. We worked closely with many U.S. government agencies, including the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, the Department of the Treasury, the Department of Transportation, the USDA, and the Department of Labor. Since that time, many U.S. agencies have opened their own offices in Embassy Beijing but, in 1998, the Department of State, the Department of Commerce's Foreign Commercial Service, and the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service were the only U.S. economic agencies in Embassy Beijing.

*KENNEDY: Was there a significant group of young people wanting to go to the United States?*

ZUMWALT: Yes. Our consular officers saw this desire. The staffing of our consular section had not kept pace with increasing visa demands from Chinese applicants. So, the section had long lines of applicants, which created a stressful situation for our consular officers. There was criticism of the embassy for not processing visas quickly enough.

While Chinese people were friendly and curious, we were reminded occasionally that we were being observed and watched closely. We believed that our apartment was bugged, so we always took care not to speak about certain things in our residence. There was a sense of violation that our apartment was not really our private home.

When I first arrived in Beijing, I called on our senior General Services Office local employee, Mr. Xie. I had been advised to pay a courtesy call on him because he was our senior employee among the locally engaged staff (LES) and could get things done in the Chinese bureaucracy. I was also warned that he worked for Chinese intelligence. During my first week in Beijing, I paid my respects to Mr. Xie in his office. After introducing myself, he replied, "Yes, I've heard so much about you." At that moment, I realized that one or more of our FSI teachers in Washington was reporting about us back to the Chinese government. Mr. Xie made no pretense. He wanted me to understand that he knew that I knew that he worked for an intelligence service. He could help me get things done when it was in both sides' interest for him to do so. Later on, I did ask him for help with issues like police unwillingness to help with senior visitor motorcades. Mr. Xie was very effective in helping us with these sorts of problems. Our DCM referred to Mr. Xie as "our comprador."

Our language school was located on the other side of Beijing. If we had taken public transit (two buses, a subway, and two long walks), it would have taken us nearly two hours to commute each way. Our cars had not arrived yet, so we decided we would share taxis to school. Our two classmates, Joe Young and Chuck Bennett, would meet Ann and I at the gate of the diplomatic housing compound each morning to pick up a taxi. It was not very expensive to commute this way.

After a few days commuting in this manner, suddenly a well-dressed person appeared in a nice large car. He greeted Ann and me in good Japanese and said, “I understand you’re going to school. I’ll be happy to give you a ride.” We negotiated a fare. We thought it odd that someone would know to talk to us in Japanese, but we appreciated that his car was so much nicer than the taxis. We also found it odd that he would make the illegal left turn just in front of a police box to save about five minutes of driving at the risk of a stiff fine. None of our taxi drivers had dared to turn left at this intersection, preferring to drive straight for a quarter-mile and then make a U-turn to come back. We were wary, but he was very friendly and engaging. He always chatted with us in Japanese as he drove us during the 45-minute drive to school. Then he volunteered to give us a ride home after school too. For about three weeks, we enjoyed this convenient arrangement with this driver in his nice car. We got to know him fairly well and he asked us many questions in Japanese about our lives, our opinions of China, what we were doing, etc. He once invited us to his home for his girlfriend’s birthday party. Then suddenly without any goodbye, he disappeared and we never saw him again. We realized that he worked for intelligence and his job was to learn as much as he could about us. Once he had enough information about us for his report, he ended our relationship. There was nothing we told him in the car that was secret, but by then the Chinese had built a good dossier on our personal lives and our habits.

*KENNEDY: I remember things like that from years in Belgrade with Tito.*

ZUMWALT: We hired a maid who had an ID card from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs because the ministry controlled the entrance to our compound and would not let Chinese people enter without such an ID card. We called her Xiao Bai (Little Bai). She had worked for another American diplomat before and came with good references. Xiao Bai did some light cooking and cleaning for us three days per week. After a few weeks, she came to us and said, “Every other Saturday, I have to go in and make this report on what you are doing.” She asked for suggestions on what she should tell them. She clearly did not like the situation. We paid her Ministry of Foreign Affairs-affiliated employer and they paid her a portion of what we paid them. She was angry that they were taking a large cut of her salary. When we learned that, we started giving her cash bonuses directly. Occasionally, she would ask us “I don’t know what to report this week — what shall I tell them?” We would suggest something she could report — for example, that I had taken a trip. The Chinese already knew that information anyway, so it did not matter if she put that into a report on us. We realized that Xiao Bai had no choice but to report on us. She did not like doing it and made it clear. We faced constant reminders that while Beijing seemed open, there were people watching and observing us, so we needed to be careful.

*KENNEDY: Did you notice in your studies a difference in attitude that reflected Chinese authoritarianism?*

ZUMWALT: We were studying at a Chinese teacher-training college. So other than the four FSI students, every other student at the college was aged 18 to 23. They were studying a foreign

language to be a teacher of English or Japanese or other languages. Most of the students were too intimidated to come up and talk to forty-year old diplomats, so we did not strike up too many conversations at school. We were each assigned a language partner, a student who was paid a small stipend to talk with us in Chinese for two or three hours a week. My partner was a young woman who was studying Japanese. We talked about a lot of subjects, but she really wanted to ask me about the situation in Japan. Although her Japanese-language skills were excellent, she knew very little about life in Japan. She was fascinated that I had lived in Japan so long. She was well-educated in one sense; she had studied mathematics and science and so forth. But she seemed to lack intellectual curiosity — I could not tell whether she was afraid to ask certain questions or whether she simply was lacking in curiosity.

Our linguist encouraged us to travel around China instead of taking classes as long as we took a language pledge to speak only Chinese, even to each other, during the trip. We would visit a city and hire a Mandarin-speaking tour guide. These professional guides usually escorted people from Taiwan and Hong Kong; they had never given a Mandarin-language tour to an American before. We would visit a site and they would start their canned presentation. We would then say “Slow down. Let’s just talk.” Then, we would invite them to join us for lunch. Some were interested in talking about issues like China’s one-child policy or the role of ethnic and religious minorities. And sometimes people would ask us questions about guns in the United States or race relations. But many of our guides avoided these subjects and I suspect they were afraid to engage in sensitive conversations with us. In Beijing, educated people were much more willing to talk about sensitive subjects in their private conversations. A few might even complain about their government, but always in a private setting such as a restaurant or taxicab.

*KENNEDY: Was there much American influence via magazines or TV or movies?*

ZUMWALT: You could see American cultural influence in China at that time. There was a vibrant black market in pirated American movies. The movie *Titanic* was a huge hit, everyone knew Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet. Céline Dion’s title song from the movie was frequently blasting on the Chinese radio. Their pictures were everywhere, often endorsing (without their knowledge) some Chinese consumer product. There was much less American influence on television broadcasts because television was controlled by the government. But you could visit a Chinese market and buy any kind of music CD (compact disc) or DVD for fifty cents a copy. Sometimes when we would be sitting in a restaurant, a vendor would come in off the street to try to sell music CDs and movie DVDs. Characters like Snoopy and Mickey Mouse were also popular.

Probably the most famous American in China at that time was Michael Jordan. The Chinese loved NBA basketball. They liked the L.A. Lakers but they also liked Michael Jordan and the Chicago Bulls. Famous Chinese Americans like Yo-Yo Ma were celebrated. He was not widely popular, but Chinese who liked classical music were proud that an overseas Chinese musician had become famous in the United States. Many Chinese also admired rich self-made Americans like Steve Jobs and Bill Gates. The Chinese also liked foreign brands — Sony and Panasonic electronics, Shiseido cosmetics, North Face jackets, and Coach handbags were all status symbols.

*KENNEDY: Was there anything at that time about Chiang Kai-shek and Madame?*

ZUMWALT: Not in Beijing. The narrative that the Chinese Communist Party propagated was that foreigners were bullying China until the Communists finally rose up and unified the Chinese people and expelled the foreigners. Unity under the Communist Party is the patriotic defense against foreigners who have designs on our great civilization. The Nationalist regime and their war against the Japanese did not occupy a major place in that Communist Party narrative. The one exception I saw was in Nanjing. We visited the mausoleum for Sun Yat-sen, the shared founder figure for both the Nationalists and the Communists. In this mausoleum, there is a tile floor with the Nationalist flag. I was surprised to see this flag, but it is part of Chinese history and they did not erase it from his mausoleum.

In 1998, Taiwan was much wealthier than China, so we encountered many wealthy Taiwanese tourists. Some came to Beijing, but even more visited Shanghai and Nanjing, places that were associated with the Nationalists. The Chinese must have noticed all these well-off, well-dressed tourists from Taiwan who carried expensive cameras, stayed in nice hotels, and ate fancy meals. People had to know that Taiwan was quite prosperous. “Overseas Chinese” from Singapore and Malaysia also came as tourists. I think the Chinese living in big cities were aware that the Chinese overseas diaspora had prospered more than those who had stayed in China.

*KENNEDY: Was there at that time a feeling that things were getting better?*

ZUMWALT: Yes. The economic situation for ordinary Chinese was improving rapidly. China's economy was growing fifteen percent a year. I heard many people say “I used to see people taking a bus and then a year later they were riding a bicycle, now a few years after that they are driving a car.” Even poor people could see an improvement in their living standards. Before I arrived, Tiananmen Square at dawn was filled with bicycles, but by the time I arrived, cars and taxi-buses were more common than bicycles. More and more restaurants opened as people could afford to eat out and the Chinese government loosened restrictions on private enterprise. Outside of our compound gate, we could order a nice Chinese meal with several dishes and rice for \$3 each. We tended to eat at inexpensive places like this, not official government-run restaurants that catered to foreign tourists. Most of the clients at these establishments were Chinese who also wanted a nice meal out at a reasonable price. There were more shops opening in Beijing; China's capital was rapidly changing. That said, when we traveled into the countryside, we still witnessed abject poverty.

*KENNEDY: I'm told that, even today in Russia, Moscow looks great but you get 25 miles out of Moscow and you're back in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.*

ZUMWALT: Where we lived in Beijing, animal-driven carts were not allowed. But when we drove ten miles to the outskirts, instead of a truck, we would see a peasant with his donkey cart hauling bricks or cement. I am sure that situation has changed now, but in 1998, China was still a poor country.

Ann began taking singing lessons from a voice teacher who was a professor at the military arts academy. Her teacher's husband was also an army officer. Every week, Ann would take a taxi to the military housing complex with a note from the teacher to get in. Ann would have her lesson, pay her fee, and then leave the military compound. We were invited to her teacher's house at the Chinese New Year holiday time for dumplings. There was no hostility from these army officers. Her teacher was just making extra money by teaching on the side; she was a talented singer and had a lot of Chinese students as well. Many Chinese professors were moonlighting in those days.

It was a good year for us. We felt some pressure to pass our Chinese language test. But compared to the work pressure we experienced in the embassy, it was not a stressful year.

*KENNEDY: Did you get to travel?*

ZUMWALT: Every school break, we traveled. We did not visit Tibet, but we visited almost every other province of China. It's such a big country with thousands of years of history and so much to see. Pretty much every school break, we would travel to a different region. Travel in the country was inexpensive other than airfares and we could always find plentiful food. Every time we checked into a hotel, they would photocopy our passports for the police. We were under no illusion that we were traveling without surveillance. But when walking around, if we asked for directions or purchased something from a vendor, almost always the people were very friendly. They would chat with us and even guide us to places. We did not experience too many anti-American attitudes in those days.

Our personal experiences in China were quite positive. Most Chinese we met by chance on the street or when we were traveling were friendly; many had not previously had a chance to interact with Americans. Many people we met while traveling in China were curious and, if they knew we could speak Chinese, they were happy to converse with us. During our first year, it was much easier to meet Chinese because we could tell people we were students learning Chinese. Most Chinese we met then were very helpful — they would correct our Chinese mistakes and some offered to guide us around. They seemed pleased that foreigners had chosen to come and learn about China.

One incident did occur toward the end of our student year. That was the May 7, 1999 bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade as part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) actions against Serbia. Three Chinese were killed and over twenty were injured, some seriously. Hardly anyone in China believed this happened by accident — even government officials. We would have been outraged too if a U.S. embassy had been bombed by some foreign power.

*KENNEDY: It was stupidity on the part of our bombing planners.*

ZUMWALT: The bombing resulted from a series of mistakes one on top of the other, not just one bad decision. My understanding is that much of the blame lies with a CIA analyst who used an inappropriate technique to select the target and that another key person who might have questioned the target selection was called away for training at a critical time. When I tried to explain this to Chinese friends, I would point out that "If we were making up a story, we wouldn't make up a story this dumb." There were errors compounded by other errors that led to this fatal outcome. But suddenly, we experienced tremendous animosity toward the United States; the Chinese believed that yet again a foreign power was bullying them. The regional security officer decided that we should not attend school for a week over concern about our safety, so we stayed home and studied in our apartment.

The day before the bombing, the Chinese government had authorized what they thought would be a controlled demonstration against the U.S. and British embassies, complaining about the NATO bombing in Serbia. These students, who for the first time in a decade had a permit to protest, were excited. Then suddenly, the Chinese embassy in Belgrade was bombed and this demonstration ballooned from a few hundred students to tens of thousands of people, including some of what the Chinese called "the bad elements." The police lost control of the situation for half a day and the uncontrolled crowds frightened us.

That first day, we had legitimate fears for our safety. Our apartment faced Chang'an jie, the main street that crossed Beijing all the way to Tiananmen Square. From our fifth-floor balcony, we had a commanding view of the unruly and angry demonstrators filling the eight-lanes-wide avenue, marching around the corner toward the U.S. embassy.

Right at that time, in preparation for a much-needed sewer repair, workers had removed the concrete bricks forming the sidewalk and placed them neatly in piles on the sidewalk in front of the U.S. Embassy. From our apartment two blocks away, we could hear the sounds of people breaking up these concrete bricks for students to fling against the chancery building. There were some Molotov cocktails thrown at the embassy that started small fires on the compound and virtually every window was broken by the concrete pieces the demonstrators had flung at the chancery building. In fact, by the end of these demonstrations, the chancery compound grounds were completely covered with these small concrete pieces that had been thrown against the embassy, making it difficult to walk from the gate to the building.

We could also hear the footsteps of the marchers and the shouting of slogans such as "Down with the USA, down with NATO" or "George Bush is a son of a bitch and Tony Blair is a grandson of a bitch." Later, I was told that five or six embassy staff inside the chancery building started shredding classified documents that day because we were not sure whether the chancery compound would be overrun.

By the second day, the government had seized control and steered the people's anger in ways that reinforced the party propaganda machine. The demonstrations became much more organized, comprised of groups from universities, government offices, factories, labor unions, and even medical workers who marched by, one work unit after another. Many police in full riot gear lined the route and surrounded the embassy.

After things calmed down and we were allowed again to enter the chancery building, I visited what was to become my office in a few months. The floor was littered with stones that had come through the windows. I kept one of these small stones with me as a reminder of the fragility of the U.S.-China relationship. One bad mistake had caused a major crisis. Our relationship lacked ballast.

*KENNEDY: This story struck me. It is easy to push that nationalist button and, once you do that, you really lose control.*

ZUMWALT: Until that moment, I had always felt safe in Beijing. Our compound was surrounded by Chinese armed police, so the street between my housing compound and the embassy was normally very safe. As I said, during the first day of demonstrations, Ann and I shared concerns that our Qijiayuan housing compound might be overrun. The embassy soon activated its emergency phone tree and that afternoon we received a call from our warden ordering us to stay in our apartment. We needed no encouragement!

By day two, the embassy organized town hall meetings in each of the four major housing compounds. Residents of our compound met at the residence of the deputy in the political section, Ken Jarrett. The DCM called in and briefed us about our efforts to engage the Chinese government to provide police protection to our housing and embassy compounds. The situation was actually much worse at our consulate in Chengdu, where a mob had broken into the consulate compound and set fire to the housing complex inside. The mob there began using bicycle racks as battering rams in an attempt to smash the doors to the consulate where the

American staff were sheltering before the Chinese police finally intervened. That briefing from the DCM helped us to understand that the Chinese authorities had begun to take steps to protect us. Although the demonstrations remained quite large, I no longer feared for my safety.

To some extent for Ann and me, the next three days were a bit of an adventure. We enjoyed a bird's-eye view from our fifth-floor balcony of the same scenes on Chang'an jie that were being broadcast by CNN. We spent hours watching the marchers and reading the banners with slogans such as "The Chaoyang Nurses Union Condemns the Barbaric NATO Bombing" and "The Haidian Second Middle School Parent-Teacher Association Protests U.S. Bullying." I'm no expert at estimating crowd numbers, but each day, we saw seven or eight hours of people marching past in rows of ten to fifteen wide just below our balcony. The sheer number of demonstrators was impressive.

*KENNEDY: This was the first time since Tiananmen Square that students had a chance to get out...*

ZUMWALT: Exactly. The government decided to steer the people's anger in directions aligned with their policies. Work units began busing demonstrators to assembly points just beyond our housing compound to begin their march.

By day two, it became obvious that the government did not want this incident to impede the inflow of foreign capital and technology. One *People's Daily* editorial discussed an incident of property damage at a McDonald's restaurant. This editorial said, "While one can admire the patriotic spirit of this well-meaning person, his anger was in fact misdirected. McDonald's is a company that employs Chinese workers and pays taxes to the Chinese state. These funds are used to buy more missiles that make us stronger. We should direct our anger where it is deserved, at the American government, not at these foreign companies." We also heard from the American Chamber of Commerce in China that American companies were invited to their local police stations where they were told "We will provide the protection you need for your factories to continue operating. Please restart operations as usual tomorrow." Chinese people are good at reading signals and few American companies were damaged by blowback from this incident.

Suddenly, however, many Chinese began distancing themselves from American popular cultural symbols. One small restaurant across from our compound removed its neon signs for Budweiser beer and Coca-Cola from its window. They were replaced with hand-lettered cardboard signs advertising "Patriotism Beer" and "Love-China Cola."

In our apartment building lived a couple of Serbian diplomats and one Cuban diplomat. They displayed bull's-eye targets (the symbol of Serbian resistance in Belgrade) in their car windows. Someone spray-painted something nasty on our parking space. I thought maybe our car (a Toyota) would get trashed as happened to some American diplomats, but we did not have any physical problems in our compound other than new graffiti. One Sudanese diplomat who lived in our building came by to offer to purchase groceries for us. He told us that he had been the recipient of a USAID scholarship many years previously and he liked America, despite its actions in Yugoslavia.

Our final month of school was dominated by the repercussions of this incident.

After two weeks, the embassy decided we could return to school but should not drive our cars with our diplomatic license plates across town. We began taking taxis again. By this time, our Chinese conversational skills were pretty good and I enjoyed the chats with cab drivers. As I

boarded a taxi after my first or second day back at the school, instead of asking to be dropped off at our diplomatic housing compound, I asked to go to the Friendship Store across the street. I did this because I did not want to identify myself as a diplomat by asking to go to the diplomatic housing compound. The driver glared at me in the rear-view window and asked, “Are you an American?” in an aggressive tone. After pausing to think, I finally said, “Yes.” He replied, “I hate Americans.” But then after a pause, he added, “But I like you because you’re honest. I’ve had a lot of Canadian passengers lately!” We had a conversation about why America had bombed the Chinese embassy and I tried to explain that it was an accident. He did not believe me, but at least he could relate that not every American was a bad person.

Just after the Belgrade bombing, our long-lost Japanese-speaking driver suddenly called. He said, “I know you can’t leave your compound. Do you need any groceries or anything I can bring you?” We said, “No, thank you. We appreciate it.” The initial euphoria of living in Beijing and absorbing China’s wonderful culture was over. This incident reminded me that we were earning our 15% hardship pay. On the surface, life in Beijing was good, but the embassy American staff faced mental health challenges with so much animosity just beneath the surface.

After I started to work at the embassy, it became more challenging to develop new Chinese friendships. When we left at the end of our four-year tour, most of our Chinese friends were people we had met as language students. Certainly, my official contacts with the trade and foreign ministries were polite and friendly; we enjoyed good professional relationships. But for them, becoming friends with an American diplomat represented a risk, so I never tried to push our relationships too far. I did not invite Chinese officials to my house because most likely they would decline and it would be embarrassing for both of us. Therefore, we always entertained at restaurants. These officials were willing to meet in a public place (as long as we invited more than one so they could vouch for each other should a problem develop later) when there was a work-related reason.

A word about surveillance and harassment in China: I rarely noticed surveillance in my work because my portfolio covered trade and investment relations, so my activities were not of interest to the Chinese police or intelligence communities. However, our human rights officer and our press officers experienced hard times with the police. The human rights officer named Woo Lee had the most difficulty. He never reached out to a contact because all of his conversations were monitored. Woo knew if he reached out, that person could get in trouble. He would wait until contacts called him and Woo would then suggest a public meeting. When he would go to a restaurant with a contact, someone would sit right next to them to eavesdrop on the conversation and sometimes even take out a movie camera to film the meeting from a few feet away. These dedicated, committed Chinese human rights advocates (often lawyers and university professors) knew they would get in trouble but persisted anyway. Often, Woo met lawyers defending another human rights activist in a trial.

The other people who experienced harassment were our press officers, but American journalists had it even worse. Often, our press officer would report that American journalists would get harassed; their tires would be punctured or the car window opened in the middle of winter so their car would have snow or sleet inside. There was a lot of petty harassment, but a few times American journalists would get beaten. We would then complain to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. One of those journalists was Matt Pottinger of the *Wall Street Journal*, now Deputy National Security Advisor at the NSC. I am sure that the Chinese regret the way they treated him then. Harassment of journalists often occurred when the reporter was pushing the envelope and

pursuing a story on a sensitive subject like high-level corruption or the AIDS outbreak. The human rights officer and the press officer had a much tougher time than I did in the economic section.

We knew that our home computers were monitored and our homes were searched. One day, I came home and when I turned on my personal computer, the screen opened to the Ministry of State Security (MSS) home page. Then very rapidly (I couldn't stop this), one after the other, every email I had ever sent on that computer was opened and copied and sent to MSS, leaving over a thousand emails open on my desktop all at once. This intimidating method of stealing emails was no accident. The ministry, for some reason, decided to send me or Ann a message that they were monitoring our internet usage. Another time, after we returned from a trip, our bathroom smelled like cigarette smoke and someone had left three cigarette butts floating in our toilet as their calling card. That kind of incident was not pleasant. But I never had any physical confrontation with the police or security forces.

During our first year, the Chinese government made it clear that our economic relationship could proceed despite the Belgrade bombing, but that we were in the penalty box on political or security-related topics. Ann received the cold shoulder from her bureaucratic counterparts. The Chinese refused to engage on arms control issues and cut off military-to-military contacts to show they were still angry about the Belgrade bombing. I joked with Ann, saying, "I know the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs has caller ID because whenever I call, somebody answers, but whenever you call, no one is there." I did not mind if the Chinese overheard this sort of conversation in our apartment.

*KENNEDY: What did you think of the staff you dealt with at the ministries?*

ZUMWALT: Like many economic sections, we had broad portfolios. The trade ministry had the lead on the WTO. We met with the finance ministry, the economic planning agency, the bank regulator, the agriculture ministry, the foreign currency management agency, the labor ministry, and the central bank — we worked with a broad array of ministries in the Chinese government, any entity with an economic role. We also engaged with the aviation ministry for civil aviation talks and with the railway ministry on railway safety issues. There was a mining ministry we dealt with because American companies were interested in mining in China. These entities were bureaucratic, but cooperation was good in areas where there was mutual benefit like aviation or mine safety.

*KENNEDY: What did you think of the staffing of these?*

ZUMWALT: Except for the trade and foreign ministries, we needed to call a liaison office in a ministry to request an appointment. These counterparts were often friendly, but sometimes when we had different agendas, it might be difficult to obtain an appointment. I think our economic section had fifteen American officers and three local staff in 1999. That sounds like a lot of officers, but our economic section supported the work of Treasury, the Federal Reserve, and USTR in addition to other U.S. agencies like Transportation and Energy. We had very little support from local staff compared with other embassies where I have worked because in those days our local staff were all Chinese government employees.

*KENNEDY: That's remarkable, usually it's pretty much the reverse, even in the most difficult countries, real expertise comes from long-term national employees who know the business.*

ZUMWALT: There was no free labor market in China then, so our local staff were assigned to us by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the Chinese system in those days, one was assigned to a work unit for life after graduation from school. We could write up a job description specifying education levels, language requirements, and other qualifications, but we could not hire an employee directly from a free labor market in those days. We had to accept someone sent to us by the ministry's labor pool. If we did not like the new hire, we could send them away and ask the ministry to send someone else.

The economic section employed three Chinese staff who might help us obtain appointments or gather publicly available data that we might use in a report. But they worked in a separate building; the message to them was "We don't trust you" and, frankly, we couldn't trust them because they all reported back to the Chinese government. One employee in particular was extremely nosy about new arrivals and it was clear she was trying to spot the CIA cover positions.

But our local staff did perform some valuable duties — obtaining appointments for example. We had one employee who was a typical Chinese bureaucrat. She had been assigned to work at the U.S. embassy fifteen years earlier; by the time I arrived in Beijing, she was bored and recognized that she was not going to advance. The only thing she really controlled was her work pace, so she chose to work slowly. To motivate her, I began to explain why the tasks I was assigning her were in China's interest. For example, I might say, this senator is very wary of China, but if we can organize a good schedule for him, he might gain a better appreciation for China's importance to the United States. She was a different type of locally hired employee than I had dealt with in the past and required a different management approach.

*KENNEDY: On the business side, did American industries come to you?*

ZUMWALT: Yes. The Motion Picture Association of America, the Recording Industry Association of America, agricultural exporters such as wheat and soybean growers, the pork council and beef exporters — they all visited us frequently. The most important economic policy issue in 1999 was China's WTO accession. China wanted to join the WTO and we could block their accession, so the United States had leverage in our bilateral trade talks. We tried to maximize China's concessions as the price of its admission to the WTO. Resolving that question took almost my entire three-year tour in the economic section. The challenge to that approach was that the Chinese would not concede on anything prior to an agreement on China's accession, because they feared that early trade concessions would only raise the price of admission to the WTO. In other words, the longer the talks continued, the greater the delay for American companies to reap the benefits of a deal on China's accession.

Towards the end of my tour, we concluded an agreement on China's WTO accession suddenly during a visit to Beijing by Deputy USTR Charlene Barshefsky. It took about two weeks of round-the-clock negotiations, but we did finally announce a deal whereby the United States would support China's WTO accession. The agreement was about 150 pages with individual tariffs China agreed to cut and various concessions they agreed to make listed one by one. There were side letters and other documents to initial. At the time, most American companies and industry associations thought the China accession deal would help their businesses in China and they made positive statements about this agreement.

*KENNEDY: What did we want from the Chinese?*

ZUMWALT: Most observers thought that China was gradually evolving into a market economy. We thought that China's WTO accession would give us tools to enforce the right kinds of economic behavior as China integrated into the world. I think now people look back and question whether that was the correct assumption, but that was the dominant perspective at the time. There were discussions about issues like intellectual property protection, motion picture screen quotas, restrictions on inward investment, opening the insurance market, allowing credit cards, and allowing American banks to market savings products directly to Chinese consumers. There was much discussion on Chinese limits on the percentage of foreign direct investment allowed in certain sectors. These were all issues that interested American companies because China was a large and growing economy. Of course, U.S. exports of agricultural products were also a key aspect of our agreement. We concluded agreements on phytosanitary measures because the Chinese had been using phytosanitary measures to restrict agricultural imports such as American soybeans. It was a very broad and complex negotiation. My unit was not by any stretch the only part of the embassy involved; our commerce and agriculture sections were also very involved in the process, as was our DCM, William C. McCahill, Jr.

Unfortunately, in April of 2001, we experienced another major U.S.-China relations incident. A U.S. EP-3E signals intelligence aircraft and a Chinese J-8 fighter jet collided about seventy miles offshore of Hainan Island in the South China Sea. The Chinese aircraft crashed into the sea and the pilot was presumed dead. The heavily damaged U.S. airplane managed to land on Hainan Island where the Chinese authorities detained and interrogated the 24-person crew for ten days. Finally, the U.S. government provided the Chinese with an ambiguous statement (we referred to it as the "letter of the two sorries") that allowed both sides to deescalate the tensions without losing face. This step led finally to the return of the U.S. airplane and crew.

For three days, we were not in communication with the crew after they were taken off the aircraft by the Chinese, so we didn't know their situation. Both our ambassador and our defense attaché worked hard with Chinese counterparts to demand the return of the aircraft and crew. The Chinese were saying, essentially, "You were trespassing. These people are criminals." There was a standoff for several days. Finally, they did allow our defense attaché, Karl Eikenberry (who later distinguished himself in Afghanistan), to see them. Karl went down to Hainan where the crew were being detained to meet them in person.

Eventually, the American crew was freed. But for the second time during my tour in Beijing, we experienced a period of nationalist outrage where the Chinese fighter pilot who was killed by his own reckless actions was treated as a revolutionary martyr resisting foreign encroachment. The Chinese media reported that the slow and lumbering U.S. surveillance aircraft had rammed the nimble Chinese fighter jet. The real issue was our different interpretations of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). We believed that UNCLOS permitted freedom of navigation, including for military aircraft. The Chinese interpreted UNCLOS as giving them authority to control overflights inside their Exclusive Economic Zone.

Our ambassador, Joseph Prueher, had been a navy pilot and had flown this type of aircraft. He could explain the aerodynamics of aircraft that undermined the Chinese explanation. After a series of meetings with Ambassador Prueher, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs came to realize that the People's Liberation Army was not revealing the whole story, so they backed off their outrage in our private sessions. I think the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also recognized at this point that they had to deescalate the situation and return the crew. But the public story never

changed: “Nefarious American trespassers rammed our plane.” This led again to a great deal of public outrage and anti-Americanism.

*KENNEDY: Were there many demonstrations?*

ZUMWALT: I do not recall as many as in the aftermath of the Belgrade bombing. Partly, I think, the Chinese government feared losing control of the situation. But for Embassy Beijing employees, it was another unpleasant period for U.S.-China relations.

Despite these incidents, my tour in China was professionally rewarding. I was working closely with the deputy U.S. trade representative, the U.S. trade representative, and senior State Department officials because I was handling China’s WTO accession, an issue of high interest to the U.S. government. For example, I spent a week traveling around China with Senator Max Baucus. We briefed important members of Congress like Senator John McCain and Senator Lindsey Graham. Baucus was a fascinating person who had a great deal of respect for the Foreign Service.

*KENNEDY: During your time, how did the economic section view developments in the economic world of China?*

ZUMWALT: Because I was the section deputy and then later head of the U.S. Embassy’s economic section, I could decide how we deployed our resources. I pushed our officers to take regional reporting trips. We had some really good young officers who were eager and happy to experience rural China. One officer, Jonathan Shrier, spoke Arabic from his prior assignment in Saudi Arabia. He traveled extensively in Xinjiang, the Muslim region of western China where Uighurs constitute the majority of the population. When he traveled in Xinjiang, he would ride buses and visit remote settlements. I asked Jonathan once how he obtained such good information and he told me that when he arrived in a new town, he would ask for an introduction to the local imam. Jonathan could read the Qur’an in Arabic, so many Chinese Muslims regarded him as an erudite visitor. After it became known that the imam had hosted him to tea, Jonathan gained access to the Muslim population of the village. Jonathan wrote some excellent reports on the tensions under the surface between the Uighur population and their Chinese regional leaders. Every three months, we would send Jonathan on a ten-day trip to these remote areas. After his return to Beijing, Jonathan would write two or three of his excellent reports on ethnic tensions in Xinjiang.

*KENNEDY: Did you report on government control and corruption?*

ZUMWALT: Those issues were covered by the embassy’s political section. Some of our political officers’ best contacts were with the Chinese “princelings,” the sons and daughters of very senior Communist Party officials. The princelings had more freedom because of their fathers’ and grandfathers’ roles as revolutionary heroes. (We referred to these old communist heroes as “the immortals.”) Many of these princelings began leaving their sinecure jobs in government or the party to enter the private sector. There, they took advantage of their connections by partnering with some Chinese entrepreneurs to run a start-up business. The princelings would drive around in fancy imported cars and lived in fashionable modern apartments. Many would have been educated in the United States and were willing to talk with our political officers.

My impression was that senior Communist Party officials who were “caught” for corruption were generally in political trouble. It seemed very common for officials who had lost out in a

power struggle to be arrested for corrupt dealings. The former mayor of Beijing, Chen Xitong, who had been a rival of Jiang Zemin, was one example. Chen had been a member of the Politburo, but in 1995 he was arrested for corruption. He was convicted in 1998.

Corruption was an issue, but it was hard for the embassy to know just how bad it was. I was amazed by the stories the princelings would tell our political officers! They spoke of rumors about corruption of connected officials and their children. Our military attaché was also reporting on PLA corruption. For example, an oil tanker would dock at a Chinese naval base and offload petroleum outside of the government-controlled trade channels. We heard reports that the government had begun cracking down on PLA corruption because they were concerned about the impact on military readiness.

At this time, China's economy was growing at 15% per year so there were plenty of money-making opportunities. Although many Chinese were worried about corruption, they were more focused on their aspirations to get rich. Perhaps the Chinese people in those days were more tolerant of corruption because people supported economic liberalization policies even if they resulted in an increase in corruption.

There was a group of people called the "sea turtles" — sea turtles return years later to the beach where they themselves had been hatched to lay their eggs. Many Chinese who had gone off to America or Europe began returning to China where there were more opportunities to make money. They aspired to become millionaires — a Chinese Bill Gates — and this was much easier to do in China than in the United States in those days. It was an optimistic period for young educated Chinese. A decade after the Tiananmen Square Incident (known as the June Fourth Incident in China), these young Chinese were more interested in making money than in politics.

One of my good friends was a university economics professor who had participated in the Tiananmen demonstrations as a graduate student. He told me that the universities always held examinations on the anniversary of the incident to keep students busy on campus. That year, his students asked him to postpone his test scheduled for June 4 so they could hold a party. He was concerned that they were planning some sort of demonstration to commemorate June 4, so he said, "Instead of doing that, come over to my house and we'll have dinner." They said, "No," they wanted to go to a bar to watch a Chinese soccer game. He told me that, on the one hand, he was relieved that his students were not planning an activity that would get them in political trouble, but on the other hand, he was disappointed that his students had become so apolitical. He had very mixed feelings about his students who had forgotten the Tiananmen demonstrations.

*KENNEDY: By this time, had the precepts of Marxism, the little red book and all... was that past history?*

ZUMWALT: That was past history. Many young, hardworking entrepreneurs believed that political connections to the party were no longer needed to make money.

We would organize a round table for visiting members of Congress to meet with young, successful Chinese entrepreneurs. One of the things they said was "We don't have to join the Communist Party to be successful anymore. It's a waste of time to attend meetings and study sessions. We want to make money, so we don't have time for the Party." This may have changed in today's China, but it was the case in the year 2000.

*KENNEDY: It sounds like the Communist cadres were ruling things and appropriating property.*

ZUMWALT: That was going on. You could see this even in Chinese movies being made (with government permission). The plot would concern a heroic peasant outsmarting a corrupt local official with a clever scheme. It was permissible to talk about local corruption at a remote place, but not about national-level corruption, particularly not about the princelings, the immortals, and their associates — these people were protected.

*KENNEDY: How was development of China from an economic point of view? I was thinking that Beijing was the wrong place — it would be Shanghai, Guangzhou, along the coast.*

ZUMWALT: China is such a diverse country.

The United States had four constituent posts — in Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenyang, and Chengdu. (Later, we would open a consulate in Wuhan.) Each of these posts had an economic officer. The principal officer of each post would be their rating officer, but I would serve as that economic officer's reviewing officer. I thought it was important for young economic officers to be evaluated by a more senior economic officer in their performance evaluation reports. When I would visit each consulate, the economic officer would set up an itinerary for a work trip together. This arrangement helped me to escape Beijing and see China; this travel also gave me material for each officer's performance evaluation. Shenyang is located in China's rust belt. There, I visited failing state-owned enterprises and ethnic Korean regions where uneducated peasants did not speak much Chinese. In Sichuan, the officer took me to the countryside to learn about China's agricultural reform efforts. We also visited remote mountainous areas inhabited by ethnic Tibetans. In Guangzhou, our focus was trade and relations with Hong Kong. These regional oversight trips opened a window onto life in China outside the capital. China, like the United States, is a vast, diverse country with strong regional differences.

*KENNEDY: What were you getting out of Hong Kong?*

ZUMWALT: In the old days before the United States established such a big diplomatic presence in China, our Consulate General in Hong Kong had been a listening post. Officers would talk to Hong Kong scholars and interview people who came across the border. By the time we arrived in Beijing, Hong Kong's political reporting on Chinese domestic politics was much less central to our understanding of China. I think there was a shift in the consulate's reporting to focus on Hong Kong's transition from a freewheeling British colony to becoming a part of China under a one country, two systems model.

*KENNEDY: Guangzhou's and Shanghai's economies were expanding.*

ZUMWALT: Yes. In fact, the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai had more members than Beijing's American Chamber did. Beijing's Chamber had more government-relations people, lawyers, and policy people, but Shanghai had more factory managers and engineers. A lot of American businessmen in Shanghai and Guangzhou managed factories and businesses — many others came as buyers from American companies. These regions were receiving Taiwanese, Hong Kong, and Korean investment as they moved production of labor intensive products — tennis shoes, ladies' fashions, underwear, electronics, small appliances, and sporting goods — from their home base to Chinese factories. In that period, China could provide an almost infinite supply of labor, as peasants left the countryside in search of paid jobs.

*KENNEDY: Right away, I suppose you ran across the usual thing. The bureaucrats in the capital often are not a good source for economic information.*

ZUMWALT: The Beijing/Shanghai relationship then was somewhat like the Washington/New York relationship. Both cities were valuable and important. Within our mission, we also had some sense of competition with American Consulate General Shanghai. It was a big post; I think they had maybe fifty American officers. Consul General Hank Levine was extremely smart and knew China well because he had lived in China extensively before. Hank and I got along well because we had been economics course classmates back in 1993. Shanghai's reporting was similar to ours, so there was sometimes creative tension about different interpretations of economic developments. I thought that our posts in Shanghai and Beijing had a healthy competition that enriched our overall reporting.

Consulate General Guangzhou was a large consulate too, but there was less of a sense of competition with Embassy Beijing because their focus was mainly on consular work. Guangzhou was the only post in China that processed immigrant visas, so all Chinese from around the country who wanted an American immigrant visa had to travel to Guangzhou. There was a large foreign adoption program at the time, so numerous American parents came to Guangzhou to finalize their adoption of a Chinese orphan. The other consulates — Shenyang and Chengdu were much smaller and in regions very different from Beijing and Shanghai, so their reporting enriched our understanding of China by providing insights from their regions of the country. Shenyang reported on China–North Korea economic ties and efforts to sustain failing state-owned enterprises. Chengdu could report on developments in Tibet, as well as rural reform and the impact of the population shift from rural to urban areas. These consulates provided unique insights for China-watchers in Washington DC. We had a collaborative relationship.

*KENNEDY: During the time you were there, how was pollution in Beijing?*

ZUMWALT: Pollution was bad but got even worse later. When I arrived in Beijing, our embassy doctor advised me *not* to jog outdoors, but to join a gym where I could breathe filtered air while exercising. In October, I could jog — Beijing had beautiful blue skies that month because the wind blew away the pollution. Beijing is flat and has wide sidewalks, so jogging was fun. But most of the year, Beijing would experience temperature inversions that would trap the factory pollution in the air we breathed.

Two car washers worked on our street. We would pay them a monthly fee — as I recall it was in the range of \$3–5 per month — and in exchange they would wash our cars every day. When I first arrived in Beijing, I thought that I did not need to have my car washed every day. In about three days, my car was covered with an oily, dusty film. I realized that a daily car wash was not a luxury but a necessity in Beijing's polluted air. I was breathing in the same oily, dusty air when outside. I did not ride my bike much in Beijing, as I felt like I was breathing in too much bad air.

*KENNEDY: How stood things with Taiwan?*

ZUMWALT: The China-Taiwan economic relationship was not as robust as now; there are many more economic ties today. But Taiwanese economic investment into China was increasing rapidly and China welcomed this inflow of Taiwanese technology and capital. Beijing separated its political differences from its economic policy toward the island. There were still no direct flights, so Taiwanese businessmen had to fly to Hong Kong and then on to Shanghai and other

cities. When the governments agreed to start direct flights, the business community was very happy.

*KENNEDY: Did you do any regional travel during your tour in Beijing?*

ZUMWALT: During our tour in China, Ann and I had a wonderful opportunity to travel to Brunei, where we stayed for almost a month. Brunei was hosting the APEC forum in the year 2000, one year before China was scheduled to host. My boss, Economic Minister Lauren Kahea Moriarty, recognized that Embassy Beijing would need to prepare to support U.S. government APEC activities the following year, so when the tiny U.S. embassy in Bandar Seri Begawan asked for help to support the APEC leaders meeting, Lauren agreed to send a large number of China-based economic officers to help. I went as the senior Embassy Beijing officer, but we sent about nine economic officers from around China. Ann was able to work in Brunei as well, so we roomed together during that extended deployment in a nice apartment that had been built to house athletes during the 1999 Southeast Asian Games. Brunei was a small enclave on the island of Borneo that derived its wealth from offshore oil. There were a few nice places to visit, such as a small modern shopping center and few good Indian and Chinese restaurants. It was a good experience for me to learn how the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs managed these regional meetings so that Embassy Beijing would be in a better position to support the U.S. APEC delegations the following year.

More work is accomplished at the side meetings than at the main event during these big regional gatherings. That was true for APEC Brunei as well. The major news coming out of this meeting (which was ostensibly focused on the internet economy) was that, over a round of golf, President Bill Clinton and Singaporean Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong had agreed to launch bilateral free trade agreement negotiations. This decision surprised the USTR senior officials present in Brunei. It was not something that had been considered carefully and brought up to the president for a decision. The announcement took my breath away. At the time, we had a free trade agreement with Canada and Mexico and Europe had its free trade area, but these agreements were among geographically contiguous economies. This decision was the United States' first visible step to move away from global trade liberalization in the WTO to proceeding faster with more like-minded countries in bilateral and regional FTAs.

The next year, in 2001, China hosted APEC, which meant that Embassy Beijing and Consulate General Shanghai would support visits from President Bush, Secretary of State Powell, the U.S. Trade Representative, and others. China also organized three preparatory senior officials' meetings (SOMs) and various ministerial-level meetings during the year. The focus of the senior officials' meetings, which were held in Beijing, Shenzhen, and Dalian respectively, was to strengthen the policy environment to promote the digital economy.

With the departure of Lauren Moriarty to her next assignment in Washington DC, I became Embassy Beijing's Economic Minister. My section was in charge of the whole panoply of senior officials' and ministerial-level meetings during the year-long APEC process. The Chinese, being interested in attracting more foreign direct investment, positioned these events to showcase China's opportunities. Major U.S. firms like FedEx supported a robust private sector involvement as well. The APEC leaders' meeting and the ministerial meeting right before was scheduled for November 2001 in Shanghai.

The terrorist attacks in New York and Washington DC in September 2001 changed the focus of APEC from economic integration to combating terrorism. Our message to the Chinese — the need to cooperate to confront Muslim terrorists — resonated with them. The priority for the United States had changed. It was a bit disappointing to see a sudden downgrading of a year of careful work on issues like trade facilitation, streamlining customs procedures, and promoting e-commerce. I must say I never thought of the Chinese government as nimble or flexible, but they recognized the shift in U.S. priorities and adapted quickly to the change of focus to anti-terrorism cooperation.

*KENNEDY: How did you feel about this economic work, the way it was going before it was so rudely interrupted?*

ZUMWALT: The work on the various economic agreements didn't dissipate. Progress on some areas was announced and other work was saved for the next year in APEC. Most APEC work does not result in binding agreements as in the WTO. Rather, APEC members agree to make best efforts. Our ambassador Sandy Randt, who was a close personal friend of President Bush from college together at Yale, was happy with this shift because it was what the White House wanted. I thought Embassy Beijing did a good job adjusting to the new post-9/11 atmosphere.

*KENNEDY: The president had been in China before.*

ZUMWALT: President Bush's father had been chief of the U.S. interests section in Beijing prior to formal establishment of diplomatic relations. My understanding is that President George W. Bush had come to China for a few weeks to visit his dad during this time.

Of course, the president's time in Shanghai was not only spent with Chinese counterparts. He met with leaders from Australia, Russia, Japan, and other countries. APEC Shanghai was the first opportunity for the United States to mobilize support for actions we sought from the world community after 9/11.

For us, APEC had started the previous February with the first senior officials' meeting. In addition to the three SOMs that I mentioned earlier, we supported meetings for transportation ministers, foreign ministers, and trade ministers. Each session involved negotiations with the Chinese, who as hosts held the pen on drafting the APEC statement. I was impressed with the Chinese work in the APEC Secretariat that year. There were certain things we wanted that others opposed, so the Chinese hosts needed to work out these differences in the draft text.

In the lead-up to this meeting, I stayed in Shanghai for about three weeks. Shanghai really impressed me; Beijing was China's political capital, but it was not as wealthy or sophisticated. Shanghai had integrated western influences more gracefully. The city had nicer high-rise buildings, shopping centers, and modern restaurants. Few Chinese would patronize the western restaurants in Beijing, but in Shanghai, wealthy Chinese consumers would join foreign residents at western restaurants. Shanghai was more cosmopolitan than Beijing.

*KENNEDY: I'm reading right now a biography of Madame Chiang Kai-shek called The Last Empress. She had many promises to make when they had to go to Beijing. It was going back to the provinces for her.*

ZUMWALT: Southern cities like Nanjing, Shanghai, Hangzhou, and Suzhou were more cultured. And these cities were more “Chinese” because Beijing had been the Manchu rulers’ capital with more Manchu cultural influences.

One additional complication we faced in managing these APEC meetings was the presence of Taiwan (referred to as Chinese Taipei in APEC) who, along with Hong Kong, was a member of APEC. When the APEC meetings were held in another capital, Taiwan already had people on the ground to facilitate their diplomats’ travel to APEC meetings. Because Taiwan did not have a liaison office in Beijing, the State Department asked us to help visiting Taiwan diplomats as required. Through our American Institute in Taiwan (AIT), we arranged for me to meet the Taiwan delegation when they arrived in Beijing prior to the first senior officials’ meeting. We were initially concerned about how China would treat these Taiwan representatives, but the Chinese were anxious to host a successful APEC meeting and chose not to make Taiwan’s participation in APEC an issue that year.

*KENNEDY: How did you find the Chinese press reporting on economic issues?*

ZUMWALT: Reporters were trained and professional, but understood the limits on what they could report. There were some papers that tested these limits. At the time, *Southern Weekly*, a newspaper from Guangdong, was considered edgy. They would report more about corruption or inefficiency than other newspapers. Once in a while, their editors would be given guidance on off-limits subjects. The Chinese reporters we talked to were pretty sophisticated — they read the *New York Times* or other western papers. Television was much more rigidly controlled.

The internet was just getting started and Chinese controls were not as stringent as they are now. For example, March 15 is Consumer Rights Day in China. Our public affairs section organized an online webchat with me on consumer rights. I explained to an online audience how John F. Kennedy wanted consumers to understand their rights. We talked about the consumer’s right to be informed and the right to safe products. As people wrote in questions, the conversation quickly turned into a discussion about democracy. One Chinese student asked me about Ralph Nader and I explained he was an activist who criticized the American government for inadequately protecting consumers. I noted that Nader’s campaign resulted in Congress passing new consumer protection laws. We could talk to an online audience of about fifty thousand people about citizen activism in the United States without ever using the word “democracy.” Our Chinese webhost was pleased with the large audience, but they soon received “guidance” that they were providing too much coverage to the U.S. Embassy. I do not think we could work with a Chinese content provider like that in today’s China.

*KENNEDY: Jim, you want to say something more about China before we move to Japan?*

ZUMWALT: After four years, I was ready to depart Beijing. Ann and I transferred directly from Beijing to Tokyo with deferred home leave. When I first arrived in Tokyo, for about three weeks I was in a state of euphoria. I remember asking myself, why am I so happy? I had not appreciated the psychological strain from the surveillance while I was living in Beijing. But when I left that environment, suddenly I experienced a feeling of lightness and freedom. I then realized that the constant surveillance and occasional bouts of hostility had affected my mental health. I was glad I had gone to Beijing — I gained experience as a manager of a large section and as a briefer for important members of Congress and the administration — but by the summer of 2002, I was ready to leave China for a new assignment in Tokyo, Japan.



## Chapter IX

### Embassy Tokyo: U.S.-Japan Economic Relations, 2002–2006

APRIL 16, 2018

*KENNEDY: You were in Tokyo from when to when?*

ZUMWALT: Our tour in Embassy Tokyo lasted from the summer of 2002 to the summer of 2006. We arranged for a direct transfer from Beijing to Tokyo with a deferred home leave because Embassy Tokyo was shorthanded during the summer transfer season.

Foreign Service entry and mid-level grades start at the 06 and 05 levels (lieutenant, junior grade equivalent), continuing to 04 (Navy lieutenant level), 03 (lieutenant commander), 02 (commander), and 01 (captain/colonel). There are four senior Foreign Service ranks: Counselor (one-star admiral or brigadier general), Minister (two-star), Career Minister (three-star), and Career Ambassador (four-star).

My assignment as Economic Counselor was scheduled to last for three years. However, after two years, the economic minister became the DCM, so I moved up to the Economic Minister position. I extended my tour by one year due to this change in my job and Ann also extended, so we stayed in Tokyo for a total of four years.

*KENNEDY: What was your wife's job?*

ZUMWALT: Ann worked in the political section covering domestic politics and human rights. She also handled women's issues such as the annual Trafficking in Persons Report, a major annual project mandated by Congress. She enjoyed her work. Our tour coincided with the middle of the George W. Bush administration. We were blessed with an impressive political ambassador named Howard Baker. He was rather elderly then and had lost some spring in his step. Most days, Ambassador Baker would arrive in the office early in the morning, return to the adjacent ambassador's residence for lunch, and then his special assistant might bring Ambassador Baker some work to do at his home in the afternoon.

Baker enjoyed incredible access to senior Japanese policymakers. He would visit Yasuo Fukuda, Japan's chief cabinet secretary — the right-hand man of the prime minister — especially frequently. As I recall, we could obtain an appointment with this busy person whenever we needed to convey an urgent message. They would meet perhaps once every two or three weeks and even more often if events warranted. (By this time, the U.S. embassy in Tokyo employed a professional Japanese interpreter who had a security clearance, so I no longer needed to perform this function.) Fukuda would always meet Baker in his personal office, which was more private and away from the Japanese media. At the end of the meeting, Fukuda would accompany Ambassador Baker out to the hallway and wait for us to board the elevator and for the doors to close. I remember Ambassador Baker telling Fukuda that this courtesy was not necessary as Fukuda was a very busy man. Fukuda replied, "You were a friend of my father (former Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda) and I should pay my respects to people from his generation." Ambassador Baker also called on government ministers, in particular the minister of foreign affairs and the head of the Defense Agency, often.

*KENNEDY: We had a good tendency to send respected political people to Japan.*

ZUMWALT: Mike Mansfield had been U.S. Ambassador to Japan for many years and was followed by senior American politicians such as Walter Mondale, Tom Foley, and Howard Baker. The Japanese were very comfortable interacting with these senior American politicians and regarded their presence as a sign that the United States valued its special relationship with Japan.

Ambassador Baker was incredibly valuable because of his astute political judgment and his connections in the White House. Everyone understood that he could call the president if needed. The NSC did not want that, so Stephen Hadley or Karen Hughes would answer Ambassador Baker's calls to resolve issues. Baker was not close friends with President Bush, but the president saw him as a wise person from his father's generation, so the White House paid deference to Baker's recommendations.

One example of Baker's political skill was his work on the case of Sergeant Charles Jenkins. Jenkins was an American soldier who had defected to North Korea in 1965. While Jenkins lived in North Korea, he was married off to a Japanese woman, Hitomi Soga, who had been abducted from Japan to North Korea. The issue of Japanese abductees had become a huge political issue in Japan. At one point, the North Koreans allowed seven of these abductees to return to Japan, among them Hitomi Soga. Of course, Soga wanted her husband and children to come as well, so the Japanese made efforts to reunite them all in Japan.

Jenkins' arrival in Japan posed a dilemma for the United States. Japan asked us to grant Jenkins a pardon, but the U.S. Army opposed a pardon for a traitor and military deserter who had violated the military code of conduct for prisoners of war. Ambassador Baker understood the bad optics of imposing a long prison sentence on Jenkins. Most Japanese felt tremendous sympathy for Hitomi Soga and people thought she should be able to reunite with her husband for the remaining years of their lives. Baker made several calls to explain to the U.S. Army and Pacific Command leadership about the political fallout in Japan of treating Jenkins harshly. I believe Baker also called the White House. As a result, the army expedited Jenkins' trial, dropped certain charges, and sentenced him to a reduction in rank, a forfeiture of his pension, and to thirty days in prison, most of which he had already served. Jenkins was very sorry for what he had done and accepted this sentence. Ambassador Baker cut through a lot of army regulations and red tape to accelerate this court-martial process — and he had the clout to succeed. I don't think a career ambassador could have played the role Ambassador Baker played in managing this delicate issue. Some people complain about political-appointee ambassadors but some political appointees are quite effective. With one exception, I have been very fortunate serving under political-appointee ambassadors in my career.

Ambassador Baker was an outstanding public speaker. Baker delivered his best speeches when he ignored our prepared text and spoke extemporaneously. If he were inspired by the venue or the occasion, he would lay down his text and tell yarns — but these stories always made a pertinent point. One day in our senior staff meeting, Ambassador Baker told us about Lamar Alexander, who had been Baker's speechwriter. (Alexander was later elected as a U.S. senator from Tennessee.) Baker told us that, one day, Alexander entered into his senate office to complain that "I write these speeches for you and you don't read them." Baker's riposte was "I don't see any problem; you write what you want and I'll say what I want." In Embassy Tokyo, we always joked about Ambassador Baker's tendency to ignore our prepared speech texts. We called it "the full Lamar" or "the half Lamar" treatment. If Ambassador Baker read your speech, it meant he was not in the mood or inspired, but if he put your speech down and ad-libbed, that

was the “full Lamar” treatment. Those speeches were well received. He was folksy, but his stories always resonated with his Japanese audience and always made a point.

*KENNEDY: You think of the Tennessee mountain thing.*

ZUMWALT: And Ambassador Baker played up his folksy image, but that image was a veneer. Baker was extremely sharp and a good judge of character. Ambassador Baker was also very progressive about professional women. He told the story about his grandmother, who'd been elected county sheriff in the 1930s when few women worked in law enforcement. He would joke “I thought everyone’s grandmother packed a pistol under her pillow!” Ambassador Baker was comfortable with smart, intelligent women; they didn’t intimidate him at all. Agriculture Minister Suzanne Hale was smart and forceful and Baker welcomed her contributions. He was married to Nancy Kassebaum Baker, who had herself been a U.S. senator. She was also a wonderful addition to our embassy community.

*KENNEDY: Her father had been a presidential candidate.*

ZUMWALT: Her father was Alf Landon, who had been the Republican governor of Kansas and who ran for president against Franklin Roosevelt in 1936. Nancy Kassebaum Baker had been for many years a U.S. senator from Kansas, a moderate Republican, and a leader on many issues in the Senate. She had been the first woman elected to the Senate without her husband having served previously in Congress. Her foreign policy area had been Africa; I think she had chaired the Africa Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. Then suddenly, she came to Tokyo as Ambassador Baker’s wife.

Ambassador Baker was always willing to give his wife as much room as she wanted. Ann would work with Mrs. Baker on the issue of trafficking in persons. Mrs. Baker had previously been involved in an NGO with senators Kay Bailey Hutchison and Hillary Clinton, who had formed a group of female senators (it was a small group in the Senate in those days) to advocate on certain bipartisan issues. One of the issues they had taken up in those days was sex trafficking across international borders. Ann was working on this issue and involved Mrs. Baker. She began giving speeches, attending seminars, and appearing at events. The Japanese paid attention to Mrs. Baker’s highlighting this issue and they did start moving to strengthen enforcement of laws against sex trafficking. Ann set up a high-profile public seminar and Mrs. Baker invited some of her Diet contacts to appear. One was a prominent conservative female member of the Diet named Yuriko Koike, who later became the first female governor of Tokyo. I remember talking to a couple of Japanese reporters after Ann’s conference. Off-the-record, they were saying “We really don’t appreciate foreigners commenting on this embarrassing domestic issue, but you’re right and we need to do something about this problem.”

*KENNEDY: How did you see the role of women in Japan at that time?*

ZUMWALT: Women had equal political rights — the right to vote and access to education — over half of Japan’s university students were women. Gender roles in Japan were changing. But problems remained. Large Japanese companies still did not employ many women in senior management roles or on their boards of directors. One of my contacts, an analyst at Morgan Stanley named Kathy Matsui (an American), coined a term which later became popular in Japan — “womentrics.” She explained how the poor economic opportunities available to women reduced economic growth in Japan. At the time, hers was a lonely voice but, later, Prime

Minister Shinzo Abe adopted many of Kathy's recommendations in his structural reform policies. In the year 2003, Kathy talked about the "M-curve" where, if one graphed employment rates on the vertical axis and age on the horizontal axis, the line formed an "M-curve."

Employment rates for young Japanese women were high but there was a heavy drop-out rate from the workforce as women married and bore children. Then later in life, Japanese women might return to the job market, forming the second "bump" on the M-curve. Today, Japan's ratio of women in the workforce is higher than in the United States. This M-curve has flattened. But when I was the Economic Counselor in Tokyo, we reported on these employment issues for the female workforce.

In contrast, at U.S. Embassy Tokyo, most of our senior local staff were women. In the economic section, we employed six or seven women among eight locally engaged staff. The U.S. embassy was known as a good place for women to work. We offered a better work-life balance compared to most Japanese companies. However, the embassy did not have many senior American women on its staff. The agriculture minister, the CIA station chief, and the press officer were the only three women on our country team of perhaps 22 people.

*KENNEDY: How did women deal with the culture where I assume, after working hours, you went off and got drunk?*

ZUMWALT: That was not an issue for us in the economic section. It was sometimes an issue for Ann because she was meeting politicians in the evenings. A few times, she was somewhat embarrassed when entertained at a bar. But for the most part, diplomats were not included in these evening drinking activities.

*KENNEDY: The Japanese are having a demographic problem now.*

ZUMWALT: Japan is experiencing a severe demographic problem of an aging society. This problem is shared with other East Asian societies like China, Korea, and Taiwan. We did some reporting on this issue in the economic section too.

*KENNEDY: I would assume that in your contacts with the Japanese, the fact that you'd done almost the same job in China, they must have been interested in pumping you for information about China.*

ZUMWALT: At the beginning of my tour, I did some public speaking on China's economy. The challenge was, after I left Beijing, my information quickly became stale.

When I returned to Japan in 2002 as Economic Counselor, the work in the section had changed from when I had joined the section nine years previously. In the early 1990s, the economic section was the busiest section in Embassy Tokyo due to the wide array of politicized trade issues. The ambassador wanted to talk about trade, so we needed to draft his speeches. But by the 2002–06 period, our bilateral economic agenda had diminished as President Bush wasn't pushing hard on these trade issues. Instead, in the post-9/11 era, we were stressing security alliances and partnerships against international terrorism.

Because there was less economic work, our section had time to engage in public diplomacy. I encouraged our staff to give speeches outside Tokyo and I enjoyed public speaking myself. Because I was comfortable with speaking in Japanese, I spent time on the road giving speeches. Our public diplomacy section frequently recruited me to speak in Japanese.

I also worked more closely with our five constituent posts. Each one had a pol-econ officer, usually an FS-03 who lacked a senior officer mentor from her cone at post. That was because the consuls general were usually PD, consular, or management officers. The DCM agreed to allow me to review the work evaluation reports of these officers. Therefore, every year, I visited each of our constituent posts in Sapporo, Nagoya, Osaka, Fukuoka, and Naha. The pol-econ officers were creative in devising an itinerary, usually a combination of public speaking, calls on officials, and visiting universities or businesses to learn about local conditions. I would use that time for officer mentoring and as a basis for their review statement at the end of the rating period.

*KENNEDY: I would think, given the structure of Japan with a relatively stable political situation, that econ was where the changes were happening.*

ZUMWALT: Japan was shifting to a more innovation-focused economy and new upstart companies like Fast Retailing (Uniqlo), Rakuten, and SoftBank were emerging. The American government wanted to understand these changes and one of the economic section's most important tasks was to analyze and report on the Japanese economy.

We also helped facilitate important U.S. government visitors so that they could better understand developments in the Japanese economy. For example, Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco President Dr. Janet Yellen visited Tokyo twice while I was economic minister. Each time, we facilitated her schedule of meetings with the Bank of Japan and the Ministry of Finance. On each visit, I hosted a working breakfast at my home for her to meet foreign economists who made their living analyzing economic data in Japan. Janet was an extremely gracious guest and I learned a lot from the penetrating questions she asked of these economists around our dining table.

Janet was also quite generous in allowing us to schedule a public diplomacy event during her visit. We arranged for her to meet with some Japanese academics and journalists in a seminar on the role of the U.S. Federal Reserve system in pursuing twin goals of price stability and full employment. These sorts of events helped the embassy meet another goal — to promote mutual understanding between Japan and the United States.

While I was in Tokyo, we welcomed a new political ambassador. Ambassador Howard Baker retired and returned to the United States. When he was scheduled to depart his residence for the airport, we invited embassy staff to line his long and wide driveway to wave goodbye. There was a huge turnout. Ambassador and Mrs. Baker were much beloved in the embassy by both American and Japanese staff.

Fairly soon after Ambassador Baker departed Tokyo, Tom Schieffer (who had been the U.S. ambassador to Australia) arrived. Ambassador Schieffer is the younger brother of Bob Schieffer (host of CBS' *Face the Nation*). He's a Democrat but was personal friends with President Bush from when they had worked together on the Texas Rangers baseball club. Bush had been a big investor in the enterprise and Tom Schieffer had run the company. I heard that Deputy Secretary of State Rich Armitage had been so impressed by Schieffer's strong performance in Canberra that he asked Schieffer to come to Tokyo as the U.S. ambassador.

Schieffer's arrival marked a sea change for the embassy because he was much younger, more energetic, and had his own management ideas. We needed to adjust to his new leadership style. For me, this change was positive. I welcomed his penetrating questions on an economic issue

because that forced me to sharpen my thinking. However, our management counselor was pulling his hair out because Ambassador Schieffer became deeply involved in management issues. Schieffer asked many good questions about established embassy management practices — I thought it was good for us to rethink our traditional practices, but others needed to adjust their approach due to his attention to management details. It was a new era for all of us at the embassy.

Ambassador Schieffer would often say “We’re in the information business. How can we do this more efficiently to save money?” Ambassador Schieffer and Under Secretary of State for Management Pat Kennedy got along well — as noted in Chapter 5, I had first met Kennedy when he was a mid-level officer supporting Secretary Shultz’s travel in 1986. Even then, I thought he would go far in his career, so I was not surprised when he was named to the senior management position at the State Department. Kennedy respected Schieffer’s business acumen. Ambassador Schieffer became one of Kennedy’s informal advisors among the department’s political ambassadors. Schieffer complained to Pat Kennedy that the State Department’s incentives structure was wrong. He pointed out that “If I save you money, you keep all the money. If you let me keep some of the savings, I’ll have more incentive to find more savings.” To Kennedy’s credit (I forget the details), he did recognize Embassy Tokyo’s cost-saving efforts and he did find us some money for a project we wanted.

Schieffer was very interested in economic policy issues. He had been very involved in the final negotiations on the U.S.-Australia Free Trade Agreement. His initial idea was to pursue a bilateral FTA with Japan, but we needed to explain that Japan was not ready to make the necessary concessions for such an agreement. For that matter, neither were we. The United States talked a good game of free trade, but we were not prepared, for example, to liberalize shipping between the mainland United States and Hawaii and Puerto Rico, which was restricted to U.S. ships under the Jones Act.

The DCM tended to assign senior visitor control officer duties to the economic section because the political section was quite busy. When he learned that President Bush planned to come to Japan for a three-day visit, he asked me to be the senior embassy liaison with the White House advance team to support this visit. Preparations for this visit took up two months of my time. The final five weeks of this period, I remained in Kyoto on temporary duty (TDY) status to oversee all of the visit preparations.

This duty provided a real insight on how the White House staff actually worked. We tended to emphasize policy — the president should raise this topic, the prime minister is probably going to raise that topic — but the White House staff was focused on the president’s image back in the United States. They wanted to visit a photogenic Buddhist temple called the Golden Pavilion at seven a.m. At first, I thought the choice of time was extremely odd and our Japanese hosts originally resisted scheduling an event so early in the morning. However, I learned that this timing meant that the U.S. television networks could cover the event live on their nightly news shows. The White House staff was correct — major American news networks set up cameras for broadcast of the president and prime minister walking down a rocky path toward a beautiful pavilion on a crisp, sunny autumn morning. Thanks to the White House advance staff planning, millions of Americans saw this image of friendship between our leaders in their living rooms.

The embassy had to manage endless run-ins with the police whose job was protecting the president and prime minister. The White House media office wanted more access for reporters

but the Japanese police wanted less. Therefore, I had to spend a lot of time negotiating with the Japanese police over the number of barriers and distance between the press pool and the event. We were comfortable with granting close access to the White House photographers because they had been vetted and were known to us, but the Japanese police were horrified we were willing to allow these journalists to be in such close proximity to our leaders. I had many conversations with the hotel management because the White House Communications Agency had to set up a robust communications network, running cables and drilling holes in the hotel walls. We had many details to arrange at eight or nine different sites, such as to request that the Japanese fire department pre-position emergency firetrucks near the helipad at the Kyoto Imperial Palace where the president would land. We also needed to visit the emergency hospital in case someone became sick or was injured and inspect all the kitchens where his food would be prepared. We worked from eight a.m. until nine or ten p.m. every day for five weeks to nail down all of these details.

I was on the outer periphery of the entourage after the president arrived but, from a distance, I could see the genuine warmth between our two leaders. Clearly, for whatever reason, they'd forged a collegial relationship. Many Japanese considered Prime Minister Koizumi to be an odd person. In fact, his nickname among Japanese reporters was "spaceman." However, his personality matched well with President Bush who appreciated Koizumi's direct and open manner and his sense of humor. Koizumi's English was not great, but he used every bit of language skills he had. Despite these communications challenges, they really seemed to enjoy each other's company. Of course, they discussed major topics of the world, but they also enjoyed touristic activities together. The Japanese public welcomed this visit; they loved that an American leader visited Kyoto to enjoy their culture. Many schoolchildren lined the president's route, waving American and Japanese flags. This visit garnered a lot of goodwill even though, to be honest, President Bush was unpopular in Japan. But the Japanese public wanted to get along with the United States and they appreciated the symbolism of warm relations between our leaders.

Managing the embassy support for this visit became a busy three-ring circus for about two months, but it was a wonderful chance for me to revisit Kyoto's famous sites. The White House advance team visited many places before deciding on the Golden Pavilion for the cultural site. We also spent much time in the beautiful state guesthouse, which was newly constructed using traditional Japanese methods. President Bush was the first state visitor to overnight at this magnificent government facility. This guesthouse is not open to the public, so I felt privileged to have access to one of the most wonderful sites in Kyoto. Every room in the guesthouse looks out onto a central garden and each has a different vantage point of the ponds, waterfalls, trees, and rocky paths of this masterfully designed Japanese garden. Many works by Japanese artists, who are considered "living national treasures," including pottery, tapestries, and paintings are on display. But after it was over, I was relieved that President Bush's visit had gone well, that the White House staff had departed, and that we could return to Tokyo to restart our normal lives.

*KENNEDY: You talked about 9/11 earlier. There'd been the Japanese Red Army and other terrorist organizations out of Japan — was that era gone?*

ZUMWALT: That era was over. These organizations you mention were remnants of the 1960s student movement. Student factions kept splitting into smaller and smaller factions. Some

became radical and a few engaged in violence, but the Japanese police had infiltrated and broken up most of these cells by this time.

*KENNEDY: Did you get caught up in ongoing problems of Okinawa?*

ZUMWALT: I didn't become involved in Okinawa basing issues during this tour because I was head of the economic section and that problem was managed by the political section, the front office, and the U.S. military leadership (see comments on Okinawa basing issues in the next chapter). But I traveled to Okinawa twice to give talks about economic issues. My speeches were of interest because Okinawans wanted to attract more American tourists and American investment. Okinawa was also interested in attracting U.S. financial services and information technology firms to establish in Okinawa offices that provided back-office support or customer services for their Japanese-speaking customers. Because wages in Okinawa are lower than the major cities on the mainland, American firms like AIG (American International Group) who had Japanese customers were moving their customer service operations to Okinawa to cut costs. I also had good meetings on these trips with the prefecture's office responsible for economic development and the Okinawa Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The image of Okinawa in the United States is different from the reality on the ground. Yes, there is unhappiness about the burden of hosting U.S. bases. This view is particularly strong on the Okinawa political left and in the local news media. But I did not detect hostility toward America or individual Americans. Okinawans from across the political spectrum would accept invitations to the consul general's house. Even politicians who were critical of the U.S. base presence wanted a relationship and were happy to meet American visitors from Tokyo. On my visits, I had tremendous access. I would meet Governor Hirokazu Nakaima, for example. The U.S. military values its bases in Okinawa because of their strategic location, but also because the operating environment is actually quite permissive. Okinawa has beautiful beaches, great water sports opportunities, golf courses, and a wonderful climate for outdoor recreational activities. Many American service members stationed in Okinawa took advantage of these opportunities.

That is part of the challenge: at the political level, the Okinawan government was unhappy with the Japanese central government for not obtaining sufficient concessions from us, but on a personal level, the marines, the air force, the navy, and the small army contingent were happy with their individual relations with the local community. One Marine Corps base commander told me that "Too many marines want to live off-base, leaving unused on-base housing." I remember thinking that this "problem" was due to individual marines' positive experiences with friendly and hospitable locals. Many Okinawan developers were building apartments to U.S. military specifications because they wanted to attract U.S. military tenants. Marines could live off-base in a nice apartment only a block from the beach on their military housing allowances.

*KENNEDY: There must be quite a lot of intermarriage.*

ZUMWALT: Many American service members marry Okinawans. There is a large Okinawan community in Washington, mainly women married to American military or other Americans. There are political issues regarding our bases in Okinawa, but for individual marines and airmen, Okinawa was a nice assignment.

*KENNEDY: How stood the situation with intellectual property?*

ZUMWALT: By this time, the Japanese were largely on our side because Japanese companies also had problems with intellectual property theft. I should add that American businesses like Disney, Major League Baseball, and the sound recording and motion picture industries were making billions of dollars per year from Japanese royalty payments. We did still face trade issues about pricing of pharmaceutical products and medical equipment. Prices of these products in the United States are high, but the Japanese government had an interest in lowering these prices because the government-financed national health insurance system paid for these American products. There was a lot of negotiation with the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare over price levels of these American medical devices and pharmaceuticals. To be honest, I was sympathetic to Japan's efforts to control health care prices. Because the U.S. Department of Commerce had the lead on this issue, I didn't become involved.

*KENNEDY: Was there any problem between the Japanese and Chinese where we got in-between or on one side or the other?*

ZUMWALT: The Japanese shared many of our concerns about the lack of intellectual property protection in China. We worked together with the Japanese and Europeans to present a united front to encourage China to improve its protection of intellectual property.

*KENNEDY: What was the status of tourism between the two countries?*

ZUMWALT: There are American tourists, but Japan's main sources of inbound tourists are Korea, China, and Taiwan. The United States is farther away and it's expensive to travel to Japan. However, Japan is an important source of inbound tourists for the United States. I believe Japanese tourist arrivals are in fourth place after Canada, Mexico, and the United Kingdom. For certain destinations — Hawaii and Guam in particular — Japanese tourism is a major source of tourist revenue. In addition to this economic impact, tourism reinforces our positive bilateral relationship. Japanese tourists to the United States generally enjoy their travels and come away with favorable impressions. The same is true for Americans who visit Japan. They generally come away with deeper respect for the Japanese culture and the people. One reason our strong bilateral relationship is the broad foundation of these people-to-people ties.

*KENNEDY: What was your impression of the American staff in the economic section?*

ZUMWALT: Our American staff wanted to work in Japan, so morale was high. Our economic officers had good language capability. Four economic officers spoke Japanese at the 4/4 level, which meant they could engage in public speaking in Japanese. There were 24 Americans on the embassy staff (not all State) who had lived in Japan previously for over a year as a student or on an exchange program such as Fulbright. This included staff from agencies like the TSA (Transportation Security Administration) and FAA (Federal Aviation Administration). Our financial attaché, for example, had lived in Japan for a year and was married to a Japanese woman. He sought this assignment because he wanted his children to become bilingual and comfortable in either culture. Our defense attachés were all trained Japanese linguists and cultural experts who were on their second or third tours in Japan. By and large, the embassy's American staff took advantage of their tours in Japan to travel and reach out to make Japanese friends.

Perhaps for this reason, Tokyo was not an embassy where the American staff socialized together exclusively because most Americans could pursue outside interests — a haiku club or skiing, for

example. A retired Japanese policeman taught judo to embassy kids and adults on our compound every Saturday. He loved judo and wanted to introduce the sport to Americans. He never charged for his classes. I think teaching American children his beloved sport gave his life purpose. He was really good with kids; judo can be a rough and tumble sport, but he organized age-appropriate judo exercises for our kids. He must have had thirty to forty students ranging from ages five to fifteen who really looked up to him as their sensei. He also spent a great deal of time talking about ethics, such as showing respect for teachers and parents, appropriate and inappropriate uses of judo skills, and conflict de-escalation skills.

Embassy spouses could easily obtain jobs tutoring English and often their Japanese students helped them to experience Japanese life outside the housing compound such as a holiday celebration in a Japanese home. The Tokyo mass transit system was accessible and easy to use. We could walk from our compound to three different subway stations that provided access to five major subway lines. Even staff who could not speak Japanese found it comfortable to travel around Tokyo.

One consular officer took special advantage of Tokyo's subways. His hobby was to visit subway stations — before his tour ended, he had visited all 179 subway stations in Tokyo. He would plan out a weekend excursion to take his baby in a stroller and ride to one station, board the train, get off at another station, and walk to another station. In this manner, he got to know the whole city. I asked him to write a weekly column in our embassy newsletter about off-the-beaten-track sights he had seen like a small temple, a good restaurant, or a little park. He told me that the Japanese were amazingly kind with his baby; people would give up their seat for him or ask to take a photo with him and his baby.

*KENNEDY: My son in Yugoslavia got a little tired of people pinching his cheek.*

ZUMWALT: Our housing was cramped. When Ann and I worked in Tokyo as FS-03s we lived in an 800-square-foot two-bedroom apartment with a tiny kitchen. But we were out in the city so much that this small apartment did not cramp our style. We appreciated our short ten-minute walking commute to work at the embassy.

Once a year, we hosted a festival where we opened our embassy housing compound to the community. We put up bunting and flags and hired a DJ to play music. Various school groups and the United States Army Band in turn performed on our stage. The judo club showcased their skills onstage as did the Japanese taiko drumming club. Every club in the embassy and the boy and girl scout troops who met on the embassy housing compound used the opportunity to raise funds by selling popcorn or hot dogs or cotton candy. We organized a little parade with kids riding their decorated bikes. The fire department came to showcase a fire engine and offer fire and earthquake safety demonstrations. Their earthquake simulator was especially popular with the children. Our Japanese guests loved this festival. Tickets would sell out quickly because so many people wanted to come. It was a really friendly, casual environment and a great way to thank our neighbors.

*KENNEDY: Were there any problems that were difficult for you as an embassy officer?*

ZUMWALT: Not then. Being Economic Minister was more fun than being DCM. I only had responsibility for twelve officers, two office management specialists, and eight Japanese staff. They were motivated people with good judgment, so I never experienced personnel problems at this time. When I became DCM, responsible for the entire embassy staff, then I needed to deal

with some unpleasant employee conduct issues. There were only a few, but they caused major headaches.

*KENNEDY: Your staff, you were talking about the Japanese women. What were they doing, your staff? Were they able to call industries and make good contacts?*

ZUMWALT: The work depended on the person. Two American staff were office management specialists; they would call and make the appointments and help organize the schedules for economic section visitors. When we had events in the embassy, they would help out. We also employed six professional Japanese staff. Of those six, two were spouses of foreign service officers. One was an American citizen from Japan. The second was a Japanese national. Both were completely bilingual. They were both incredibly good — not merely scheduling appointments, they were researching issues, doing analysis, and writing reports.

These two also helped us address one of the weaknesses of Japanese embassy staff. Our local staff sometimes were reluctant to point out our cultural mistakes. I kept telling my staff “I don’t want to make the same mistakes in Japanese over and over, so please correct me,” but they had been reticent about doing that. Once we hired two American embassy staff spouses, this all changed. These two women were not shy about correcting our mistakes in Japanese. They were used to correcting their American husbands, so they would correct my Japanese and I would thank them. The other locally engaged staff began to realize that we really did value their input.

The embassy had employed some outstanding LES. One of our most valuable employees was the senior LES in the agriculture section. He knew everyone in the Japanese beef and pork industries. These sectors were important because U.S. beef and pork exports to Japan each exceeded one billion dollars per year. Once when I was visiting the embassy agricultural section, the Japanese agriculture minister telephoned our agriculture counselor, who was the senior employee from the USDA in Tokyo. She was not there, so her secretary asked me to talk to the minister on the phone. However, when I introduced myself on the telephone, he asked me to connect him to our senior LES. As I ran down the hall to fetch our LES, I appreciated that Japan’s agriculture minister, a very senior politician, valued the expertise of our Japanese employee at the U.S. embassy.

Another example from my later tour in Japan when I was DCM was an LES employee in our political section. Our political-military section (Pol-Mil) assistant was so valued by Japanese Minister of Defense Toshimi Kitazawa that he hired her away from us to a very senior advisory position in the Japanese Ministry of Defense. She was a fixer and someone who could help us navigate Okinawa problems. Her departure was a loss, but in her new role in the Defense Ministry, she continued to help us manage challenges with the alliance.

The Regional Security Office staff were retired Japanese policemen (and a retired policewoman) who could resolve issues with their Japanese police contacts. We simply could not have done our jobs at the embassy without these valuable locally engaged staff.

*KENNEDY: You mentioned the police. There had been an attack on an ambassador — I think it was Edwin Reischauer. Was this an ongoing problem?*

ZUMWALT: The attack on Ambassador Reischauer occurred in 1964 on the street outside the U.S. embassy. The Japanese perpetrator was mentally unstable. Since that incident, the U.S. ambassador has been protected by a Japanese police bodyguard. These bodyguards are martial

arts experts; I wouldn't want to tangle with them. They ride in his car in the front seat and are often communicating with other police along our route. When the ambassador traveled in-country, they would liaise with the local police, who provided additional protection.

Two Japanese police bodyguards were assigned to the ambassador — they had to work from the crack of dawn, because some ambassadors go jogging or engage in breakfast meetings, until late at night when the ambassador returned home from an evening event. And on weekends, they were present if the ambassador planned to leave his residence on Saturdays or Sundays. The ambassador's office management specialist's job was to explain the ambassador's next day and weekend schedules to his security detail. I think the only other ambassadors in Tokyo that received Japanese police protection were the Russians, the Chinese, and the Israelis. It was not typical in Tokyo to see bodyguards.

*KENNEDY: Speaking of the Russians, were the islands to the north an issue?*

ZUMWALT: Yes. However, Japan's territorial dispute with Russia was not a bilateral issue for the United States. We recognized these four islands as Japanese territory occupied by Russia. Our security treaty did not apply, because this treaty obligates us to come to Japan's defense if "territory under the administration of Japan" is attacked. Since Japan did not administer these islands, they did not fall under our security treaty.

*KENNEDY: It's one of our main cards.*

ZUMWALT: The Russian embassy faced lots of demonstrations. In Japan, February 7 is Northern Territories Day. On that day, right-wing sound-trucks would drive around the Russian embassy and blast martial music and loud slogans. These small right-wing groups were a nuisance, but the police tolerated them blasting out slogans from very large loudspeakers as long as they did not engage in physical violence.

*KENNEDY: During this period, was that shrine where the dead are buried, the military — ?*

ZUMWALT: Japan faces a dilemma regarding the Yasukuni Shrine. Families who lost loved ones deserve a place to mourn their relatives who had sacrificed their lives for their country. We do not begrudge Japan the opportunity to pray for the souls of these people — but Yasukuni Shrine has been associated with Japanese militarism. It became more politicized when a priest in the 1970s enshrined the spirits of Japanese war criminals there. Many Japanese regard the shrine as a symbol of Japanese militarism that has been hijacked by the right wing. To many Koreans and Chinese, the Yasukuni Shrine symbolizes Japanese reluctance to acknowledge their past.

When he was running for Liberal Democratic Party President, Prime Minister Koizumi promised to visit Yasukuni Shrine every year in order to garner right-wing support. By the time he became prime minister, Koizumi probably regretted this pledge, but he also felt an obligation to keep it. Prime Minister Koizumi's shrine visits would upset the Koreans and Chinese and would make it more difficult for us to work together to address North Korea's nuclear program. The United States has chosen to downplay our concerns about the symbolism of Yasukuni, but we did express concerns about the problems it created for Japan-South Korea relations. During this period, our biggest security challenge in the region was North Korea and we wanted South Korea and Japan to work together to address North Korea.

I was happy to receive an onward assignment as Director of the Office of Japanese Affairs in the State Department's Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. The last few months of our tour in Japan, I spent a lot of time learning more about the work of the political and public affairs sections in preparation for this new job. After four years in Tokyo, I knew everyone on the embassy senior staff, including Ambassador Tom Schieffer and DCM Joe Donovan. I looked forward to continuing to work together with them from Washington to advance U.S.-Japan relations. I also looked forward to a job responsible for the entire span of U.S.-Japan relations, including management of our bilateral security alliance.

## Chapter X

### Managing Bilateral Relations: Japan Desk Director, 2006–2008

APRIL 25, 2018

*KENNEDY: Jim, you might say where we were and where we are going.*

ZUMWALT: I departed Tokyo in 2006 after serving in Embassy Tokyo for four years, two years as Economic Counselor and two years as Economic Minister. I returned to the State Department to work on the Japan desk as Director of the Office of Japanese Affairs from the summer of 2006.

*KENNEDY: In 2006, how stood Japanese-American relations?*

ZUMWALT: In the 1980s and 1990s, Americans were concerned about Japanese trade issues and senior officials visited Tokyo frequently. But by 2006, the Japanese economy was stagnant, U.S. policymakers were no longer worried about Japan's economy surpassing the United States, and U.S. economic agencies' interest shifted to other policy areas. Furthermore, Japan's bilateral trade surplus with the United States had stopped growing. For me as an office director, it was a worthwhile period to work on U.S.-Japan relations. Very senior people — the secretary of state or the undersecretaries of state — were not focused on Japan, yet there was still important work that fell to the office director. Unlike previous eras when the Japan office director would prepare senior people for their visits or meetings, I was often the senior person at the State Department managing an issue with Japan. I could navigate my issues while avoiding decision layers and interagency meetings because leadership attention on Asia in those days was focused on North Korea and China.

Our Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs assistant secretary was Chris Hill. He was very much a strategic thinker. Chris had experience in Korea, but was otherwise not an Asia expert and was rather uninterested in Japan. Chris was focused on his mandate to negotiate a deal to contain North Korea's nuclear weapons program through the Six-Party Talks that involved China, Russia, Japan, and South and North Korea. He pursued this task energetically but, outside of the Six-Party Talks, he had little time for other Japan policy issues. This situation left me with a wider lane to operate on bilateral U.S.-Japan issues.

My immediate boss, the deputy assistant secretary, was a talented officer named Kathy Stephens. She had been a Peace Corps volunteer in Korea and later on had returned to Korea as a foreign service officer. Kathy spoke fluent Korean and was very attuned to South Korean domestic and foreign policy issues. Once a week, the Korea office director, Sung Kim, and I would meet in Kathy's office for an hour. Perhaps 55 minutes of the conversation would be about South Korea and North Korea with five minutes left for me to tell Kathy quickly what I was doing. Kathy would say "Fine" and I could continue my work for another week. I really respected Sung and the fine work he and his desk were doing to support the Six-Party Talks, but to be honest, I did not mind this attention to his issues because that left me a lot of autonomy over my own issue portfolio. In contrast, Sung could do very little without many interagency meetings between the State Department, the White House, and other agencies. His job was higher profile, but he faced many more bureaucratic constraints.

Traditionally, the Japanese DCM enjoyed a direct communications channel with the EAP assistant secretary and the Japanese ambassador would see the undersecretary for political affairs. But Chris did not want to meet Japanese DCM Akitaka Saiki; he made it quite clear that he would see Ryozo Kato, the Japanese ambassador, whenever Ambassador Kato wanted, but he would not meet DCM Saiki in his office. The Japanese ambassador did not want to do that because he feared he might then lose access to the State Department undersecretaries.

I was placed in an odd situation where we had fewer higher-level meetings between the Japanese embassy and EAP. Ambassador Kato would meet with Under Secretary Nick Burns, but there was too much business to convey everything in that high-level channel. As a result, I had more intense contacts with the Japanese embassy. Japanese DCM Saiki was too rank-conscious to call on me or the DAS at the department. So, I was invited to representational events at the Japanese ambassador's residence once or twice a week. When I would arrive, Saiki would pull me into a side room and we would spend 45 minutes going through our bilateral agenda. Then, I would emerge to attend the reception and, the next day, write up our conversation just as if we had met in an office call. I began arriving at the embassy's events early, anticipating these one-on-one sessions with Saiki. I also met weekly with the Japanese embassy's political minister and perhaps twice a month with the economic minister in my office.

The Japanese and South Korean embassies were both very interested in our Six-Party Talks negotiations. Both embassies explored every channel to understand our strategy. The Japanese and Korean embassy's political ministers would ask me for information frequently even though I was not directly involved in these talks. I always coordinated with Sung Kim to find out from him in advance what I should relay to these two embassies. Sung was always generous with his time as he saw the benefit of the Japanese and Korean embassies hearing a unified message from the State Department.

*KENNEDY: What was Japan's role in the six-party process?*

ZUMWALT: Japan participated in the six-party process, so Chris Hill would meet with Japan's Six-Party Talks negotiator to discuss our negotiations strategy. But our interests with Japan in the Six-Party Talks were not completely aligned. Often, Chris Hill thought that Japan's assertion of its own interests made it harder to accomplish our goal of negotiating an end to North Korea's nuclear program. Japan's major political issue was the fate of Japanese citizens who had been abducted to North Korea. For obvious reasons, their families wanted a resolution. The Japanese government wanted an end to North Korea's nuclear program also, but these abductees remained an important political issue for Japan even as North Korea's nuclear weapons represented an existential threat.

*KENNEDY: They were getting pretty old.*

ZUMWALT: By 2006, everyone in Japan knew about Megumi Yokota, who had been kidnapped when she was only thirteen years old. We learned later that North Korean infiltrators made a mistake by kidnapping such a young schoolgirl. They had been looking for a young Japanese woman to train North Korean spies to pose as Japanese travelers. Megumi Yokota was too young to be useful to the North Koreans. The Japanese government was interested in resolving this abduction issue as part of the Six-Party Talks. Although Chris Hill understood the optics of this issue for Japan, he was also sometimes irritated because he feared that Japan's efforts to

simultaneously resolve the abduction issue would reduce the chance of reaching an agreement to curb North Korea's nuclear program.

*KENNEDY: Do the Japanese have relations with North Korea?*

ZUMWALT: There was no formal diplomatic relationship. However, there is an umbrella organization of ethnic Koreans who are resident in Japan called Chosen Soren that serves as North Korea's unofficial diplomatic channel with Japan. These Koreans were descendants of people who came to Japan before the war as laborers. The Japanese government would communicate with Chosen Soren in Tokyo and this organization in turn would communicate with the North Korean government. The head of Chosen Soren in Tokyo was considered to be the de facto North Korean Ambassador in Japan.

*KENNEDY: Something I wondered about the North Koreans in Japan — I find it hard for them to have allegiance to North Korea. They were living a very good life and they must know what the situation was back in North Korea.*

ZUMWALT: Over time, there has been an erosion of support for ethnic organizations affiliated with the North Korean side. There are over 800,000 ethnic Koreans (known as Zainichi) living in Japan. Most of them were born in Japan, but their parents or grandparents came to Japan as laborers before the war when Korea was a Japanese colony. When I had been stationed in our consulate in Osaka-Kobe in 1983–5, Chosen Soren had more Zainichi members than the rival pro-South Korea organization called Mindan, or the Korean Residents Union in Japan (see my detailed comments on this issue in the section on my consular tour in Kobe). As the economic disparity between North and South Korea widened, and as North Korea acknowledged that it had kidnapped Japanese nationals from Japanese soil, Chosen Soren gradually lost support among the Zainichi community. Now about two-thirds of the Zainichi are affiliated with Mindan and are regarded as South Korean citizens with permanent residency status in Japan.

*KENNEDY: Did immigrant groups in the United States influence your approach?*

ZUMWALT: I had very little contact with Japanese American immigrant groups when I was Director of the Office of Japanese Affairs. However, I did sometimes become involved in Korean issues where Korean immigrant groups were active. My personal rank was higher than the Korea office director's, so when Kathy traveled, I would become the acting DAS for Japan and Korea. In that capacity, I would deal with the South Korean embassy and with Korean immigrant groups on a range of issues.

For example, I happened to be acting DAS on April 16, 2007 when a Korean American student at Virginia Tech shot and killed 32 people and wounded seventeen others with two semi-automatic pistols. At the time, it was the deadliest school shooting in U.S. history. The Korean embassy DCM came in to see me to apologize on behalf of the shooter. I told him that this tragedy was not the fault of the Korean government and advised them against "taking responsibility" for the shooting in their public statements. I said that the ethnicity of the shooter had not been a major aspect of American press reporting on the tragedy, even though it did figure prominently in Korean language press reports. The Korean embassy issued a statement of regret (not apology) and it mobilized many ethnic Korean organizations in the Washington area to raise quite a bit of money for the shooting victims. I was impressed by the Korean embassy and the immigrant Korean community's response to this tragedy. At the same time, I was also glad that

the shooter's Korean ethnicity did not become an issue in the United States. The American press reporting focused on issues like gun control and mental health rather than the ethnicity of the perpetrator.

*KENNEDY: What about the economic side?*

ZUMWALT: The bilateral economic relationship did not loom large on the U.S.-Japan bilateral agenda at this time. We focused more on our security alliance and coordination of international diplomacy. One positive aspect of a Foreign Service career is that every new job presents opportunities to learn and grow. I enjoyed that process of learning and retooling. The new challenge for me in this job for me was to manage our bilateral security alliance.

Among these issues was managing political pressures over the heavy U.S. military presence in Okinawa. About half of our active duty personnel in Japan are stationed in Okinawa. The island chain represents only three or four percent of the Japanese landmass, so there is a disproportionate U.S. military presence in Okinawa compared to the mainland. The strategic importance of the U.S. presence in Okinawa has been increasing due to China's growing naval presence in the Western Pacific. The PLA Navy must sail through straits that are controlled by foreign powers in order to reach the Pacific Ocean. From China's perspective, Okinawa represents a potential choke point blocking its access to the Pacific.

I learned more about the unique history and culture in Okinawa. Until the 1860s, Okinawa was a quasi-independent kingdom where people spoke a distinct dialect related to Japanese but not intelligible to Japanese speakers. The Okinawan king had maintained relationships with the Qing Dynasty court as well as with the Japanese feudal lord who ruled over the closest Japanese province to Okinawa. The Okinawan royalty sent tributes to both. There is a noticeable Chinese cultural presence in Okinawa from its cuisine (with more pork and bitter melon than Japan) to its architecture. Okinawa had been largely left autonomous by both China and Japan because the island chain was so remote. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as the Japanese state became stronger, it seized control and imposed Japanese culture on Okinawan society. In schools, Okinawans were forced to speak Japanese, not Okinawan.

Gradually over time, Okinawan culture converged more with Japanese culture. Most Okinawans no longer speak the Okinawan dialect, only Japanese. However, Okinawans still regard themselves as distinct from the mainland. The U.S. government negotiates with the Japanese government about our presence in Okinawa, then the Japanese government talks to Okinawan political leaders about the U.S. presence. There are no direct negotiations between the United States and the Okinawan political leadership about U.S. bases on the islands. This triangle presents an inherent political problem because Okinawans believe that the Japanese central government is not adequately representing their views. Much of our work on the Japan desk was to coordinate with the civilian leadership in the Defense Department and with the U.S. military leadership to manage issues related to Japan's hosting of U.S. military facilities.

*KENNEDY: I've heard people who served there saying again and again "We took it with our blood; don't mess with us!"*

ZUMWALT: By this time, most U.S. strategic thinkers no longer approached the political challenges on Okinawa with this point of view. We needed to manage our security relationship in a manner that sustained Japanese public support for our continuing presence in order to preserve an enduring alliance. For example, we worked to implement an agreement to move about half the

U.S. Marines from Okinawa to Guam. Japan agreed to pay for part of the cost of the new housing, sewage, electricity, and schools on Guam needed for this force realignment.

Some U.S. military leaders, whose job is to maintain readiness, may have chafed at the restrictions we negotiated. But the vast majority of Defense Department civilian and military decision-makers understood the need to lower our military posture on Okinawa to sustain Japanese political support for the alliance. I believed that we needed to show the Okinawan population that we were listening to their concerns about the concentration of U.S. presence there to avoid bigger problems later. We did not want to put at risk our important Air Force base at Kadena or our naval facilities for submarines on the island.

*KENNEDY: I was under the impression that the local government in Okinawa is always more to the left than the Japanese government.*

ZUMWALT: The government of Okinawa is more skeptical of the security relationship. In November 2018, Governor Denny Tamaki (whose biological father was an American servicemember) gave a speech in Washington saying, “We have no objection to U.S. bases, but they should not all be in Okinawa. If Japan wants to host these bases, move them to the mainland.” He was not attacking the concept of Japan hosting U.S. bases; his point was Okinawa’s burden was excessive.

The economic arguments on the benefits of hosting U.S. bases were becoming less persuasive as the Okinawa economy expanded. In the 1950s, other than agriculture or small business, Okinawans enjoyed few employment opportunities on the islands. Well-educated Okinawans could aspire to well-paying jobs on a U.S. military base. As Okinawa developed, however, the relative share of U.S. base-generated economic growth declined. Local government-sponsored studies concluded that closing the bases would generate an economic boom by clearing land for development. When I arrived on the Japan desk, Okinawa’s major economic engine had become tourism. Okinawans saw tourism as a source of economic growth and thought that our bases undermined that potential.

I think that Okinawan leaders sometimes underestimated the beneficial impact of the massive Japanese government subsidies they received for hosting the bases. For decades, the Japanese government had managed Okinawan issues by providing subsidies and grants to mitigate anti-base rhetoric from local officials. This led to an unhealthy dynamic where some mainland Japanese and many in the U.S. thought that the Okinawans were just complaining to squeeze more money out of the central government. This thinking led some American policymakers to underestimate Okinawan opposition to such a heavy U.S. military presence. I did not share this viewpoint. On the desk, we worked to explain this Okinawa political dynamic to U.S. national security officials.

*KENNEDY: They are lusty young men and once in a while something crops up.*

ZUMWALT: The U.S. military crime rate on Okinawa was actually low, but crimes that were committed by U.S. servicemembers or accidents in Japan did lead to unhealthy political reactions. The Okinawa media played up these issues. While I was on the desk, most of the crimes committed were infractions like a DUI or a drunken marine causing property damage. The most serious crime during this time was a murder committed on the mainland just outside the U.S. naval base at Yokosuka, southwest of Yokohama. This would have been a much bigger political headache for us had it been committed in Okinawa.

We were continuing to return base land as agreed in our long-term realignment plan. For example, one of the big bases in Okinawa returned a corridor for a cross-island highway that split the base in two. That land return allowed the Japanese government to construct a connector highway that alleviated traffic congestion for Okinawa civilians. They built two bridges over the highway to connect the two sides of the U.S. base. During my time on the desk, we continued good-faith negotiations on more land returns.

*KENNEDY: Were we concerned that the Chinese were meddling in this to weaken American presence?*

ZUMWALT: The Chinese would have been happy to drive a wedge between the United States and Japan, but I don't think they would have succeeded. China had begun to aggressively assert its territorial claim on five uninhabited islands in the East China Sea in a manner that made it harder for China to drive a wedge between Okinawa and Japan or Japan and the United States. Growing Japan-China tensions over the Senkaku Islands (which Japan regards as a part of Okinawa Prefecture) began to raise Japanese fears over China's long-term intentions in the East China Sea around Okinawa. This Chinese pressure on Japan has increased some Okinawans' recognition that a U.S. military presence was beneficial.

I was enjoying working on all these alliance management issues. I spent a lot of time visiting the Defense Department and in Tokyo on security negotiations and defense talks. The Defense Department even issued me a badge so I could enter and leave the Pentagon without an escort. Even though these issues did not appear on the front page of the *Washington Post*, they were important to sustaining our alliance.

One challenge I faced on the Japan desk was the inherent inequality in our relationship. Japan is the smaller and weaker partner in the alliance. Therefore, Japan tends to be anxious that the United States is not sensitive to Japanese interests. Their concern was not unfounded. The Nixon administration pressured Japan not to engage with the Mao government — then suddenly Henry Kissinger arrived in Beijing without alerting Japan to this major change in U.S. policy. Nixon's China visit was seen as a triumph by most Americans, but from Tokyo's perspective, it represented a betrayal of trust. The Japanese government compensates for this concern over "abandonment" by making great efforts to develop relationships around the U.S. government.

Those outreach efforts meant that I received many Japanese visitors at multiple levels. During my tour as Office Director, I engaged with five different sets of representatives from the Japanese government — the Ministry of Foreign Affairs officers covering political and economic issues; the representative of the renamed Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI); the defense attaché; and the senior Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) official based in New York. I made a habit of calling my Defense Department colleagues to coordinate and make sure we remained consistent. The Japanese were good diplomats, trying to elicit as much information as they could and exploring any interagency differences.

*KENNEDY: Was there much cooperation with the people dealing with China?*

ZUMWALT: During this period, China loomed as a major presence in our thinking. I came to learn that the China hands in the State Department are among the biggest fans of the U.S.-Japan security alliance because they understand the value of our alliances with Japan, Korea, and Australia. When I was on the Japan desk, I worked closely with the China desk and they were always happy to brief senior Japanese visitors on China developments. The China desk wanted to

see the Japanese on our side on these issues. The Japan-China regional competition resulted in more cooperation between our China and Japan desks.

During that era, Susan Thornton, who later became the acting assistant secretary of the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, was the deputy director on the China desk. I was frequently in her office to talk about an issue. The China desk was extremely busy then as China relations issues had become so politicized. I also talked with her frequently on personnel matters. Many of the people we wanted to recruit for jobs in the mission in Japan or on the Japan desk were also interested in jobs in China. At this time, China was the hot assignment for young, ambitious officers, much like Japan had been in the 1980s.

When I was Director from 2006 to 2008, we needed to work harder to recruit qualified officers to fill our future vacancies in Japan. Even though China had a huge mission with many staffing needs, they enjoyed a surplus of bidders. Susan was generous in coordinating with me on the assignment process. Sometimes she would tell me “We’re not going to take this person but she’s really good; you might contact her.” Susan would let the candidate know they were not the bureau choice for a job in China and I would call them later to say “We have some jobs in Japan you might be interested in.” We recruited several good people to our mission in Japan by coordinating in this manner. I also made an effort to recruit more female and African American officers to posts in Japan. Japanese posts had the reputation for being male-dominated (with some justification) and we needed to change that.

When I arrived on the Japan desk in 2006, Condoleezza Rice was the secretary of state and Donald Rumsfeld was the secretary of defense. I didn’t really understand the high-level interpersonal dynamics between them. On the desk, we needed to work with our Defense Department colleagues to organize the U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee (we colloquially referred to this as the “two-plus-two meeting”) in May 2007. This meeting brings together the secretaries of defense and state with the Japanese ministers of foreign affairs and defense. This meeting is important for its public messaging opportunity and for its show of determination to potential adversaries. Our Defense Department colleagues wanted to schedule these meetings annually because they served as action-forcing events for resolving bilateral disagreements.

My job was to schedule a meeting date with Secretary Rice that also worked for Secretary Rumsfeld and then to agree on an agenda. But I hadn’t realized that their personal relationship was tense. Secretary Rice made it clear that she was not going to meet at Donald Rumsfeld’s office in the Pentagon, so we would host at the State Department. The Defense Department agreed because it wanted to schedule the meeting more than State did. Most of the agenda was on issues where Defense had the lead — reaffirmation of support for our alliance realignment efforts, cooperation on ballistic missile defense, and clarification of each alliance partner’s roles and missions. We also assured the Japanese of our extended deterrence (the so-called nuclear umbrella). I had to insist that we include issues on the agenda where Secretary Rice could take the lead. So, the ministers also talked about North Korea’s nuclear program, China, Iran, and U.S.-Japan-Australia trilateral cooperation.

As an office director, I was often note-taker for senior meetings with Japanese visitors. The Japanese loved to meet Secretary Rice, but her interests lay elsewhere. Still, she would gamely agree to accept the meetings and follow our suggestions for the approach on various issues. Rice was very professional and extremely smart. However, many of her Japanese visitors were senior

politicians who were not as prepared on the substance as she was. There was always more demand from Japan for meetings than there was supply of Secretary Rice's time to take the meetings. Japanese visitors to Washington often would end up meeting with Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs R. Nicholas Burns who, no matter how busy, would find time for Japanese visitors. Burns was fantastic — he was not a Japan expert — but he would come prepared. Often, Burns would explain U.S. thinking on third-country issues such as China, Vietnam, Iran, the United Nations, or the Middle East peace process. The Japanese regarded Burns as someone who mattered and carried weight. In particular, I remember him spending a great deal of time explaining to Japan our thoughts on UN Security Council reform. Burns would explain that we supported Japan's quest for membership on the UN Security Council as a permanent member but he would then add that we opposed the latest Japanese proposal on how to achieve that objective.

*KENNEDY: So, your policy input mattered.*

ZUMWALT: We became very involved in one of Under Secretary Nick Burns' initiatives — the U.S.-Japan-Australia Trilateral Dialogue. The Australians took this process on with great gusto; they were interested in greater U.S.-Japan-Australia trilateral work. Burns was constantly pushing us to identify concrete actions to undertake together. Perhaps twice a year, he would meet his Australian and Japanese counterparts for a trilateral session at the vice-minister level. Burns' desire for concrete actions put pressure on the working level to deliver. My counterpart on the Australia desk, Steve McGann, and I began meeting monthly with the Japanese and Australian embassy political ministers to develop a trilateral action agenda.

Much of our trilateral focus was on Southeast Asia and on the Pacific Islands where Australia had major interests. For example, we invited Australia and Japan to send medical personnel to join U.S. Navy medical personnel on the hospital ship the *USNS Mercy* during its goodwill voyage to Southeast Asia, where the *Mercy* would visit the Philippines and some Pacific Island states to provide free medical services — operations for children with cleft palates and dental work. We mostly focused on non-controversial trilateral actions to develop habits of trilateral cooperation. We also organized initiatives with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on preventing criminals from traveling. This trilateral process allowed us to be creative. Once in a while, we would ask Burns to call a counterpart at another agency to move forward on an issue proposed by the Australians or Japanese. Burns' special assistant who covered Asia policy, Steve Fagin, became very integrated with our desk; he and I talked almost daily. I did not brief Nick Burns directly often, but he received our input through Steve. We enjoyed a collaborative relationship.

I had always respected my Australian counterparts when I had served abroad, but this was my first time working closely with their embassy in Washington. Their diplomats were top-notch. During my period on the Japan desk, I always wanted to go to Australia for a trilateral meeting but we could never find free time on Nick Burns' calendar. Instead, we would meet in New York on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) when the Australian and Japanese vice-ministers were in New York anyway. I think, during my time on the desk, the vice-ministers met once in Washington DC and once in Tokyo and twice in New York at the UN.

The EAP front office was happy that the Japan and Australia desks were managing this trilateral dialogue, but they did not become involved because they were too busy with North Korea issues. I had a lot of latitude, mostly working directly with Burns' staff and other agencies.

*KENNEDY: Were we sharing information or cooperating on matters dealing with, say, the Philippines or Indonesia or Vietnam?*

ZUMWALT: In this trilateral, Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands were the geographic focus. We did have a fair amount of collaborative work on issues like maritime domain awareness for Palau. We would coordinate with Australia and Japan to support their bilateral assistance programs by providing U.S. Coast Guard training to Palau.

*KENNEDY: In the Pacific, during your time on the desk, at one point a major policy was strategic denial — keeping the Russians from developing bases or close ties to islands.*

ZUMWALT: This remained true in the former UN trust territories like Palau or the Marshall Islands, but the focus shifted from Russia to China. I think concern about Russian involvement by that time was waning because of the end of the Cold War and the decline of Russia's presence in the Pacific Ocean. There was more of a concern about the potential for China to become involved. There was also concern about Chinese and Taiwanese poaching of fish and shellfish. Our maritime domain awareness programs aimed to help these fragile island states manage their ocean resources.

*KENNEDY: Did we get involved in patrolling for any of these islands?*

ZUMWALT: These nations lack much capability. They needed a coast guard capability, not a naval capability. The Japanese and Australians were more engaged than we were. The Australians and Japanese both provided some secondhand ships and training.

*KENNEDY: How were American interests in Japan represented in the NSC?*

ZUMWALT: In this era, Japan was not high on the U.S. foreign policy agenda. On the economic side, other agencies — Commerce, USTR, Treasury — remained interested in Japan. On the State and Defense department side, the major interest was managing our security alliance. There wasn't a crisis or reason for cabinet secretaries to get involved, so most issues were managed at lower levels at this time.

I very much enjoyed my tour as the Director of the Office of Japanese Affairs. I was there in a moment when the situation in Korea was taking so much bandwidth by the DAS and assistant secretary that it left me a lot of space to manage issues regarding an important relationship. The job also prepared me well for my onward assignment as DCM in Embassy Tokyo.

## Chapter XI

### Embassy Tokyo DCM, 2008–2011

MAY 4 AND MAY 18, 2018

*KENNEDY: Jim, I'll turn it over to you.*

ZUMWALT: After two years as Director of the Japan desk, I returned to Embassy Tokyo as Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM). I was fortunate in not having to worry about finding this onward assignment. In my farewell call on Ambassador Schieffer at the end of my previous tour in Embassy Tokyo in 2006, he'd asked me out of the blue if I would be interested in returning in two years as his DCM. While I was on home leave, I'd received a phone call from the State Department's Bureau of Human Resources (HR), saying that Ambassador Schieffer was dissatisfied with his list of DCM candidates and wanted me to apply. Over the phone, I gave HR the information they needed such as a list of references to prepare for my candidacy as DCM. So, I already knew at the start of my assignment to the Japan desk in 2006 that, in 2008, I would return to Tokyo as DCM. It was a “no-stress” assignment process!

*KENNEDY: I'd think that would be problematic because political changes...*

ZUMWALT: Ambassador Schieffer had come to Tokyo as ambassador and I had already worked for him for one year in Tokyo as his economic minister. The assignment process required that HR select a shortlist of qualified DCM candidates from which the ambassador could choose. When Ambassador Schieffer said he was dissatisfied with the list, he suggested to HR that my name be added. I was the right rank and met the language requirement, so HR agreed to add my name to the list. I understand that Ambassador Schieffer interviewed all five candidates on the list. I was told later that none of the other candidates had a Japan background and they would have needed to obtain a language waiver in order to be assigned as DCM in Tokyo. So I was not surprised when I discovered early in my tour on the Japan desk that I had been paneled to become the Embassy Tokyo DCM in 2008.

One concern with this arrangement was to find a job in Tokyo for Ann that did not violate the nepotism rules. The embassy identified a public diplomacy job for her as the Director of the Tokyo American Center. That position was a good fit for Ann because it met her skill set and, furthermore, that position could be separated completely from the DCM's authority. The embassy and HR worked out an arrangement where Ann worked directly for the ambassador so she was removed from my chain of command. Her office was in a separate building which helped with the optics. HR worked out a formal supervisory agreement that we both had to sign. Ann had to promise not to serve on any committees that I would supervise, such as those allocating housing, promoting equal employment opportunity, or reviewing employee evaluation reports (EERs), to avoid any appearance of nepotism.

I felt very prepared to return to Tokyo as DCM because I had been working on U.S.-Japan policy issues for the past six years during my tours in Embassy Tokyo's economic section and on the Japan desk at the State Department. My tour in Tokyo can be divided into three phases. The first six months, I worked for Ambassador Tom Schieffer; the next nine months, I was Chargé d'Affaires; and then the final two years, I worked as the deputy to Ambassador John Roos.

The first part of my assignment, Ambassador Tom Schieffer was serving his final half-year during the waning period of the George Bush administration. I was comfortable working as DCM for Tom because I knew him already and had served occasionally as his acting DCM during my previous tour in Japan. Tom Schieffer could be a challenging boss; he had high standards and expected good performance. If someone failed to measure up, he would let them know in private, but he would never embarrass anyone. He was a political ambassador who understood the role of an ambassador and the mission of the embassy. He worked well with the foreign service officers under his authority. He identified the star performers on his embassy team and engaged with them closely.

I gained rich experience about personnel management issues while working for Tom. One good example was employee evaluation reports. Foreign service officers spend much time and effort writing evaluations of employees because these evaluations form the basis for promotions. Most political ambassadors look at this process as a mystery and some see it as a waste of time. Tom Schieffer, however, took this employee evaluation process seriously. He saw it as a tool to motivate and manage his staff. He would compose his own EERs with no input from his staff. I must say his evaluation reports on me were extremely well-written and credible. Thanks to his recommendations, many of the senior officers at post received promotions or step increases. I was already a Minister-Counselor, but I was awarded performance pay thanks to his positive evaluation. I appreciated that Tom took our EER process seriously.

Tom Schieffer had already been ambassador for three years by the time I arrived, so he was no longer promoting new initiatives. He had great connections and did not need me to introduce him to people or brief him on Japanese politics. He remained focused on the business side of the embassy; he devoted attention to managing our budget, money saving steps, and administrative processes. I stayed out of his way as he dealt directly with the management counselor.

*KENNEDY: Was there a building and maintenance problem? Almost every time you come in as DCM, you discover the plumbing isn't working or you have to relocate or...*

ZUMWALT: Tokyo was fortunate because the embassy chancery had been constructed in the late 1970s and our housing compound had been built in the early 1980s, so the buildings were not falling apart. Yes, there were maintenance issues and it was expensive to maintain our facilities in a high-cost city, but our buildings were in better shape than many embassies.

However, our embassy staffing pattern had changed since our housing compound was designed in the 1970s. By 2008, we needed fewer large representational units, fewer one-bedroom units, and more family-sized units. The embassy had fewer senior positions and we no longer assigned office management specialists to small housing units as we had done when the compound opened in 1980. Our management counselor, Jim Forbes, had some clever ideas to address this mismatch between our housing stock and our staff housing needs. He proposed creating two medium-sized units out of one representational unit and one tiny unit. Our ambassador was interested in this proposal because Forbes made a strong business case — instead of having one vacant tiny unit used for TDY housing and one over-housed family, we could house two families after this renovation. I recall Tom calling Pat Kennedy to make the case for funding this project. He was willing to take on those management issues.

*KENNEDY: What was his background?*

ZUMWALT: Tom Schieffer had a business and legal background in the Texas oil and gas business. He had been the president of the Texas Rangers baseball club where George Bush had been one of the principal owners. President Bush selected Tom Schieffer to be ambassador to Australia because they had been business associates and were good friends. Tom then came to Japan because Rich Armitage, the deputy secretary of state, respected Tom's outstanding job in Australia. Embassy Tokyo was fortunate to be led by a confident, plugged-in political ambassador with prior experience, so we did not go through the "teething pains" some embassies experience with the arrival of an inexperienced political ambassador.

All the Japanese knew that Tom Schieffer was a personal friend of the president. They regarded him as a communications channel to U.S. top leadership. This meant that Embassy Tokyo maintained excellent connections to Japan's senior political and bureaucratic leadership. For example, every two or three weeks, Tom met with the Japanese Vice Foreign Minister to discuss an array of issues. He would bring along two officers to take notes throughout the lunch resulting in several reporting cables back to Washington.

Tom was self-confident and had his own views of the world but was not threatened by differing opinions, so he wanted his country team to speak up and explain their views. He might or might not agree, but he appreciated a full airing of issues. His closest colleagues on the country team were people who brought issues to the table.

One example was Tom's relationship with our experienced head of consular operations. Tokyo's Consul General Ed McKeon was on his third tour in Japan. Ed took upon himself the job of telling the ambassador about the morale of our entry-level officers (ELOs). If they were concerned about something or feeling underappreciated, Ed would explain their concerns to the ambassador. Tom started meeting with these officers once a month over dinner at his home, even bringing them from constituent posts to Tokyo for this monthly dinner. Tom would assign them a book to read and discuss it after dinner. The books he chose were mostly political biographies and his discussions focused on leadership qualities. The ELOs read biographies of Sam Houston, Douglas MacArthur, and Dwight Eisenhower. The ELOs appreciated the attention and the opportunity to engage with the ambassador. I appreciated that the ambassador paid for these dinners out of his own pocket.

Another example of Ambassador Schieffer's openness to intellectual discussion was our internal debate over his attendance at the annual memorial services at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This was an uncomfortable topic for both countries. Even though our relationship today is very friendly, Japan and the United States have radically different viewpoints about the decision to drop the atomic bomb on Japanese cities in 1945. We had agreed tacitly to avoid discussions that would expose our differences about this issue, but the subject remained awkward. Ambassador Mondale had been the first U.S. ambassador to visit the peace memorial in Hiroshima in the 1990s. His visit was low-profile and the embassy made efforts to minimize media coverage. Every subsequent U.S. ambassador had also made low-key visits to Hiroshima while avoiding a discussion about our different views on the historical legacy of the decision to drop atomic bombs.

One of our political officers, Joel Ehrendreich, began advocating for Ambassador Schieffer to visit Hiroshima on the date of the annual memorial ceremony itself. He pointed out that the U.S. ambassador's presence at this August 6 ceremony would represent an act of reconciliation between two former enemies who were now friends. He pointed out that we could treat this

ceremony as a memorial for the deceased so we could participate without apologizing for the decision. The city invited us every year; they wanted us to come. On the other hand, many opponents of Joel's proposal noted that U.S. politics would not accept this action and also feared that the Japanese would demand an apology.

Ambassador Schieffer was open to a discussion, so we organized a debate in the ambassador's conference room. We invited representatives from U.S. Forces Japan, from the embassy political and public diplomacy sections, and our Osaka-based consul general who covered Hiroshima. Joel was a lonely voice, saying "It's time for us to attend." Tom asked a lot of questions and considered the issue, but he finally decided that the timing (the end of the Bush administration) was not right for him to attend. But he did encourage Joel to write a dissent channel message making his case for why the U.S. ambassador should attend the ceremony in Hiroshima on August 6. Several years later, Joel won the State Department's Rivkin Award for intellectual courage and constructive dissent for his Hiroshima cable. Joel deserved this credit, but I must say that Ambassador Schieffer's openness to honest intellectual discussion provided the atmosphere where officers in the mission could engage in constructive dissent. This debate paved the way for the next U.S. Ambassador to Japan to participate in the memorial ceremony a few years later.

*KENNEDY: How did we look at Japanese military strength? Were we concerned what they might do with it? Were we concerned that they weren't doing anything with it?*

ZUMWALT: We were not concerned that Japan might become a threat to us. Rather, we wanted to work together even more closely as allies to manage the regional security threats we each faced. The degree of this desire to work closely varied depending on the branch of the military. The U.S. Navy was extremely interested in strengthening ties with the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force to take advantage of Japanese capabilities like anti-submarine warfare where the U.S. Navy was concerned about Chinese capabilities. The Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force was similarly motivated to work together with the U.S. Navy. The Air Force also wanted to enhance cooperation with the Japan Air Self-Defense Force. The Japan Ground Self-Defense Force did not enjoy the same close relationship with the U.S. Army because the latter's main mission in Japan was to provide logistical support to the U.S. Army in Korea. There is an army special forces unit in Okinawa but, to my knowledge, they were not engaged in alliance coordination. Now, this situation is changing because the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force has two new missions — missile defense where they can cooperate with the U.S., particularly on intelligence sharing, and outer island defense where they need to improve their amphibious capabilities. This latter mission means that the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force is becoming more interested in learning from the U.S. Marine Corps through more joint exercises and educational exchanges. However, when I was working on the Japan desk, the more important service-to-service ties were between the U.S. Navy and Air Force and their Japanese counterparts.

*KENNEDY: What was the feeling at the time about competition with China and our establishment in China? Japan was at one point number one and now China was weighing in. Was this a driving force in the embassy?*

ZUMWALT: Japan sometimes did see itself in competition with China for U.S. attention. This concern was tempered by the longtime Bush-Koizumi friendship which showcased the close ties between our two leaders. At the margins of every G7 (Group of Seven) meeting and UN General

Assembly meeting, they would meet. Back in 2006, Koizumi had told the president that he loved Elvis Presley. President Bush then invited the Japanese prime minister to visit Graceland. After a meeting in the White House, the two leaders boarded Air Force One and flew to Graceland together. They met with Elvis Presley's wife Priscilla and their daughter Lisa-Marie, who guided them through the mansion and talked about Elvis' role in American popular culture. The Japanese media reports featured a photo of Koizumi wearing a pair of Elvis' sunglasses and playing an air guitar. The Japanese public appreciated these photos showing our leaders having fun together.

Tom Schieffer accompanied Prime Minister Koizumi on the Graceland trip. President Bush made a show of his friendship with Tom, which further enhanced our ambassador's profile in Tokyo. Every time Tom returned to Washington, he was invited to spend a night in the White House with the president and Mrs. Bush. He wasn't merely the president's envoy, but also a close friend of his. And Laura Bush and Susanne Silber Schieffer were also good friends.

One good example of how an ambassador can drive the agenda was Schieffer's leadership on intelligence cooperation. Schieffer came to Tokyo from Australia where he experienced firsthand our robust intelligence cooperation arrangement. The close "Five Eyes" relationship — the UK, Australia, New Zealand, United States, and Canada — was very different from our intelligence relationship with Japan. He pushed our intelligence community to consider sharing more intelligence with Japan. He really drove the agenda. He asked our defense attaché to lead an interagency team together with U.S. Forces Japan to engage the Japanese on improving information security. He pushed both sides. At the end of his tour, he could take some satisfaction — we weren't sharing intelligence at the level of Australia, but there was more information-sharing between us because of his efforts.

Until this time, our security alliance was primarily bilateral in focus — we were there to protect Japan. Of course, we were also there to protect Korea, so we appreciated Japan providing us access to military bases. But I think starting with the Gulf War, our relationship began maturing toward more of a global alliance. The Japanese were already trying to figure out how to work together in a more global manner when the U.S. engagement in Afghanistan started. The Japanese deployed a Maritime Self-Defense Force tanker to the Indian Ocean to refuel coalition partner navies as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. Not only the American Navy, but French, British, and Pakistani ships also received fuel from the Japanese tanker.

This cooperation at a remote location marked a big step forward for our alliance. Our military began regarding Japan as a potential partner in regions of the world where we shared common interests. Organizing Japanese participation in that Indian Ocean operation took a lot of diplomacy and negotiations and close work with the U.S. military; it really was a remarkable feat.

*KENNEDY: What did you see as the major issues that you had to deal with?*

ZUMWALT: When Tom Schieffer was ambassador, important issues included intelligence cooperation, sustaining the Bush-Koizumi friendly relationship, coordinating policies toward North Korea and China, and garnering Japanese support for the Global War on Terrorism. The economic issues that had been so important previously had taken a back seat on our policy agenda. Yes, there were still issues like Japanese import restrictions and high tariffs on beef, but they weren't as politicized as they had been previously.

*KENNEDY: Rice was coming in?*

ZUMWALT: As part of the Uruguay Round deal, Japan agreed to buy a certain amount of U.S. rice, which they then stored in government warehouses. This rice was sometimes sold to food processors — companies making rice crackers or beer — or re-exported as foreign aid. On one hand, some American farmers were saying “This is outrageous; we would rather sell on the open market.” But the Japanese responded that, in a true open market, Japan would probably import less expensive Thai and Vietnamese rice. I think the U.S. rice millers themselves were not really pushing for further liberalization of Japan’s rice market because they appreciated that Japan would purchase a guaranteed set amount of American rice at an inflated price every year.

*KENNEDY: It's something that has been pointed out — Japanese government basically doesn't look upon consumers as being their number one priority.*

ZUMWALT: I think that's true.

Soon after I arrived, Ambassador Schieffer began making preparations for his departure from Japan. He made farewell calls and farewell speeches in October and November. He left the country at Christmas time, so I was Chargé for about three weeks in December.

On December 23, Ann and I were invited to a formal reception to celebrate the Emperor’s birthday at the Tokyo Imperial Palace. Although we expected this diplomatic event to be somewhat stilted and formal, it was a thrill to represent the United States before Japan’s head of state. We drove to the palace in the ambassador’s black Cadillac with the American flag flying in the breeze. Our driver had given the car a fresh coat of wax and it positively gleamed in the low winter sunlight.

The entire diplomatic corps had been invited and 174 diplomatic couples attended. I remember this number because my invitation included ticket number 173. At the time, I did not realize that this ticket established the protocol order of each guest. Their majesties, the Emperor and Empress, would first receive ambassadors in order of their date of presentation of credentials, then chargés in order of how long they had been serving as chargé in Japan, then heads of international organizations. We all assembled in a big hall, mostly ambassadors but many chargés also because so many ambassadors were away during the Christmas holiday. As Ann and I were talking to the other diplomats, the Imperial Household Agency steward began announcing “Ambassador from so-and-so and so-and-so, please come forward.” Five couples would line up and leave the room, then five more. Over the next hour, I began looking around the room where fewer and fewer diplomats remained as the steward called out more names to come forward. Ann and I suddenly realized that since I had been the U.S. Chargé d’Affaires for less than a week, we ranked near the bottom in this protocol order. Finally, just four couples remained, holding numbers 171–174. When we four pairs lined up, the only diplomat after me in protocol order was the chargé from the European Union. He was upset that he came after me, because Japan did not regard the EU as a country but rather as an international organization.

When our turn came to greet his Majesty the Emperor and the Empress, we entered the audience room where they were seated. After a steward called out our title and name — “The Chargé d’Affaires from the United States and Mrs. Ann Kambara” — we walked to a marked spot in the room and bowed deeply. The Emperor and Empress nodded. Then we took three steps walking backwards, still facing the Emperor and Empress, then bowed again and turned around and departed. After we had greeted the Emperor and Empress, we were escorted to another large

room with tables and chairs. They were laid out with elegant boxed lunches and sake cups. By the time we arrived at this room, many ambassadors were already finishing their lunch and were beginning to depart. Stewards were wrapping up the unfinished lunch boxes in elegant cloth *furoshiki* for people to take home. Ann and I decided to leave our lunch boxes untouched since it was a bit awkward to sit down and begin to eat when most guests were already leaving. We decided to wrap them up to give to our driver. He was thrilled to report later that he had taken these boxed meals home to his two boys who enjoyed the imperial repast. We did save the two sake cups with an imperial seal as a keepsake of this event.

After the Christmas–New Year’s holiday, the Schieffers returned to Japan for two weeks, then departed Japan for good. On January 19, I again became Chargé d’Affaires. Thus began the second phase of my tour in Tokyo, which lasted until the next ambassador arrived the following August.

Serving as chargé is totally different from working as a DCM. My first decision was to ask the public affairs officer, Robert Post, to serve as my acting DCM. Rob was the senior State Department officer in the mission and had rich experience with budgeting and program management. Rob was extremely capable and he proved his worth in the embassy front office.

Embassy Tokyo suffered from a series of employee-related incidents during this period. This is an unpleasant topic, but I think it’s worth acknowledging that sometimes embassy leadership must confront employees or family members who become involved in criminal activities. One incident was relatively minor — one Saturday, the duty officer called me to say that an employee had been arrested by the U.S. military police for shoplifting at the Yokota Air Force Base commissary. When I spoke to her, she was embarrassed and quite remorseful. Rob Post went to the base about ninety minutes away to escort her back to our housing compound. We worked out an arrangement with the military police where they would drop charges, but she would lose her base access privileges. We warned her that we would send her home with one more misstep. We handled the issue quietly, but resolving the issue took most of my Saturday and a period of time the following Monday.

A much more serious incident involved a young niece of an employee who came to Japan and was living with the employee on our housing compound. She was a beautiful tall redhead who aspired to be a model in Japan. She began living a carefree life visiting the nearby Roppongi bar scene several nights a week. One evening, however, she woke up in a strange hotel room where she had been drugged and raped. We engaged in intense discussions with the Japanese police on that issue. The person identified as the rapist was a foreigner who had already left the country, so the police told us there was little that could be done. The Japanese police were quite unsympathetic to the rape victim, I thought.

Another criminal incident was even more difficult to manage. One Sunday, a women’s shelter in Yokohama conveyed to our political assistant that a Yemeni woman claimed that she had fled the embassy housing compound after having been sexually abused by her employer. We recognized the name of this woman because she had arrived in Japan six months earlier as the maid of an embassy employee. We sent Assistant Regional Security Officer Rich Volpe to the shelter to investigate. Rich had been a policeman and had worked on sex crimes cases before joining the department. A few hours later, Rich reported that he had interviewed the victim and found her claims credible. Nobody would make up such a hideous story, he said. He reported that she told him that every day when the embassy employee left for work at the embassy, the employee’s

husband would rape her in her bedroom. Moreover, he reported, she was so distraught that she was threatening to commit suicide.

We immediately launched a full investigation. This victim had entered Japan on a diplomatic servant visa as an employee of one of our embassy communicators. The couple had brought her into Japan from their previous Foreign Service post in Sana'a, Yemen. Rich interviewed the employee and her husband separately. They claimed that she had run away for no reason, although they did admit that they held her passport. But Rich reported that some of their statements did not ring true. As part of his investigation, he called the regional security officer at Embassy Sana'a and was told that this employee's husband "had a drinking problem and was well-known for abusive behavior." Embassy Sana'a told us that the couple had employed a series of maids who left their employment claiming sexual abuse. But the RSO in Sana'a discontinued his investigation when the employee and her husband were evacuated from post and never reported the allegations to the State Department.

I also interviewed the employee. She denied everything, but at one point in the interview she asked me, "If I were to admit what my husband did, what would happen to me?" That seemed like an odd thing to say if she really believed her husband were innocent as she claimed. Later, her husband demanded to see me. I did not know him at all but agreed to see him in my office. He struck me as a bully. He asked me who was I going to believe, an African woman or a white man. He began shouting in my office so loudly that my secretary called the Marine Corps security guard who was on duty to escort him out of the chancery building.

I was horrified that the embassy had enabled this situation. After all, we were the ones who had obtained the diplomatic servant visa for our employee. We owed the victim a safe working environment on our housing compound and we had failed. I was determined that we would not pass on the problem to the next post as Embassy Sana'a had done. We carefully wrote up our report. We asked the Bureau of Diplomatic Security to launch a formal investigation, saying that we suspected a crime had been committed on our compound by an embassy employee spouse. DS responded that it had no jurisdiction since the alleged perpetrator was not an American citizen with a U.S. diplomatic passport (he was a retired Australian diplomatic communicator). DS encouraged us to ask the Japanese police to conduct an investigation instead.

I never considered this option for two reasons. I was concerned about the health of the victim who remained in a woman's shelter in Yokohama. I did not want to subject her to Japanese police interviews and I knew that the Japanese authorities would undoubtedly deport her since she had lost her status as a diplomatic servant when she ran away. I was also concerned, frankly, about the bad publicity if the Japanese police arrived onto our housing compound to launch a crime scene investigation. The Japanese police enjoy close relations with the media and titillating stories such as these usually leak into the public domain. I urged DS to reconsider but they stated that DS had no jurisdiction to investigate a crime committed by a third-country spouse, even if that spouse had entered the country on a diplomatic visa sponsored by the State Department.

As I was thinking about this problem, Management Counselor Jim Forbes and my wife Ann each proposed creative approaches that taken together could resolve this issue. Our management counselor pointed out the employee had never completed the required paperwork to employ a servant. The embassy required employers of servants to submit a signed labor contract to the embassy's human resources office. After this conversation with Jim, I called in the employee and, in the presence of Jim and her immediate boss, I informed her that she had a choice: either I

would send her home over this violation of policy or she could agree to a “voluntary curtailment” instead. She decided to curtail. In our report as to why she was going home, Jim carefully worded a very explicit message that laid out the allegations before we stated that Embassy Tokyo agreed to her request for immediate curtailment. This action got rid of the employee and her abusive spouse, as well as preventing her reassignment to another post, but it did not result in justice for the victim.

Ann devised a clever solution to that second problem. She suggested that we adjust our approach and treat this matter as a trafficking in persons case rather than as a rape case. The couple had brought her into the country on false pretenses and confiscated her passport to prevent her from leaving — two classic signs of sex trafficking. We contacted Lou C. deBaca, who was the State Department’s Ambassador-at-Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. We pointed out that if the U.S. government failed to take criminal actions against its own employees who were trafficking in persons, that would undermine his efforts to strengthen the international regime to combat this crime.

Lou immediately agreed to look into the case. He contacted the Department of Justice (DOJ) and they dispatched two sex crimes investigators to Tokyo to open an investigation. By this time, the employee and her husband had departed post, but the investigators interviewed a few people who had interacted with the victim and the victim herself. They decided to prosecute the couple and arranged for the victim to travel to the United States on a special visa under a witness protection program. This way, the victim could move to the United States where she would receive protection and psychological counseling.

Lou C. deBaca went further than this to ensure that, in the future, DCMs would receive more cooperation from DS if spouses of diplomats committed sex crimes abroad. I was told that he briefed Secretary of State Hillary Clinton about our case. About nine months later, the department issued an announcement that foreign spouses would be subject to the same requirements as employees and American spouses and, if they broke the law, they would be prosecuted. I give Lou deBaca a lot of credit for this needed change in State Department policy.

In the end, the DOJ decided not to prosecute the couple, but they did arrange for the victim to engage a pro bono attorney who filed a civil case against these two people. The civil court in Arlington ruled in the victim’s favor and awarded her damages, but the couple had already sold their assets in Virginia and fled to Australia. I was told the husband died soon thereafter. I never heard what happened to the former employee, but I assume she would be arrested if she ever tried to re-enter the United States. I always felt bad that the couple fled the country before the victim could see them brought to justice. At least the victim did receive counseling and social services to help her adjust to life in the United States.

At the end of the day we did the right thing, but this process was quite time-consuming. Resolving this case took five months of my time, not to mention the involvement of the acting DCM, the RSO, the embassy human resources officer, and the management counselor. We needed to do this, however, and I hope that in the future DCMs will receive more cooperation from DS thanks to the change in rules. I mention this case because sometimes employees do things that create time-consuming problems for a DCM.

*KENNEDY: It's important. Sometimes you run across things. When I was in Saigon, we had a man, a first mate on a barge in the middle of the Mekong delta, and he and the captain got into a*

*fight and the first mate killed the captain. The military somehow got the idea it was a crime on the high seas and took him in. Then later, they decided it wasn't and tried to turn him over to the Vietnamese authorities, who said "It's not our case." Eventually, he got a passport and went off.*

ZUMWALT: At least in this case, the State Department changed its procedures so similar incidents could be handled through State channels in the future. I really appreciated the management counselor; he was the one who drafted the cable explaining why the chargé had lost confidence in her, without making unproven claims that violated the employee's rights. Thanks to Ann, we found a way to take care of the victim also.

Most of my period as chargé was stimulating and exciting. One example was the visit of Secretary Clinton to Tokyo. The Japanese were nervous about our political transition and they sought reassurances that the new administration continued to value our security alliance. The Japanese government and political leaders lacked strong connections with President Obama because he had not spent much time on foreign policy issues. Moreover, the Japanese in those days were more comfortable with Republican U.S. presidents. President Clinton's term had been a rocky period in our relationship and the Jimmy Carter years were difficult because Carter threatened to shake the foundation of our alliance by pulling U.S. troops out of Korea. Whereas presidents like Reagan and Bush were seen as supportive of the alliance.

The Obama administration dispatched Secretary Clinton to Tokyo, Seoul, and Beijing in February 2009. This was her first foreign trip as secretary and she came to Tokyo first. She recognized the important public messaging aspect to her visit. Of course, her policy meetings were important, but we also spent a lot of time planning events to reinforce our messages about our strong alliance and enduring relationship. Visual images were important. For example, upon arrival at the airport, we arranged for her to meet the Japanese Special Olympics team who had just returned from the 2009 Special Olympics Winter Games in Idaho. The Japanese athletes and their parents were delighted to pose for photos with the secretary in their brief meeting. The next morning, the Japanese public awoke to images of the secretary congratulating the Japanese Special Olympics athletes who proudly displayed their medals for her.

Very early the next morning, I accompanied Secretary Clinton to visit the Meiji Shrine. This is a beautiful site in the middle of Tokyo, but her visit was not for tourism. Rather, we wanted the Japanese public to see her enjoying a famous cultural site in Japan. The mid-morning television news shows broadcast clips of Secretary Clinton meeting Shinto priests and taking off her shoes to go inside the shrine. The Japanese public appreciated this gesture of respect for Japanese tradition and culture. When she emerged from the shrine, totally by chance, a Japanese couple had arrived for their baby to be blessed. Secretary Clinton rushed over to greet the couple and hold the baby. The newspapers ran this photo of her gazing adoringly at this Japanese baby sleeping in her arms. We later invited the family to visit the embassy to receive a photo the secretary had autographed and with their permission, we posted their visit on our social media. A year later, we invited them back to celebrate their baby's first birthday.

Most of the rest of Secretary Clinton's visit was spent meeting with Japanese leaders. She met Prime Minister Aso, had a meeting and working lunch with Foreign Minister Nakasone, and met with the major powerbroker of the opposition party, Ichiro Ozawa. She also was invited to an informal tea with the Emperor and Empress at the Tokyo Imperial Palace. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was most nervous about the tea with the Emperor and Empress because the protocol was unusual. The Emperor as head of state normally does not meet with cabinet

secretaries. However, I had the impression that the Emperor himself wanted to meet Secretary Clinton. Certainly, the Japanese public saw this visit as symbolizing our special partnership.

I was most impressed by Secretary Clinton's mastery of the issues in her policy meetings. She had clearly studied the voluminous briefing materials that the State Department had provided. We had reviewed the agenda with the MOFA in advance — we told them what the secretary would raise and they in turn told us what they would raise. In the meeting with Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone (the son of former Prime Minister Nakasone), I was sitting to her right. I began mentally checking off the various topics we had asked her to raise — I think there were thirteen or fourteen issues. Towards the end of the meeting, she had covered all of the issues save one. She turned to me and said, "Jim, is there anything else to discuss?" I replied with one word that served as a memory jogger for her and she immediately pivoted to that remaining topic. Her management of that meeting was an amazing display of intellectual rigor and careful preparation.

When we heard that Secretary Clinton would visit Tokyo, we recommended that she meet with Megumi Yokota's parents. Yokota had been abducted by North Korean agents when she was only thirteen years old. For many years, her parents didn't even know what happened after she disappeared. Mrs. Yokota worked tirelessly for her daughter's return since that abduction. There was tremendous sympathy for Mrs. Yokota as a sincere, grieving mother who had persevered despite the loss of her child. Our previous ambassador had developed a good relationship with the Yokotas, so we could assure the secretary that this would be a positive meeting.

We met in my office in the embassy, away from the media. Present were Secretary Clinton, Mr. and Mrs. Yokota, me, and an interpreter. When Mrs. Yokota entered, the secretary greeted her warmly and invited her to sit down. Mrs. Yokota placed a framed black-and-white photograph of Megumi in her school uniform on the nearby coffee table. Secretary Clinton picked up the photo and asked Mrs. Yokota about her daughter. Mrs. Yokota spent most of the meeting relaying stories about her daughter to the secretary of state. Secretary Clinton listened sympathetically and told Mrs. Yokota that, as a mother, she could not imagine the pain Mrs. Yokota must have felt over the years. At the end of the meeting, she promised Mrs. Yokota that the United States would not forget the fate of the Japanese abductees and we would work with Japan for their return. There was no media at this meeting, but as Mrs. Yokota left the U.S. embassy, she was mobbed by Japanese reporters waiting outside our main gate. Ms. Yokota told them that Secretary Clinton had understood the importance of the abductee issue for Japanese parents. We received positive publicity from this meeting.

We also arranged for a meet-and-greet for our embassy staff. I escorted the secretary into our packed auditorium and, after a brief introduction, the staff gave her a rousing cheer. I could see that she was energized by this warm welcome. Her staff had agreed that she would recognize one of our local staff who was about to retire at age seventy after fifty years of service at the embassy. When she asked him to come to the stage to receive an award, he told her that he had not missed a single day of work in his fifty-year career. I was pleased that the secretary could see the dedication of our incredible Japanese staff. The secretary was extremely patient, posing with embassy children and then working a rope line to shake hands with our employees, both Japanese and American. Her visit boosted embassy morale.

The most difficult meeting to arrange for her visit, and the least successful one, was with Ichiro Ozawa, the powerbroker in the major Japanese opposition party, called the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ). Ozawa was well-known to the embassy. He had been a protégé of former Prime

Minister Kakuei Tanaka and a force within the ruling Liberal Democratic Party for decades. A generation of embassy political officers had been meeting him since the 1970s and Ambassador Armacost had worked with him closely to generate political support for the Japanese financial contributions in the Gulf War. About ten years earlier, Ozawa had left the ruling party after losing out in a power struggle and taken many former ruling party members with him to form a new political party. Later, Ozawa formed a coalition between this party and several center-left parties. The embassy political section had been reporting that this unified opposition party was likely to win a majority in the upcoming parliamentary elections. Therefore, it was important for the secretary to meet Ozawa and we hoped to hear some words of reassurance that the newly formed DPJ valued our bilateral relationship.

I still do not understand why Ozawa made scheduling this meeting so difficult. Perhaps he was trying to work out the internal dynamics of his new party, which did include politicians who were more skeptical of the U.S.-Japan relationship. Perhaps he had soured on the United States after leaving the LDP. In any case, Ozawa only agreed at the last minute to meet us at nine p.m. When we entered the private room at the Hotel Okura Tokyo, much to my surprise he had not yet arrived even though he was to be the meeting host. Secretary Clinton must have been exhausted after a very long day that had started at seven a.m. (I know I was), but she was patient when I explained to her that Ozawa was late. When Ozawa arrived, it was not clear if he would shake her hand. The media was present to record this awkward moment. Clinton and Ozawa just did not hit it off. We had hoped to hear from Ozawa some statements of support for our relationship and for the security alliance, but he did not provide them. I left that meeting with a mounting concern that our relationship would face difficult times when the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) came to power in Japan.

Except for that final meeting, Secretary Clinton's visit to Tokyo was a huge success. The Japanese ruling party leadership and the senior bureaucrats were reassured that the Obama administration valued our partnership. For our part, they assured us that Japan would remain a stalwart security ally and diplomatic partner as we faced increasing challenges in other parts of the world.

While Secretary Clinton was in Tokyo, the White House announced that President Obama would host Prime Minister Taro Aso to a meeting in the White House. This announcement reinforced the message that the new Obama administration was committed to a strong relationship with Japan. Prime Minister Aso was the first foreign leader to meet with President Obama in the White House. It was a very short meeting but the photo of the two leaders in the Oval Office reassured the Japanese of continuity in our partnership.

Secretary Clinton transited Tokyo twice during my tenure as chargé on trips to other countries in Asia. Yokota Air Force Base, located in the suburbs of the city, was a convenient airfield for refueling the secretary's airplane on her way home from other stops in Asia. The secretary's office was always very gracious when they informed me of her transit, saying that there was no need for anyone from the embassy to meet her. I thought that I should go to Yokota anyway as a mark of respect.

One of her transits coincided with the evening of Embassy Tokyo's annual Marine Corps Ball. After giving a short speech to 250 guests during the ceremonial portion of the ball, just as dinner was being served, I left for the one-hour drive out to Yokota Air Force Base. With no time to change clothes, I waited in my tuxedo in the VIP lounge of the airbase terminal for Secretary

Clinton's plane to arrive. When it landed, her deputy chief of staff, Jake Sullivan, got off the plane and met me in the VIP lounge. Jake invited me onto the airplane to greet Secretary Clinton. The secretary was dressed in comfortable clothes for the long trans-Pacific flight ahead, so we presented quite the contrast. The secretary picked up on this right away and said, "Jim, you needn't have dressed up just for me!" We spoke for a few minutes and I appreciated the opportunity to brief her about the important role Japan played in supporting U.S. diplomatic objectives around the world.

At the encouragement of the public affairs staff, I began to write a biweekly blog. I would write a two- or three-paragraph story with a photo about some aspect of living in Japan. I might write about attending a temple festival, learning a new Japanese word, eating some Japanese food, or walking in a Tokyo park. My most popular blog item was about enjoying Japanese shaved ice on a hot summer day. That blog was picked up by an *Asahi Shimbun* columnist who mentioned my blog in his front-page column. The public seemed to enjoy reading about Japan as seen through a foreigner's eyes and my blog received over one million hits during its two-year life.

Another nice memory from my time as chargé was an event set up by our public affairs section. Although it had been eight years since the September 11 terrorist attacks, we had been marking this anniversary every year with a commemorative event. That year, we organized a Buddhist religious service at my house for families of the 24 Japanese who had been killed on that day in New York. We invited a Buddhist priest and set up a small altar in my living room with rows of chairs for our guests. We also invited representatives from the Tokyo Fire Department since they had sent firefighters to New York to commemorate their American counterparts who had been killed. This event was not open to the media, but we did take advantage of social media to convey the message that the 9/11 attack had been an assault on the entire world. It reminded Japanese that we were all victims of terrorism, so our response together was important.

*KENNEDY: Can you explain?*

ZUMWALT: Most of the Japanese who had been killed were employees of a Japanese bank whose New York office was located in the World Trade Center. We asked the bank to inform family members of our service. I think we hosted about three or four families, including one girl who had been a junior high school student on that fateful day. She told me that on that morning, when she kissed her father goodbye, she never dreamed she wouldn't see him again. She felt a little guilty because she was excited to meet her friends at school and she had rushed out without a long goodbye. It was quite moving to hear these family stories.

*KENNEDY: Over a stretch of time, did you see a change in how the Japanese talked about the Great Pacific War?*

ZUMWALT: Yes. For Japanese my generation and younger, the war was not prominent in their thinking about U.S.-Japan relations. But our parents' generation was different. When President George H.W. Bush had visited Tokyo, he commented in a speech that former enemies were now friends. His remarks were made in a friendly way, but my generation would not refer to the war, which had become a historical event and not a personal recollection.

There is still disagreement over history. We have a different assessment of the decision to use the atomic bomb in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. For the World War II generation of Americans, President Truman made the right decision. They believe that the atomic bombs shortened the war and saved American lives. I remember when I was having that discussion with my uncle, Elmo

Zumwalt, Sr., who had been in the navy during World War II. He said, "Atomic bombs were just a weapon like any other weapon. Of course, we needed to use them. Their use saved lives." My father had told me that he felt relief when he heard about the atomic bombings because that meant that he would not need to risk his life in an invasion of Japan. In contrast, many Japanese have the view that nuclear weapons are inhumane, indiscriminate, large-scale, and not proportionate, so there can be no moral justification for using a nuclear weapon on civilian targets.

The Japanese welcomed President Obama's speech in Prague about his desire to rid the world of nuclear weapons. With this new political backdrop, we at Embassy Tokyo began advocating that, as Chargé d'Affaires, I should attend the August 6 ceremony at Hiroshima. We said that the Japanese would regard this act as an important step toward reconciliation and that we could arrange for a visit without making an apology for the decision to drop the bombs. We drew upon Joel Ehrendreich's dissent channel cable from 2008 in making our arguments. The State Department, but especially the White House, was uncomfortable with this idea, so it didn't come to fruition.

*KENNEDY: It's still an issue. I was seventeen years old when they dropped the bomb, getting ready to go into the military. We knew there would be horrible casualties, both Japanese and American. In a way, it probably saved lives.*

ZUMWALT: That's certainly what I was taught in history class. The view in Japan is very different. But both sides now believed that we should put aside our different interpretations of history and acknowledge that we are now friends.

*KENNEDY: Did they ever bring up the bombing of Tokyo? We killed more people there.*

ZUMWALT: Of course. The bombings of Japanese cities were horrible. There were commemorations for the victims of these events too. But the Japanese were the first to bomb civilians in Shanghai using conventional weapons. So, Japan did not occupy the moral high ground when it comes to use of conventional weapons against civilian targets. I don't recall hearing Japanese saying you should not have bombed Tokyo because it was inhumane. The atomic bomb was in their view different. I accept your point — it was not so different in numbers of people killed. But nonetheless, President Truman's decision to drop the bomb is unique in history whereas indiscriminate bombing of civilian targets with conventional weapons, unfortunately, is not.

Tom Schieffer did a great job in showcasing U.S.-Japan cultural ties, but he seemed to be uncomfortable visiting Ise Shrine, one of the two main Shinto shrines in Japan. Frequently, the shrine had invited the U.S. ambassador to come visit but Tom never went. Fairly soon after he left, I asked the political section to inform the shrine that, if they would invite me as chargé, that Ann and I would visit.

Soon, we received an invitation. Ann and I traveled to Ise and they were thrilled to host us. This shrine is in Osaka's consular district, so I asked the consul general to accompany me. We enjoyed a very nice tour of the shrine. They explained the significance of their cycles of destroying and rebuilding the main structures and we signed the guestbook after many other ambassadors. There was positive Japanese media coverage of our demonstration of respect for Japanese culture. I did not ask Washington for permission in advance; I did not believe I needed Washington's permission because my visit promoted our mission to strengthen bilateral ties.

However, I did not want them to say “no,” so I did not ask in advance. Later, Ambassador Roos and his wife Susie also visited the Ise Shrine; the logjam had been broken.

Ann and I have one very special memory from the period when I was Chargé d’Affaires. In July 2009, His Majesty the Emperor and the Empress traveled on an eleven-day state visit to Canada. On his way home, His Majesty wanted to visit Hawaii. The Emperor had first visited Hawaii when he was the Crown Prince, on his way to studies at Oxford University. I was told that he had fond memories of the warm welcome he had received in Hawaii as a young man.

The State of Hawaii and City of Honolulu were thrilled with this visit. They rolled out the red carpet. I had not planned to go, but the MOFA made clear that when the head of state of Japan arrived, protocol demanded that the ambassador (or in my case, the chargé) be present to greet them.

Their Majesties spent three days in Hawaii — two in Honolulu and one on the Big Island. Because the imperial couple was quite elderly, the Japanese government organized a relaxed three-day visit. The city and state went all out; the imperial visit represented an excellent opportunity to promote Hawaii as a tourism destination in Japan.

Ann and I stood on the receiving line at Hickam Air Force Base along with the governor of Hawaii, the mayor of Honolulu, the Pacific Commander, and the Japanese Ambassador to the United States when their airplane landed from Canada. After a brief arrival ceremony, we traveled by motorcade to Kapiolani Park, where they had planted a tree during a 1960 visit. For the first few miles until our motorcade entered the freeway and for the last three miles through Honolulu, the streets were lined with people waving Japanese and American flags as we rode past.

At Kapiolani Park, there was a brief ceremony at the tree. In preparing for this ceremony, we faced one puzzle — nobody knew which umbrella tree the imperial couple had actually planted. The city engaged a horticulturist who identified a tree that was fifty years old for the ceremony. It could well have been the tree that the imperial couple had planted in 1960. They took a nice photo in front of this beautiful tree for the local papers and television.

The following day, Their Majesties visited the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific at the Punchbowl Crater to honor American soldiers who had made the ultimate sacrifice. This is a dramatic setting. We stood at the bottom of a volcanic cauldron looking up at neat rows of white gravestones on the sloping lawn. A military band played the Japanese and American national anthems. The band completed “Kimigayo,” the Japanese national anthem, but partway through their rendition of the “Star Spangled Banner,” the skies opened up and it began to pour. I was standing near the back and we could scramble under the roof of a gazebo, but the Emperor and Empress did not move; they stood at attention, getting completely soaked. Her Majesty was wearing a nice dress and a hat that were completely ruined, but they remained at attention until the national anthem was finished. Then they laid a wet wreath at the monument, returned to their car, and departed. After seeing this display of grace and dignity in an awkward moment, I appreciated even more the degree to which the imperial family is a diplomatic asset for Japan.

Later, Governor Linda Lingle hosted a small lunch for Their Majesties in the Iolani Palace. I’d seen the palace from the outside, but never the interior; it was a memorable event. Guests included Pacific Commander Admiral Timothy J. Keating and Ms. Wanda Lee Keating, Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann, Japanese Ambassador Ichiro Fujisaki and Mrs. Yoriko

Fujisaki, a few members of the imperial entourage, Ann, and me. Governor Lingle was a gracious hostess and her toast lauded the U.S.-Japan friendship and the special place of Japan in Hawaii's history. I still have the picture of the lunch that Governor Lingle signed.

The Japanese embassy also arranged for Assistant Secretary Kurt Campbell and me to pay a call on His Majesty at the Japanese consul general's residence. Kurt brought them a jar of homemade honey from his farm in Virginia.

*KENNEDY: You hear about the stilted language of the court. Was that at all apparent?*

ZUMWALT: Not at this meeting. For one thing, Kurt Campbell didn't speak Japanese, so that conversation was in English. His Majesty speaks fairly good English; he had studied in Oxford for a year or two. I was surprised that Her Majesty seemed quite comfortable conversing in English also, despite never having lived abroad.

*KENNEDY: There was an American teacher, I think. Windows for the Crown Prince?*

ZUMWALT: I think you're right. His English was a bit rusty, but we were not conversing about challenging subjects. We welcomed them to Hawaii and asked what they thought about the state.

Japan's ambassador, Ichiro Fujisaki, had come out from Washington. He was incredibly nervous; if something had gone wrong, it would have been his embassy at fault. I was fairly relaxed because I thought the visit would go well thanks to all of the preparations by the State of Hawaii, the City of Honolulu, and the Japanese Consulate General. I saw that the Emperor and Empress were modest, not demanding. They could finally relax in Hawaii after a long official visit to Canada. I thought that the best way to welcome them was to be relaxed ourselves.

*KENNEDY: The court reminds me of what I've heard of the Austro-Hungarian court. Or Buckingham Palace — the courtiers can take over.*

ZUMWALT: Exactly. The imperial couple wanted to go to the Big Island to experience something different from Honolulu. MOFA wanted Ann and me to accompany the entourage, so we were invited to board the Japanese government's airplane with them. A Japanese government airplane has a similar atmosphere to a U.S. government plane. Many little bees buzz around the queen bee. I was sitting in the very back, observing how Japanese staff behaved just like American staff around a very senior presence.

After we arrived in Kona, the entourage drove to Kamuela to visit the Parker Ranch, which is about 2,600 feet above sea level. They served a nice barbecue lunch and some Hawaiian paniolos (cowboys) demonstrated cow-roping, which people don't really expect in Hawaii. That was followed by a meeting with representatives from the Big Island's Japanese American community. There were perhaps sixty people in the room, mostly elderly, many born in Japan. As we were waiting for Their Majesties to enter, I started conversing with a woman in a wheelchair. She told me she was 102 years old and she said, "This is the happiest day of my life!" She was so excited. The Emperor and Empress must have been tired; they were not young and there were many people to greet. Yet Their Majesties were gracious and attentive to each person. They recognized their responsibility to represent Japan.

A month later, Ann and I received an invitation to the palace for a thank-you party; Their Majesties wanted to thank the people that made their visit to Hawaii successful. The people invited included the flight attendants and pilots from the airplane, staff from Haneda Airport,

police, and the working-level foreign ministry officials who performed the hard work organizing the visit; we were probably the most senior people invited. Then His and Her Majesty came out and chatted with every single person, probably about a hundred people in total. They wanted to show appreciation for the work supporting their visit. Of course, the airline crew and others were thrilled to be included in this event.

Soon thereafter, a new ambassador arrived in Tokyo. I did see the Emperor one last time when Ambassador Roos presented his credentials at the beginning of his tour in 2009.

Like many embassies around the world, we thought we would take advantage of the presidential election in November 2008 to showcase our democracy. We held a large party for Japanese students at the embassy. We converted our auditorium to a campaign headquarters with balloons, bunting, flags, and ribbons and set up huge screens with live television feeds from four U.S. news networks. We took advantage of the time difference so we could host this event in the morning as the U.S. evening news shows broadcast the election results. Our public affairs section also organized a quiz game, provided handouts about the election system and electoral college, and served snacks. We had a mock vote as well, where we asked which candidate they preferred and then announced the results, which were overwhelmingly in favor of Barack Obama.

A few days before the election, many African ambassadors called us to ask if they could watch the election returns with us. We decided to invite them to join this party; perhaps twelve ambassadors from African countries joined us. As the students were circulating around the various booths trying to find the answers to the quiz questions so they could win a prize, these African ambassadors were glued to the television as results from different states were being announced. Finally, when CNN and the other stations called the election for Barack Obama, several of the ambassadors began to cry. One told me that finally the United States had lived up to its ideals. Another told me, "I always wanted to believe the United States could do this, but I didn't quite trust that it would." It was a touching moment to share with foreign friends.

In June 2009, when President Obama made a speech in Cairo about Islam and our relationship, we hosted ambassadors from Muslim countries to watch the speech at my house. We also invited some imams from local mosques. My living room was filled with about forty ambassadors and twenty or so Muslim religious and community leaders. I asked the Egyptian ambassador, a good friend, if he would be our co-host because President Obama was speaking in Cairo. He was so excited to co-host the event and made a really gracious speech at the beginning. The ambassador from Iraq, an American citizen who made his home in Detroit, also made brief remarks about Muslims in America. Another guest was the Palestinian ambassador, also a U.S. citizen.

During my period as Chargé d'Affaires, I worked hard on one consular issue. Japan was not yet a signatory to the convention on international parental child abduction, which we referred to as the Hague Convention. This is an agreement among countries to deal with international child custody issues. The agreement states that if a parent abducts a child to his or her country, the child should be returned to his or her country of habitual residence where the courts will decide on custody issues based upon the best interests of the child. The Japanese had not signed this convention because the vast majority of cases involving Japanese citizens were Japanese women who decided to leave their husbands in foreign countries and take their children with them back to Japan. In Japan, the mother generally obtains custody of the children in divorce cases.

Some people in Japan were skeptical of the Hague Convention, but Japan is a strong supporter of the multilateral system and the United Nations. Our strategy was to make Japan uncomfortable

with being an international outlier, while avoiding turning this into a bilateral issue. We worked carefully with other countries, especially Canada, France, and the European Union.

As an aside, the head of Embassy Tokyo's American Citizen Services, Hugues Ogier, was a naturalized American originally from France and his Canadian counterpart was from Quebec. I listened in on a few of their strategy sessions in rapid-fire French. While the Canadian-French-American embassy partnership on this issue made sense, the personal chemistry between these three native French speakers certainly helped further our cooperation.

The Canadian embassy took the lead in organizing joint demarches and we would accompany them. In my private meetings with MOFA, they acknowledged that Japan needed to sign this convention because nearly every European country had. But because of resistance in their own government, it took time. We also met frequently with an active group of left-behind American parents, mostly fathers. They were quite critical of us for insufficient effort because progress was slow, so managing their expectations was challenging. This issue was high on our agenda; it took a while, but we did get it done.

*KENNEDY: In this time, did any particular things land on your desk?*

ZUMWALT: Yes. But a chargé lacks the gravitas of a presidentially appointed ambassador. There's something special about a representative appointed by the president, especially in a country as protocol-conscious as Japan. Previous ambassadors had been distinguished politicians like Tom Foley, Walter Mondale, Howard Baker, and Mike Mansfield. Edwin Reischauer is not a household name in the United States, but he was famous in Japan as the first Japanese-speaking U.S. ambassador and an erudite professor from Harvard University.

During this hiatus between ambassadors, I recognized it was not desirable for the United States to be represented by a chargé for an extended period. Of course, I felt privileged to have the opportunity to gain these insights into Japan as Chargé d'Affaires. If I had an important demarche to deliver, I could arrange to call on the foreign minister, but generally I met the vice-ministers, who were senior bureaucrats at their ministries. We got business done and the relationship remained sound, but I did not have the same access to senior levels of Japanese politicians and decision-makers that a political appointee ambassador would enjoy.

Therefore, I was eager to complete the transition process when I finally received instructions to request agrément for our new ambassador, John Roos. The relationship between an ambassador and DCM is so important. Prior to his arrival in Japan, I flew from Tokyo to San Francisco over a weekend to spend two days at John's home, briefing him and getting to know John and his wife, Susie. This extended meeting facilitated our communications by telephone and email over the next few weeks until they could finally arrive at post. By the time I greeted John and Susie when their airplane landed in Tokyo, we already knew each other, my having visited his home and become acquainted with his dog. This made the transition a bit easier.

The challenge of managing the embassy leadership transition was compounded by Japanese domestic politics. Just after John Roos' arrival in Japan, Japanese voters elected a new government that was less experienced in managing Japan's relationship with the United States and more skeptical of our security alliance.

The embassy had already predicted that the DPJ would soon come to power. Even though the United States enjoyed positive ties with many of these opposition politicians, we feared that their

election could pose problems for our relationship so we worked to enhance our ties with senior leaders of this opposition party.

In the months prior to Roos' arrival, I had spent much time meeting with heads of various DPJ factions. I hosted one-on-one dinners for Yukio Hatoyama, Katsuya Okada, Seiji Maehara, and Naoto Kan at my residence. These party leaders were eager to meet with us because they feared Japanese voters might turn against them if they appeared to be an anti-American party. They wanted to neutralize that issue and were happy to be seen coming to the American chargé's house. In these private events, all four said the right things about continuity of Japan's policies regarding our security alliance. Maehara seemed to have the most conviction about our security alliance. But we remained concerned about the upcoming change of ruling party. I realized that one of the major tasks for our new ambassador would be to establish good relations with the new government leaders. The timing was unfortunate because our ambassador would be new himself, but he would need to reach out and develop relationships soon after arriving.

One interesting note was that the DCM residence in Tokyo had been the residence of the founder of the Bridgestone Tire company, Shojiro Ishibashi, before the war. Ishibashi was the maternal grandfather of DPJ leader Yukio Hatoyama and his mother had been raised in our home. Hatoyama was quite interested in his personal connection to my residence, so I gave him a tour of the upstairs and the garden of the house so he could see where his mother had grown up.

*KENNEDY: Could you feel the political change was coming?*

ZUMWALT: Everyone could read the opinion polls. After Koizumi stepped down from office, Japan had been led by three LDP prime ministers in quick succession — Yasuo Fukuda, Shinichiro Abe, and Taro Aso. None were popular. The voters wanted change.

*KENNEDY: How would you describe the LDP and the DPJ?*

ZUMWALT: The Liberal Democratic Party was created by the merger of two conservative parties in 1955, the Liberal Party and the Democratic Party. This party was never cohesive — factions were continuously jockeying for power. Generally speaking, there was a more nationalistic group that was pro-defense; current prime minister Abe's father was in that group. A more dovish faction valued the limitations on Japan's ability to defend itself; they were willing to see the U.S. assume more responsibility for defense and to focus Japanese government resources on economic growth. The opposition socialist and communist parties were slowly atrophying. One reason the LDP stayed in power so long was the political opposition had been so weak.

The newly formed Democratic Party of Japan was a coalition of LDP defectors and moderate elements of two of the opposition parties. They too were riddled with factions, but united in their desire to unseat the LDP and assume power.

*KENNEDY: Were there any issues between Japan and the United States that were particularly irritating to one or the other?*

ZUMWALT: Because a Republican administration was leaving and the Obama administration was settling in, 2009 was not an active period in U.S. trade diplomacy. While I was chargé, the embassy was essentially in a caretaker position. We managed issues that arose and invested in strengthening our people-to-people ties, but we did not launch new policy initiatives. We

provided recommendations to the new U.S. administration but were awaiting direction for new policy initiatives.

*KENNEDY: During this transition, how did China fit in?*

ZUMWALT: The Chinese were probably also wondering about our new government. There was no big challenge to the alliance; the Chinese didn't probe our alliance at this time. China was not taking provocative actions to test the alliance mainly because their main focus was improving their own relations with the new administration.

Even in a big embassy like Tokyo with many government agencies and senior people, a different ambassador makes a huge difference. Our previous ambassador had been a personal friend of President Bush; he was business-focused and interested in motivating our staff.

*KENNEDY: What was Ambassador Roos like?*

ZUMWALT: The new ambassador came from Silicon Valley, where he'd run a large law firm. John was used to working with extremely ambitious, hardworking, self-starting entrepreneurs. He was tolerant of risk-taking and willing to accept that some risks result in mistakes.

When the White House announced the selection of John Roos, we had never heard of him. He was not a Japan expert or someone who had been involved with U.S.-Japan commercial issues and he had never previously visited Japan. We found an article in the June 2008 issue of *The Atlantic* written about candidate Barack Obama's fundraisers. One of the prominent photos was of John Roos, then Obama's Northern California finance chair. Later, I learned that he had been involved in American Democratic Party politics for years. Roos had been the CEO (chief executive officer) of the Palo Alto law firm Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati, the largest IT law firm in the United States. He was very connected to the big IT companies like Apple, Google, Facebook, and YouTube, and also to the venture capital firms there.

My role was to smooth Ambassador Roos' arrival and then to maximize his strengths and make up for his shortcomings. I needed to step back as the mission leader so Ambassador Roos could fill out this role in his own style. This required some adjustments. John Roos was less interested in management details than his predecessor, so I became more involved in overseeing the management section. We had an experienced management counselor, Jim Forbes, so this new responsibility was not too difficult. Ambassador Roos was uninterested in our EER process. He said, "We don't do evaluations in my company. We give bonuses to high performers, fire low performers, and move on."

I had to explain that the Foreign Service and civil service did not function like the private sector. I explained that, in government, one could not fire low-performing employees or award large bonuses to the superstars. Our human resources practice was to help people improve through clearly defining expectations in a written job description, providing training and mentoring, and then offering written feedback on performance.

Understandably, John was sometimes frustrated with the government personnel system because he could not hire people to fill the skills he needed. Under Secretary for Management Pat Kennedy did allocate one position, a chief of staff, that he could hire. Other than that, John Roos was at the mercy of not only the State Department, but other government personnel systems who made the decisions on Tokyo assignments.

*KENNEDY: Did he try to digitize the operation?*

ZUMWALT: John was surprised that the State Department had not embraced new technology. But to be honest, he was not tech-savvy himself. His strength had been to understand the Silicon Valley entrepreneurial ecosystem, to recognize talent, to make connections, and close deals. I needed to explain how the State Department personnel system worked and he was unhappy with my explanation. His point — which made sense in Silicon Valley — was that firing someone was not bad because if the person was unsuited to the job, they generally knew it anyway and often people were relieved when they were fired because they could move on. But I told him that government employees did not move on to find a new job quickly. As managers, our job was to help underperformers improve. Only in rare cases, after much work to try to help an employee improve, could we consider firing for cause. This system was alien to him. As a consequence, he asked me to ghostwrite all of his performance evaluation reports. I realized that John was a different ambassador.

The previous ambassador was eager to meet the leaders of the Japanese business community, the heads of massive Japanese corporations like Sony, Panasonic, Toyota, and Nissan. Ambassador Schieffer would host a dinner for perhaps ten CEOs and have an insightful dialogue between the equivalent of the *Fortune* 100 CEOs on the Japanese side and our ambassador.

In contrast, Ambassador Roos was less interested in these brick-and-mortar industry leaders. He wanted to meet heads of startups and IT firms. We did introduce him to the heads of companies like SoftBank and Fast Retailing (Uniqlo). Ambassador Roos used terms that were new to me like “disrupting.” I had always thought disruption was a bad thing, but for Ambassador Roos, firms that disrupted the economy represented the future. I made the mistake of trying to combine the two sorts of business leaders in one of his first dinners. Ambassador Roos hosted a dinner where we invited Masayoshi Son from SoftBank, Hiroshi Mikitani from Fast Retailing, and Carlos Ghosn from Nissan, as well as the Japanese business senior statesmen from Toyota, the Tokyo Electric Power Company, Toshiba, All Nippon Airways, and Hitachi. The dinner conversation was dominated by Son, Mikitani, and Ghosn, who spoke great English, relegating the other businessmen to observer status in a conversation with the ambassador. I didn’t realize until later that these old-line Japanese companies felt slighted. I should have anticipated this problem and worked to prevent it, so I blame myself for this outcome. I learned that these two business groups just did not mix.

My job was to help the embassy staff adjust rather than continuing the approach that had worked under our previous ambassador. Our public affairs section began to schedule him to give talks at universities and business fora. John was much more effective conversing in a talk show format than he was reading a prepared speech at a podium. Ambassador Roos loved public speaking and he was good at extemporaneous formats because he could think quickly on his feet. He had been a coach for the Stanford debate team. After a while, we figured out his strengths and programmed him in those areas. He was extremely effective in settings where students or journalists could interact directly with him and he responded well even when challenged by students.

Ambassador and Mrs. Roos needed to adjust to us too. For example, Ramadan came soon after they arrived. Ambassador Schieffer had hosted an annual Iftar dinner for Muslim ambassadors and Muslim religious leaders in Japan during this season in previous years. One of our first recommendations to John and Susie was that they host an Iftar dinner as their first public event at

the residence. Susie Roos was somewhat nervous about this proposal. She wondered how she would be treated by these Muslim ambassadors since she and John were Jewish. We pointed out that if they did not host an Iftar this year, it would be noticed. Several ambassadors had already called to offer us help with event preparations. We said that these ambassadors were professional diplomats and would not do anything embarrassing.

The Roos' first official dinner turned out to be a great success. Several of the Muslim embassies helped us out — I recall that the Saudi embassy sent over a large amount of dates to serve and the Egyptian ambassador sent over his cook to oversee the Halal preparation of food. About 35 ambassador couples attended, along with about ten Muslim religious leaders and a few Japanese academic experts in Middle Eastern and North African societies. We invited a Turkish imam from the Yokohama Mosque who chanted out the call to prayer. We had set up male and female prayer rooms with washing stations so our guests could pray before they broke the fast. Then the imam announced that the sun had set and we could begin to eat.

Susie Roos has an outgoing, friendly personality and she mingled well with the guests. After the dinner, she said, "Oh Jim, I'm so glad you talked me into this. It was so much fun. So-and-so invited me to come over to tea and so-and-so invited me to a flower show next week." She made a lot of friends that night. Susie had not only survived, but thrived in her first representational event. With her gregarious personality, Susie was a natural diplomat.

I came to appreciate the challenging nature of the role of ambassador's spouse. I realized we needed to be cognizant of how awkward this position could be for her. Susie Roos was a woman of substance. She had been a partner in a law firm specializing in labor law. Yet, coming to Tokyo, she was not paid, had no staff, no office in the embassy, and no formal job. Despite this lack of support, Susie was expected to host events in her home and represent the United States at various functions.

Susie was all-in for this new experience. She wanted to learn about Japanese culture and travel to Kyoto. She was a dynamic woman with a lot of energy and quite happy to take on "ambassador spouse duties." The first two weeks, I had prepared a busy schedule for Susie — visit her son's school, meet the residence staff, attend some cultural activities, go with the family to a festival. About halfway through the second week, she called me and said, "Jim, do I really have to do this because I met this woman at the bus stop who invited me to do this and I met this other person who asked if I could do that?" I realized Susie didn't require our help any longer because she had quickly made a network of friends among parents of her son's classmates and in the diplomatic and artistic communities. Susie contributed greatly to U.S.-Japan relations in her new role. This was nice to see because our previous ambassador's wife was very reserved and uninterested in Japan.

*KENNEDY: How did the press treat them?*

ZUMWALT: The Japanese media treated them well. At first, they questioned the appointment because John Roos was not a prominent American figure like Howard Baker or Walter Mondale, nor was he a close personal friend of the president like Tom Schieffer. Although President Obama knew John Roos from the campaign, they were not close. Some in the Japanese media sniped that the Obama administration was downgrading the relationship by sending out someone less prominent than his predecessors. But overall, I would say that John Roos received positive

press treatment in Japan. We arranged for John to meet senior Japanese reporters and they appreciated his engaging, sincere, and friendly personality.

MOFA jumped through hoops to arrange for our new ambassador to present his credentials to the Emperor quite soon after he arrived. This step is important because, until this formality is completed, an ambassador cannot make official calls or give speeches or interviews. The Japanese did this ceremony in style, providing two horse-drawn carriages for the ambassador and five of his senior staff to ride from Tokyo Station to the Tokyo Imperial Palace for the audience with the Emperor. We all wore rented morning coats and top hats for the occasion. I will never forget looking out between the fringed curtains of the carriage window at the stone bridge leading into the palace while hearing the *clop, clop, clop* of the horses' hooves on the cobblestones.

With great show, we arranged for John to make a courtesy call on DPJ President (and soon-to-be prime minister) Yukio Hatoyama in the DPJ office. I remember accompanying John on this September 2 call on Hatoyama. Two weeks later, Hatoyama became Japan's prime minister. Hatoyama's father had been one of the founders of the ruling party and his brother was still an LDP Diet member. Hatoyama was part of Japan's old political class and we had hopes that he would become a good steward of our security relationship. We thought he understood the United States as he had spent three years studying engineering at Stanford University. (Sometimes this was hard to believe, as Hatoyama's spoken English was not good.) Hatoyama appeared anxious to make a good impression.

Ambassador Roos called on Hatoyama in the cramped DPJ headquarters office building near the National Diet Building. The room was crammed with Japanese media. Hatoyama had brought a Stanford football helmet that he held in photos with the ambassador to emphasize their university connection. At this meeting, Hatoyama wanted to reassure the Japanese public that his party would manage the Japan-U.S. relationship. He said the right things about his friendship with the United States but they did not engage in a detailed conversation.

After the formation of the new Hatoyama government cabinet, John called on Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano, and Minister of Defense Toshimi Kitazawa. Only a few months earlier, Okada had come to my home as a senior opposition party politician, eager to show his party could work with the United States. Now, he was the foreign minister of our most important Asian ally. A real policy wonk, Okada had a long list of issues to discuss with Ambassador Roos. He made it clear that while Japan would remain a close partner of the United States, Japan under a DPJ-led government would establish more of a distanced foreign policy than before. From this meeting, it was clear that Okada was less instinctively friendly to the United States and came from a position as outside critic of the previous government's conduct of foreign policy. However, he was thoughtful and diligent; he made decisions after careful deliberation and would listen to his ministry's professional staff. We would learn that Okada was willing to listen to logic and could be persuaded to reconsider his views.

We initially thought that new Minister of Defense Kitazawa had been miscast; he was a longtime labor union activist, a leftist who was not versed in the alliance or security issues. But we discovered that he was also a serious, thoughtful person. Kitazawa was accessible and we met him frequently to work through issues. Usually, I would be the embassy person to accompany the ambassador or a senior official such as the Pacific Commander or Chief of Naval Operations to

the meeting with Minister Kitazawa. I must have visited his office once or twice a month. I think we worked well with the Defense Ministry bureaucrats to mitigate some of Kitazawa's impractical ideas. I would say that of all the Hatoyama cabinet members with whom we interacted, Minister of Defense Kitazawa grew the most on the job and, over time, we developed a constructive working relationship.

Overall, the new ruling party was anxious to show they were a responsible governing party and could manage the relationship with the United States. There was a naïveté on their part and excessive optimism on ours that we could successfully manage our relations with the change in government.

The change of government in Japan began a rocky period in U.S.-Japan relations as the new government, most of its members out of power for so long, was anxious to make its mark by departing from the past. Often, those new policy initiatives created problems for us. For example, the Hatoyama government terminated Japan's operation to refuel coalition ships involved in Operation Enduring Freedom in the Indian Ocean. Japan, without committing troops on the ground in Afghanistan, had been getting credit for its contributions to the operation. When it was in opposition, the DPJ had opposed this operation, but after canceling it, they had difficulty identifying other ways to contribute to the multilateral effort. Even a lot of Japanese editorials started to call the decision to cancel the refueling as foolish because this operation had represented a low-risk way for Japan to contribute to international anti-terrorism efforts. The DPJ desire to be different resulted in some own goals and red cards that an experienced government might have avoided.

The DPJ had promised to shake up the bureaucracy, saying it was too conservative and too close to the LDP. This attitude concerned us at the embassy because we had enjoyed a comfortable working relationship with many elements of the bureaucracy — particularly the foreign and defense ministries. Senior Japanese bureaucrats began asking me for help. I might get a phone call from a senior bureaucrat who would say "When your ambassador meets the minister, be sure and raise these three things because the minister doesn't understand why they're important."

*KENNEDY: I imagine Okinawa would be a particularly difficult one.*

ZUMWALT: Managing the presence of U.S. troops on Okinawa was probably the most difficult issue for us to manage with the new DPJ-led government. We had previously agreed with the Japanese government on a plan to reduce the U.S. military presence on the island. Our plan, when fully implemented, would reduce the Marine Corps presence by about half, reduce the land area of our bases by about half, and move most of our remaining bases in the populated southern part of Okinawa to rural areas in the north. I thought it was a good package that would help us sustain our presence on the island. But this new government came in saying "We can do better than this!" The DPJ criticism of the previous government's position raised the expectations of people on Okinawa that the DPJ government could not then fulfill.

Progress on implementation of our realignment plan on Okinawa ground to a halt. The biggest issue was our agreement to move the Marine Aircraft Wing to the north of the island. The new government, without any consultation with the United States, promised to move this U.S. facility off the island instead. But they had no concrete plan to do so. Our position was that the only viable alternative to what we had already agreed was to remain in place. The new government scrambled furiously to identify a new site for this Marine Aircraft Wing. They did not realize that

the previous government had already considered these other options. The new government raised trial balloons about remote islands that lacked the necessary infrastructure. As soon as they did so, the local population on these islands rose in opposition. The new government generated a political mess that complicated our bilateral relations.

The DPJ government made a few other own goals as well. Prime Minister Hatoyama, on a visit to China, said that Japan “had depended on the United States too much.” He said Japan needed to “rebalance” its foreign policy. He had no need to comment on U.S.-Japan relations while he was in Beijing. We were completely flabbergasted and even many Japanese were shocked by this statement. Hatoyama could have found a way to improve relations with China on his trip to Beijing in a way that did not raise alarm bells in Washington. When we were asked by Washington what Hatoyama was doing, we replied that we do not really know as he had not previewed with us his thinking about “rebalancing.”

*KENNEDY: I assume the foreign ministry didn't understand it either.*

ZUMWALT: Senior Japanese bureaucrats could not explain Hatoyama’s statements either. They were embarrassed and tried to spin them in the best light. They would call to coach us on how to interpret their unpredictable prime minister’s statements on our alliance. Later, Hatoyama went to Mexico to sign a free trade agreement, which we supported. But he gave a speech in Mexico City where he talked about American imperialism. We were wondering why Hatoyama thought it appropriate to comment on the history of U.S.-Mexico relations while in Mexico. It was supposed to be a visit focused on economics. He only embarrassed the Mexican president and further damaged his reputation in Washington DC.

The only explanation for the contradictions between his positive comments to us and these statements in China and Mexico was that Hatoyama was so eager to make friends that he would say what he thought that friend wanted to hear. Hatoyama lacked a defined vision that would have anchored his policy in a coherent framework.

In our personal interactions, Hatoyama was always friendly. I remember that Ambassador Roos hosted a “big game” party for the Stanford and UC Berkeley (Cal) alumni clubs at his residence. Due to the time difference, the broadcast of the Cal-Stanford football game started early Sunday morning in Japan. PM Hatoyama’s wife Miyuki came to the event dressed as a Stanford cheerleader with red and white pom-poms. The prime minister and Miyuki both mingled with the crowd, cheered the Stanford football team, and enjoyed socializing with American and Japanese alumni from these schools. Miyuki was quite the ebullient personality and even led the Stanford alum in a few cheers. They both obviously enjoyed remembering their youthful time in California and did not seem to bear any personal grudge against the United States.

*KENNEDY: We're talking about a novice not understanding the pitfalls.*

ZUMWALT: A novice who lacked a policy framework and who was eager to undo what his predecessor had accomplished. He kept talking about an “equal alliance,” which was a fine idea in the abstract but our alliance was fundamentally different from our alliances with NATO or Australia because of Japanese constitutional restrictions on its military. Our public messaging mantra was “an equal alliance where each partner contributes in different ways.” The United States agrees to defend Japan and Japan agrees to host U.S. forces. The DPJ government was not making these changes because of political pressure. The Japanese public continued to support the

alliance. That's why I refer to the political tensions between us over our alliance as a DPJ "own goal." It was a challenging time.

The Japanese bureaucracy became disgruntled with this new DPJ government quickly. The DPJ had promised to reduce lavish spending on public works and to eliminate waste and fraud and to use the savings for tax cuts and childcare subsidies. That concept appealed to voters in a campaign because the DPJ could promise free childcare and free kindergarten all paid for by eliminating waste. But the DPJ discovered it was much harder to govern than to campaign against the government.

The new government set up public hearings on government spending that were a bit like a kangaroo court. These hearings were conducted by a photogenic female Diet member named Renho Murata. She usually just went by her first name, Renho. Drawing upon her background as a newscaster, Renho would grill vice ministers about how they spent their budgets. I'm sure she did find some examples of waste, but other programs were actually solid.

I remember her public hearing about an education ministry program (JET, Japan Exchange and Teaching) by which Japan brings 10,000 young foreigners to teach English in Japanese schools for two years. There have now been over 35,000 Americans who have participated in this program. JET returnees live all over the U.S., with fond memories of their time in Japan. Renho asked, "Why are we bringing these foreigners to Japan? They're not good teachers anyway!" The education ministry asked if we, along with the French and Canadian embassies, would testify about the benefits of this JET program. When it was my turn to speak, Renho Murata asked me why I cared. I replied that this program represented an investment in the future of our relationship. I noted that of the 150 Americans working at the U.S. embassy mission in Japan, 22 were alumni of the JET program who understood Japan and spoke the language. I said that if Japan ended this program, then in twenty years there would be fewer Japan experts in the United States, thereby undermining the foundation of our friendship.

In the end, she decided to cut but not to eliminate this program which continues today.

*KENNEDY: It sounds like bureaucracies responding to an inept new leadership.*

ZUMWALT: The DPJ was both inept and inexperienced. They had ideas about bureaucratic corruption. In my experience, I might disagree with Japanese bureaucrats at times, but they were true public servants who worked diligently. Japan had a strong Confucian culture of public servants working to advance the public good.

*KENNEDY: From what I've absorbed over the years reading about it, you never hear about Japanese corruption. Chinese corruption is a completely different matter.*

ZUMWALT: China is a different story. With the arrival of the DPJ government, Washington policymakers suddenly cared about Japan again. I encouraged our talented political section, saying "People are reading your reporting." Three years earlier, people were doing good reporting, but it didn't have the same audience because our relationship was strong and stable.

*KENNEDY: Were you sensing that the new party was on the road to oblivion again?*

ZUMWALT: The DPJ was in charge for three years. Hatoyama's popularity waned rapidly and he resigned in early June 2010 after serving as prime minister less than nine months. Even the liberal press who had previously been critical of the LDP government panned the Hatoyama

government's performance. The DPJ elected a new president, Naoto Kan, and he became prime minister in June 2010. We knew Kan less well, as he had not come out of the LDP like Hatoyama, but rather was a grassroots activist who had previously belonged to the left-wing Japan Socialist Party. We needed to engage him quickly.

Thinking back, perhaps Kan's main accomplishment was survival. He was the first Japanese prime minister to serve in office for more than a year since Junichiro Koizumi. Before Kan, Shinzo Abe (in his first term), Yasuo Fukuda, Taro Aso, and Yukio Hatoyama had each left office after less than a year.

During the Kan period, our alliance faced a major test. A dispute erupted between China and Japan over sovereignty of the Senkaku Islands — a remote and uninhabited group of islands between Okinawa, Taiwan, and mainland China. The Japan Coast Guard arrested the captain and crew of a Chinese fishing boat near the islands. After China protested by severing some economic ties with Japan, the Kan government backed down. During this crisis, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates told reporters that the United States would fulfill its security alliance responsibility to defend Japan if necessary. China may have won this "skirmish" with Japan, but at a cost of highlighting for the Japanese public the value of the U.S.-Japan security alliance.

This statement, to my knowledge, marked the first time that a U.S. official had explicitly stated that the U.S.-Japan security treaty covered the Senkaku Islands. To sum up the background, the U.S.-Japan security treaty states that the United States would regard any attack on territory under the administration of Japan to be a grave national security threat to the United States. The reason for that treaty language was that when the treaty was negotiated, instead of saying our treaty covered "the territory of Japan," which would include the islands occupied by the Soviet Union to the north of Hokkaido, the treaty used the language "areas under Japanese administration," which excluded these Soviet-occupied islands.

The Obama administration made explicit what had been implicit — that the United States acknowledged that the Senkaku Islands were covered by our treaty because they are under Japanese administration. Japanese security officials in the Defense and Foreign ministries appreciated these statements, which they believed had a deterrent value. It is somewhat ironic that this clarification occurred during a period when the DPJ-led Japanese political leadership questioned many basic tenets of our security relationship.

Another major development in U.S.-Japan relations occurred during Prime Minister Kan's brief term. It was Ambassador Roos' visit to Hiroshima on August 6, 2010 to attend the memorial service for the victims of the atomic bomb that had been dropped 65 years earlier. The internal embassy debate on the merits of the ambassador's attendance had started two years earlier under Ambassador Schieffer. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, Schieffer had hosted a discussion in his conference room to review the arguments pro and con for his attending the ceremony that year. In 2009 when I was chargé, we requested permission for me to represent the United States at the ceremony, but it proved to be too early in the Obama administration to force through the bureaucracy a decision on such an important step.

After a political ambassador arrived in Tokyo, we thought the time was right to break with past policy by sending the U.S. ambassador to Hiroshima on the anniversary. The embassy staff presented the idea to Ambassador Roos, drawing upon many of the arguments laid out by Joel Ehrendreich in his 2008 dissent channel message. Ambassador Roos enthusiastically supported the recommendation that he attend the ceremony in 2010. The White House was again rather

cautious about our proposal because President Obama was being criticized for his “apology diplomacy.” Ambassador Roos pushed back. He explained carefully that our attendance did not constitute an apology, but rather support for Hiroshima city’s desire for nuclear disarmament. This is a good example of the clout of a political ambassador. As chargé a year earlier, I had been unable to convince the White House to allow me to attend, but the White House reluctantly agreed when John Roos advocated forcefully for this proposal a year later.

Ambassador Roos’ visit to Hiroshima required careful and detailed preparation. I knew the mayor of Hiroshima, Tadatoshi Akiba, who had been on the same American Field Service foreign exchange program that had first brought me to Japan in 1973. Akiba had received a PhD in mathematics at MIT and had taught at Tufts. I talked with him once in his office and again on the telephone about the parameters of the visit. I said that we faced some domestic political constraints and explained that we would not apologize for the decision, but we wanted to come to commemorate all of those who had perished in the war. I asked for his assurance that the ambassador would not be placed in an awkward position or embarrassed during his visit. Akiba understood completely the U.S. political situation as he had been active in nuclear disarmament politics when he was a scholar living in Boston. He was eager to host the U.S. ambassador and reassured me that he would not embarrass our ambassador during the visit. Mayor Akiba was true to his word.

Both sides did just enough to allow this historic gesture of reconciliation to proceed. Ambassador and Mrs. Roos attended the ceremony and laid a wreath at the eternal flame in Hiroshima Peace Park. This ceremony was carried live on television. The U.S. ambassador’s participation opened the doors for others also. The UK and French ambassadors also joined the ceremony, as did United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Ambassador Roos’ visit to Hiroshima in 2010 changed the whole tenor of the Japanese media coverage of the anniversary commemoration. Previous years, in early August, we would hunker down as the Japanese media reported on survivor memories of the atomic bombings. This ceremony had become an occasion for unfriendly embassies such as the Cubans and Venezuelans to criticize the United States. When Ambassador Roos attended in 2010, the Japanese news stories focused on “The Americans laying a wreath.” The Japanese media was no longer interested in the Cuban ambassador’s opinions.

The Japanese, with a few exceptions, did not demand an apology; they appreciated the gesture of reconciliation represented by Ambassador Roos’ presence at the ceremony. One anti-nuclear activist criticized Ambassador Roos for not apologizing, but Mayor Akiba replied quickly that he had “spoken to Ambassador Roos and the ambassador was sincere.” Prime Minister Kan, for his part, in his remarks said that “for the time being, nuclear deterrence continues to be necessary.” In the United States, the *Wall Street Journal* criticized the Obama administration, but most papers reacted favorably. American veterans’ groups issued statements that it was time for the United States to take this step as an act of reconciliation between former enemies who were now allies. Ambassador Roos’ visit made possible President Obama’s visit to Hiroshima and Prime Minister Abe’s visit to Pearl Harbor a few years later. I considered this event to be a major accomplishment as it moved us forward on the path to full reconciliation from events in the past.

Despite our rocky relationship with the DPJ-led government, we made progress with work to strengthen the security alliance and to move forward with reconciliation. This experience taught me the importance of positive public opinion. The work of organizations on both sides to

strengthen people-to-people ties between our two nations provided some ballast to our relationship as it sailed in rough seas. I appreciated even more the work of countless organizations that sustained programs like sister cities and youth exchanges. Their work continues to represent an investment in the future of our relationship.

The major event during my assignment as DCM was the massive earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear crisis that enveloped Japan in March of 2011. When I woke that morning, however, I was very worried about another problem that could damage our relationship. In the preceding months, the *Guardian* and *Der Spiegel* had begun publishing classified diplomatic telegrams from the State Department that had been obtained by WikiLeaks. Many of these messages revealed sometimes unflattering assessments of foreign leaders or divulged private communications that had been relayed in confidence. It was perhaps the most embarrassing set of leaks in State Department history.

*KENNEDY: Were these classified documents?*

ZUMWALT: These were classified documents that had been obtained by WikiLeaks from a disgruntled U.S. Army private stationed in Afghanistan. *The Guardian* and *Der Spiegel* reported on issues of interest to European readers but did not publish anything related to Japan. We later heard that the *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper had bought the rights to this story. The State Department ordered us to not visit the WikiLeaks website and prohibited us from confirming the authenticity of the leaked cables. We were in an embarrassing public affairs position, not knowing what the *Asahi* would report and being prohibited from commenting on its stories.

*KENNEDY: Let me ask a question. They say don't go to such and such a website, which you can get to from your computer. I mean...*

ZUMWALT: As instructed by the State Department, we forbid our staff to access the WikiLeaks sites, even outside of work hours. Given this constraint, I decided we needed to do some damage control by reverse-engineering the leak to identify potential problems.

We divided our embassy into teams where each embassy section — political, economic, consular, and management — as well as our consulates would review every classified cable they had written during the relevant period. I asked them to pull out for senior review any message that, if published, might be embarrassing to us or to our Japanese friends. This was a time-consuming process, especially for our political section, which had written many classified reports during this period. One of our junior political officers worked full-time for several weeks reviewing messages for embarrassing content.

After reading the telegrams that our officers had culled, I realized that our most potentially embarrassing reporting came from Consulate General Naha. Our consul general there, Raymond Greene, enjoyed incredible access to senior Okinawan political figures who provided him with useful insights into Okinawan anti-base politics. Ray had reported that numerous Okinawa politicians would convey views in private that differed from their public statements. Ray also reported on Okinawan efforts to leverage local anti-base politics to increase central government subsidies. Potential press reporting on Ray's insightful cables was my biggest concern with WikiLeaks. We also worried about some of our frank assessments of Democratic Party of Japan leaders' personalities and competence.

As we were preparing for the unfavorable *Asahi Shimbun* reporting on the trove of U.S. diplomatic reporting, we suddenly received a message from *Asahi* asking for a U.S. Embassy comment. *Asahi* is a professional news organization and this step seemed to us to signify that it was close to publicizing its analysis of the leaked classified cables. We had already been instructed by the State Department not to comment on or confirm the authenticity of any WikiLeaks cables, but we were not prohibited from trying to find out what the *Asahi* planned to report. After consulting with the head of our Public Affairs Office (PAO) and our press officer, we asked the *Asahi* if they had specific questions they wanted to ask.

Soon, the *Asahi* faxed us twenty questions, asking for replies prior to March 12, when they would begin to publish their reports. These specific *Asahi* questions provided us a very good idea of the specific U.S. Embassy cables that the *Asahi* would feature in its coverage. Much to our surprise — we didn't understand why at the time — there were no questions about our Okinawa reporting. That was most surprising because we feared that Raymond Greene's reporting provided the most explosive stories in exposing the difference between the public and private positions of certain Okinawa politicians.

Armed with this information, I called MOFA and asked for an urgent meeting. I said, "The *Asahi* on March 12 is going to start publishing embassy cables. We have a fairly good idea of what they are." The foreign ministry, of course, was most interested in meeting us. I went to this meeting feeling embarrassed and angry because MOFA had provided us good access and spoken to us openly and honestly to manage some challenging bilateral issues, whereas we had betrayed their confidence by leaking these classified reports.

I informed State that we would meet MOFA the following day. I was annoyed with the State Department, which had forbidden me from providing the classified telegrams themselves to the foreign ministry. As a result, I told my foreign ministry counterpart, Director-General for North American Affairs Kazuyoshi Umemoto, that although I could not provide copies of the text of the telegrams, I would read important parts very slowly so I advised him to bring several note-takers! (I did not ask for permission to read verbatim these cables but did tell the department that I would "brief" the foreign ministry on possible *Asahi* reporting.)

Due to the sensitivity of the issue, Umemoto asked me to visit him at Iikura Guest House, a foreign ministry facility near Tokyo Tower. That way, we could meet away from the Japanese reporters who often patrol the entrance to the ministry itself. Since many of the sensitive cables involved North Korea or China, Director-General for Asian Affairs Shinsuke Sugiyama (who became Japan's Ambassador to the United States in 2018) also joined our meeting. I was accompanied by embassy political officers Thomas Whitney, John Mark Pommersheim, and Cody Walsh, who brought the relevant telegrams in two fat binders. We sat across from our Japanese counterparts around a large wooden conference table in a second-floor drawing room. A butler served us coffee.

Although I enjoyed wonderful personal relations with both Umemoto and Sugiyama, this was an unpleasant meeting. I was embarrassed about the poor information security of the United States government and concerned about potential damage to our relationship. I started relaying to them the contents of these messages. I read the cables slowly as their note-takers took copious notes. They were mostly relieved with what I had read. For example, I read one report of our discussions about the DPJ decision to terminate Japan's mission to refuel coalition oil tankers in the Indian Ocean. The United States was angry with the DPJ government and criticized their

decision as shortsighted. Director General Umemoto replied that the U.S. had stated as much in public, that they already knew the U.S. was critical of the Japanese government decision. Umemoto and Sugiyama also did not seem terribly concerned about our reports on their ministry's own private criticism of the DPJ political leadership, nor of their efforts to coach us on how to manage U.S.-Japan relations under a DPJ government. By this period, DPJ popular support in Japan had waned, so the ministry must have felt confident that it looked good by attempting to manage their difficult political bosses.

The one cable that concerned them the most was a report I myself had written about a conversation with a senior Japanese foreign ministry official. In a meeting a year or so earlier, this senior official said something about the fate of the Japanese citizens who had been abducted by North Koreans. I remember at the time that I was startled by his frank assessment and I took careful notes for our classified report back to Washington. My memory about this meeting remained clear.

When I read this reporting cable slowly to my Japanese counterparts, Director General Sugiyama replied, "He didn't say that." I thought to myself, "I was in the meeting, you were not." But I also recognized that if this report leaked out, it would probably end this official's career. I replied, "We are ordered to have no comment on these cables. If you tell the media that our report is incorrect, our response will be 'No comment.'" Then they appeared relieved that we could resolve this issue in this way — the ministry would claim that the embassy report was wrong and we would not comment, leaving them the final word. I just felt horrible because this senior official was a trusted friend who was really honest with us. Our leak had threatened his career.

To close the story on Okinawa, the reason the *Asahi* did not plan to report on Consulate General Naha's reporting cables was because WikiLeaks didn't have them. After 9/11, State had been encouraged to share reporting across agencies, so State created a special "slug line," which came after cable addressees that shared our reporting automatically in classified military channels as well. Our consul general, Raymond Greene, had simply forgotten to add this slug line into his reports, so Okinawa's reporting never moved though military channels and were not available to the army private who provided them to WikiLeaks. It was a fortuitous human error. I joked with Ray later that it was the best mistake he ever made in his career. We had dodged a bullet.

I must say that WikiLeaks, while embarrassing for our diplomatic mission in Japan, did not damage our access for long. I think that the impact was less in Japan due to its vibrant free press. For example, our reporting on infighting between Japan's security bureaucracy and DPJ political leaders was not news in Japan — the media had already reported extensively on this issue. WikiLeaks posed a bigger problem in places like Russia where the public stories and the private communications are so different or in places like China where lives of our contacts were put at risk. For the next few months, my contacts might joke "I'm not sure I should tell you this because it might appear in WikiLeaks, but..." but these people were professionals and recognized that Embassy Tokyo was an important communications channel back to the United States government.

Later, a really good friend who worked for *Asahi* told me that "We were surprised by your cables because what you say in public is what you told the ministry in private! Moreover, the ministry was so assertive in advancing Japan's interests. We admire the foreign ministry for pushing back on your demands. What they told you in private was the same as what they briefed to us." He

added, “We thought there would be more interesting stories.” I think many Japanese thought that Japan just does the United States’ bidding so, in many ways, the *Asahi* was impressed by the efforts of diplomats on both sides as a result of these leaks.

In the end, the *Asahi* delayed publishing these WikiLeaks-related stories because of the March 11 earthquake and tsunami. They did not publish as planned on March 12 because of the need for newspaper space to report on the disasters and the relief efforts. I later spoke to my friend at *Asahi*, who told me that the WikiLeaks stories, when they were finally published in the aftermath of the earthquake, simply did not resonate with Japanese readers after the positive news about U.S. support to Japan during and after the disaster.

## Chapter XII

### Embassy Tokyo Response to Japan's March 11 Triple Disaster, 2011

MAY 18 & 31 AND JUNE 4, 2018

*KENNEDY: WikiLeaks coincided with the so-called “triple disaster,” didn’t it?*

ZUMWALT: On the afternoon of March 11, thanks to WikiLeaks and also to the *Asahi Shimbun* plans to report on leaked Embassy Tokyo cables, I found myself with embassy political officers Thomas Whitney, Cody Walsh, and John Mark Pommersheim, holding two fat briefing books filled with classified Embassy Tokyo reports as we met with two senior Japanese foreign ministry officials, Director-General for the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Shinsuke Sugiyama and Director-General for the North American Affairs Bureau Kazuyoshi Umemoto at the ministry’s Iikura Guest House. Just over an hour into the session, as we were discussing these leaked cables, suddenly the large conference room began to shake. Japan experiences many earthquakes and most cause little damage as Japan has strong building codes, but this severe shaking continued several minutes. We began to hear the building creak and the overhead chandelier swung violently. A facial tissue box slid across the table and fell onto the floor.

I looked across at my Japanese counterparts and, almost simultaneously, we all crawled under the sturdy wooden conference table. As we sheltered under this table, I thought that all of us looked rather undignified crouching on all fours in our suits with our neckties dangling to the floor. I realized suddenly that the WikiLeaks telegrams were less important than I had believed. The earthquake dissipated the meeting tension; we were now instead wondering what was to befall us.

The Iikura Guest House building continued to creak and rumble. The butler encouraged us to evacuate down the stairs as the earthquake continued. We ignored his advice. Our earthquake response training had stressed the importance of sheltering under a sturdy table or desk or in an open doorway. Running outside would expose us to falling debris. I chose to remain under the foreign ministry’s sturdy wood table instead.

Later, I learned that the earthquake lasted about five minutes, but for me at that moment, time slowed down. I thought of my childhood in California and wondered what my parents and sisters were doing at that moment. I worried about Ann, who would be at work on the eighth floor of the Tokyo American Center office building. I was concerned about the situation at the Embassy Tokyo chancery and our housing compound as the ground shook under all of us. I worried about my driver, Norio Onodera, who was waiting patiently outside in an embassy car. All these thoughts raced through my mind as the shaking continued.

When the earthquake finally subsided, we abruptly ended our meeting. Director General Sugiyama called his wife on his cellphone, but the rest of us were unable to obtain a dial tone on our phones. Tom, Cody, John Mark, and I gathered together all of our classified telegrams and returned downstairs to our waiting embassy car. Mr. Onodera looked grim. We started driving back to the embassy but, after only a few blocks, traffic slowed to a crawl and then stopped completely. As we passed the Hotel Okura Tokyo, I saw through the car window hundreds of hotel staff and guests milling about the parking lot. I realized that I could return to the embassy more quickly on foot. I asked Tom and the others to remain in the vehicle and to secure the

binders of classified telegrams when he returned to the office. I got out to walk the final few blocks to the chancery compound.

When I arrived, the embassy had already launched its emergency building evacuation. The staff had left the building and each section was assembling in their designated spots so that the floor wardens could take roll. The embassy had just practiced a fire drill a few days before, so our staff understood the procedures well. I must admit that my first action was to look for Ann in the crowd, to make sure she was safe. I was relieved to see her surrounded by her staff with the rest of the public affairs section. She had led her staff from the Tokyo American Center down eight floors of the fire escape, then walked with them six blocks to the chancery compound. Three times in just the ten-minute walk, strong aftershocks caused her to lose her balance, forcing her to squat down in the street to avoid falling. Later, one of her staff told me that they were like little chicks following their mother hen (Ann) down the narrow street, making their way between shards of broken window glass and other detritus that had fallen onto the street.

The management counselor, Jim Forbes, reported that the chancery evacuation had gone smoothly, everyone was accounted for, and there were no reports of injuries. He had heard that the situation at our housing compound was similar, people had evacuated outside and nobody was injured. He also reported that our off-duty marines had arrived at the chancery and were already searching the building to make sure that there were no fires or leaks of gas or water. Ambassador Roos was standing under the entrance awning, talking to the employees through a bullhorn. Behind him, I could see cracks in the building edifice. Just as our management counselor reported that he was not sure that our chancery building was safe, the ground shook with another aftershock.

Our chancery building had been designed in the late 1960s by a Los Angeles architect who had incorporated the latest earthquake building standards. Although our marines reported that the building appeared structurally sound, we did not want to take any chances due to the frequent aftershocks. After a brief huddle with the ambassador, we decided to send our employees home. It was already after 3:30 p.m. on a Friday afternoon and, by dismissing our employees, we would gain a few days to figure out whether it was safe for them to return to work on Monday. A few essential employees from the administrative and security sections stayed behind, but the rest were dismissed. In their rush to evacuate the building, many people had departed without coats and scarves, but the early March atmosphere was chilly. We decided to allow groups of people, twenty at a time, to return to their offices for five minutes each to take their coats and purses. With the many aftershocks, they were motivated to get in and out fast! We didn't want more people in the building at the time because we wanted to keep track of who was inside the building at all times.

The ambassador, management counselor, and RSO had the situation at the chancery well-organized, so I decided to visit our alternate command center in the gym on our housing compound about half a mile away. We thought this one-story building would be a safer refuge for us to continue our work. As I recall, my driver took me to our compound, but my memory is a blur — I may have walked.

As I traveled to the alternate command center, I began to organize in my mind the information we needed to report to the State Department's Operations Center. The most important news was that we had accounted for all of our personnel and their families and they were safe. Our

electricity continued to function and we had running water. We could manage, at least in the short term.

When I arrived at the compound, around four p.m., the alternate command center was a beehive of activity, but it was organized chaos. People were performing the tasks for which they had trained in our emergency drills. The IT section had already set up computer workstations and printers on folding tables, then begun assembling our emergency radio system. These tools were important because the Japanese landlines were down and the cellphone network was completely overwhelmed.

Embassy Tokyo's Consul General Paul Fitzgerald and American Citizen Services Chief Bill Christopher had organized their staff to begin fielding queries from American citizens. They started receiving requests for information, mostly by email as our internet servers continued to operate. Activity suddenly stopped as our building was rocked with an aftershock that measured 7.9 on the Richter scale. People clambered under tables or moved to stand in a doorway. Somebody's child screamed and other children began crying. I realized the downside of placing our command center on our housing compound. Curious families had begun drifting in to learn about developments. I made a mental note to speak to our Community Liaison Office (CLO) employees to organize a family lounge away from our workspace. After a brief pause, the command center work restarted.

I reported to the State Department's Operations Center in Washington via satellite phone. Japan had suffered a major earthquake, damage in Tokyo appeared modest given the severity of the quake, and transportation and communications systems were paralyzed, but we had electricity and water on our housing compound. We were experiencing aftershocks, some severe, every twenty minutes or so. Our plan was to establish our emergency command center on the compound until we could assess whether it was safe to return to work in the embassy chancery. We requested that the State Department send structural engineers to assess the safety of our chancery building. The Operations Center's watch officer informed me that one of our consulates had taken the initiative of surveying the other constituent posts and had reported that their employees and family members were all safe. This was how I learned that only Tokyo's phones were down — the links at our consulates continued to function. I appreciated our constituent posts' initiative to report in directly.

Someone set up a large-screen television where we could follow the live Japanese news reports. NHK, the Japanese public broadcasting service, began reporting on the scope of the earthquake. They reported that it had measured a 9.1 on the Richter scale — a force I simply could not imagine. The earthquake had occurred offshore about 230 miles north of Tokyo, so the damage was much more severe in Japan's northeast. NHK began broadcasting live footage taken from news helicopters of the tsunamis approaching shore. They transmitted warnings for people to flee coastal areas and seek higher ground. Then the television began showing images of huge tsunamis devastating many communities along Japanese northeast coast. I realized that we were dealing with a disaster beyond the scope of the major earthquake.

As we continued to work to ascertain the safety of the rest of our embassy community, we turned our attention to the welfare and whereabouts of American citizens living in the devastated areas. Our consular section had computerized files on American citizens who had registered with us, so they began to focus on locating those citizens living in coastal areas of Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima prefectures.

As our consular section addressed issues concerning the welfare of American citizens in Japan, our embassy community still faced one additional worry — our own children. The American School in Japan (ASIJ), which most embassy children attended, is located 26 kilometers away from the embassy housing compound. What was normally a forty-minute drive would take much longer due to the traffic gridlock. Our RSO began contacting each school bus driver via our two-way radio. We learned that ASIJ had evacuated its students, that nobody was injured, and that after taking roll call, the students had boarded the buses to begin the long ride home. Other schools made similar reports. We asked our CLO staff to inform parents that their children were safe on a bus — but stalled in horrendous traffic. The buses were resourceful in this crisis. When the passengers got hungry, the bus monitors and drivers pooled their money and bought food for all the children at a rest stop.

I was still working at the alternate command center when the last bus arrived on the compound at one a.m. Saturday morning. The parents waited outside anxiously. I joined them at curbside to welcome the children home. As the school bus entered the compound, the driver began honking his horn and I joined the parents in a rousing cheer to welcome their tired children home. Anxious parents were exuberant to be reunited with their children; hugs and kisses were exchanged and we all felt relieved. Despite our emotional exhaustion, we summoned the energy to celebrate this small victory.

In the first 24 hours after the major earthquake, we experienced over one hundred aftershocks, including two that measured over 7.0 on the Richter scale. All told, in the two months after the earthquake, we felt over 5,200 aftershocks (over ninety earthquakes per day), including eighty-two that measured over 6.0 on the Richter scale. During the first week after the major earthquake, we could feel the ground shake several times per hour. The U.S. Geological Survey informed us that there was a ten percent chance this earthquake was merely a foreshock to be followed by an even bigger earthquake later. That assessment was in my mind each time I felt the earth shaking — was this one going to be even worse?

*KENNEDY: People were camping out?*

ZUMWALT: Our housing compound had three high-rise apartment buildings and about forty townhouses. This housing was built in 1981. The buildings were designed to dissipate energy and reduce stress on the reinforced concrete support pillars. Our engineers were confident in these buildings' safety.

However, all of that shaking was not kind to the interiors of the upper units. Later, I saw some photographs of kitchens from upper-level apartments. All of the contents of the kitchen cabinets and refrigerator and freezer had tumbled out onto the floor. The debris of food, glass shards from broken jars, broken china, flatware, cans, small appliances, and containers from kitchen counters was so thick one could not even see the kitchen floor. With all of the broken glass and china shards lying around, these apartments were unsafe to inhabit. The spoiling food would begin to smell unless we could organize a cleanup quickly. One apartment experienced a small fire caused by a dresser that fell onto a lamp that had toppled over onto flammable material on the floor. There was smoke damage that required some extensive repairs and cleanup. People were resourceful and many people living in our townhouses and lower apartments opened their homes to house those who lived higher up in damaged units. Our administrative section organized a cleanup over the weekend so that the inhabitants of these upper units could return home.

*KENNEDY: Going way back to the earthquake of '23 or so, the hotel —*

ZUMWALT: There was huge damage to Tokyo in the 1923 earthquake, but the Imperial Hotel designed by Frank Lloyd Wright survived largely intact. This earthquake in 2011 was much bigger, but further away from Tokyo. Few buildings in Tokyo suffered serious structural damage in this earthquake. The biggest cause of deaths in the capital was a hotel ballroom where the decorative ceiling fell on a few people underneath. In general, however, Tokyo itself experienced remarkably few casualties. Despite the chaos with the shutdown of the public transit system, there was remarkable order throughout Japan.

Our employees experienced a difficult commute that night because the trains and subways had stopped operating. Some employees walked for two or three hours to reach their homes that night. Ann invited her six employees from the Tokyo American Center (all women) to stay overnight at our home which was only a twenty-minute walk away. She took a lighthearted approach to cheer up her employees, saying that they could have a slumber party! Our cook had prepared for a representational event that night, so we even had food for our unexpected guests. Ann loaned them t-shirts for pajamas and our household staff rolled out the futons for them to sleep on. When I finally returned home about two a.m., I was surprised to see all these people around! Our home, in contrast to the compound, had suffered very little damage. A few stone lanterns in our garden had toppled, but there was very little other damage. I was glad Ann had taken the initiative to host her staff, as it would have been challenging for them to return to their distant residences that night.

After ascertaining the safety of all of our employees and their families, and after beginning our American Citizen Services work, that first night we also needed to turn our attention to earthquake and tsunami disaster assistance. The U.S. government decided to send search-and-rescue teams to help Japanese authorities find and rescue people trapped in the rubble. On Saturday March 12, we were told to work with the Japanese government to identify a good arrival location airport for the chartered aircraft that would carry search-and-rescue teams from the Fairfax County and Los Angeles County fire departments that would come by a chartered aircraft. These teams brought with them technicians, trained rescue dogs, doctors, paramedics, and other support personnel. We had only a few hours to work on flight clearances, animal quarantine waivers, and other necessary paperwork.

The Japanese government, while grateful for the offer of help, were understandably difficult to pin down as to where our team should go. They were simply overwhelmed with the scale of the humanitarian needs in such a wide and isolated area. Somebody on the U.S. side decided to send our teams to Misawa Air Base in Iwate prefecture, the closest U.S. military base to the affected area. When we informed the Japanese of the arrival of this team at Misawa, they asked our search-and-rescue teams to work with the Tokyo Fire Department, who had set up their operations in nearby Ofunato in Iwate prefecture. The teams departed the United States on Saturday about 24 hours after the earthquake and arrived at Misawa on Sunday. The Air Force had to scramble to help the plane because it was difficult for them to arrange for refueling and other support activities as the base itself now operated on emergency generators. The Air Force was most helpful to our teams, even as the base was dealing with its own post-disaster challenges.

Once these search-and-rescue teams arrived in Ofunato, they searched house to house with their dogs and equipment. The town had been reduced to rubble. These old-fashioned wooden houses

simply did not stand up to the force of the tsunamis. Unfortunately, the teams did not find any victims alive. But Japanese TV did broadcast stories about the U.S. search-and-rescue efforts. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York, the Tokyo Fire Department had sent firemen to support New York fire stations, so I thought that these American fire department teams coming to Japan in its time of need represented an appropriate return gesture of friendship. I think our efforts did give hope to the Japanese at a moment when they were suffering greatly.

At this time, we also enhanced our efforts on a growing number of welfare and whereabouts cases. Helping Americans in distress was not normally a huge element of our consular work in Japan. In a typical year, we might handle one or two hundred welfare and whereabouts cases. With this disaster, that would change. Suddenly, we needed to handle thousands of cases; the demands on our consular section were almost overwhelming. Paul Fitzgerald had already set up a 24-hour operation with his consular staff. Initially, he could reinforce the ACS section by drawing upon our visa officers to help their ACS counterparts, but as we received more and more calls, Paul told me that his consular section needed additional manpower.

The Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA) established a global network of volunteers so that we could hand off much of the telephone work to consular officers in other posts. They announced an emergency hotline and then recruited consular volunteers around the world to receive telephone inquiries. Worried relatives would call to report a missing person and the phone might be answered by a consular officer in Montreal or West Africa or Washington DC. These consular volunteers would record all of the information in a report which we could then access online in Tokyo in order to investigate. This worldwide telephone network helped us manage the volume of inquiries.

We prioritized the growing number of cases where we had credible information that a missing American was located in the affected region. If we had an address for a hotel or a workplace, we could start investigating. In normal times, we could contact the police when we had a welfare and whereabouts case, but the police were overwhelmed with other priorities during this crisis.

*KENNEDY: What was your clientele?*

ZUMWALT: The welfare and whereabouts cases were a big part of our operation. Some customers wanted us to follow up; they might have information that somebody worked for company X and often they would have already tried to contact the Tokyo office of the company and ask if they had information about their employee. However, we knew that almost everyone in Tokyo was safe and had access to public services, so we focused first on reports of Americans in the affected region.

Sendai, a big city with a population of over a million people, had been affected by the tsunami. We heard reports that many people in Sendai had no heat, no water, no electricity, no internet, and no telephone connectivity. There were a number of deaths and injuries in that city, which was home to the largest number of American citizens in the affected areas, including American university students, businesspeople, and missionaries.

I became personally involved in one unusual welfare and whereabouts case. I received a call from a friend who worked for GE Japan. He told me that there had been twelve American welders, GE subcontractors, who had been working inside the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant when the earthquake struck. The company had lost contact with these American citizens and wanted our help to find them. For the next few hours of our search, we always seemed to be

one step behind them. We heard a report that they took a car and began driving south. We heard secondhand that they had been inside the reactor building and actually got wet from the inflowing water. Then we heard the disturbing news that they may have been contaminated by radiation. Finally, we located the Americans at a hotel in Iwaki in the southern part of Fukushima prefecture. They arranged for their own transportation to Narita International Airport, but I had to call Northwest Airlines because the airline was reluctant to accept these passengers on their flight back to the United States. We arranged with Northwest to furnish a place at the airport for these workers to change clothes and shower, then to be tested for radiation — which proved negative. I was happy to hear when they were safely on a flight home.

By the following Monday, we experienced a surge of other American Citizen Services work. There was a dramatic increase in demand for Consular Reports of Birth Abroad and passport renewals. Many long-term resident American citizens who hadn't seen the urgency of obtaining the proof of citizenship for their newborn children or seen the need to renew their expired passport suddenly came to the embassy to seek these documents since they now wanted to leave Japan quickly. Our consular section was busy, but we sought to provide expeditious and courteous service to the American community in their hour of need.

On Saturday afternoon, about 24 hours after the earthquake, Embassy Seoul offered to send three volunteer consular officers to help us. Then some of the China posts also called, offering their help with additional officers. We needed and appreciated the help, but these arrivals further burdened our administrative staff. For a couple of days, our stalwart management section managed this personnel intake process, but then CA took over this task. They asked us to explain our staffing needs and CA in turn arranged for volunteers to travel to Tokyo to staff these new temporary positions. At a time when foreigners were fleeing Tokyo over fears of nuclear fallout, the Foreign Service began sending in volunteers to help us manage the crisis. I was impressed by the positive attitudes and high morale of these entry-level officer volunteers. Many had some Japanese-language capability and were already familiar with Japan.

I made a point of meeting every incoming officer. I usually asked them why they had volunteered and many replied that helping in a crisis like this was the reason they had joined the Foreign Service. I admired their desire to serve, despite personal risks. Most of them were entry-level officers, but we did ask two Embassy Tokyo veterans to return to help us manage this large intake of consular staff. Ed McKeon, our previous consul general, now posted in Mexico City, came to help, working out a schedule with Paul Fitzgerald where Ed would work from seven p.m. to seven a.m. and Paul would work the twelve-hour daytime shift. We also brought in our former visa chief, now posted in the Philippines, to provide some mid-level management support for our now-large consular section. The consular section grew from ten officers to about forty officers in less than a week. With their support, we could sustain 24/7 consular operations for two months.

The 1995 Kobe earthquake taught me the importance of employee mental health in a disaster. That magnitude 6.9 earthquake had resulted in six thousand people killed and forty thousand injured in Kobe city. An officer who had served at our consulate then later enlightened me about tension between Embassy Tokyo and the consulate in the aftermath of that tragedy. He acknowledged that the consulate was not as active as it could have been, but he said that the Embassy Tokyo leadership had failed to realize that consulate employees were under severe personal stress even as they were being asked to perform extraordinary duties. I never forgot this lesson — I needed my staff to respond to this crisis with courage and fortitude, but I could not

forget that they were also fathers and mothers worrying about their families' own safety. We needed to manage the mental health aspects of the disaster in this crisis.

Another lesson I learned from the Kobe earthquake was that our public posture sent important signals to the outside community. Our Consulate General in Osaka had been criticized for its slow response in 1995. I wanted our efforts to demonstrate visibly our commitment to the American community in Japan and to our Japanese hosts. Since the State Department had provided us with so many volunteers, we had the means to expand our hours of operation to manage the surge of consular work. By March 16 or 17, we paid for advertisements in Tokyo's English-language newspapers announcing that the embassy's consular section would extend its hours of operation until eight p.m. each evening. We sent notices to the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan and foreign clubs and churches saying we would extend our hours of operation for American citizens needing these services. We then announced that we would open for American Citizen Services work on Saturday and Sunday. The mainstream Japanese media reported on these announcements too, commenting that even as many other foreign embassies began to flee Tokyo, the United States Embassy would remain. Later, many Japanese told me that they had appreciated that the United States Embassy remained stalwart in support of Japan throughout the nuclear crisis.

We also dispatched consular teams to both Narita and Haneda airports to open help desks. The team of two consular officers and two local staff wore emergency reflective vests with the words "U.S. Embassy" in big letters. They made a large sign to announce their presence and set up a table in the airport lobby. We enjoyed good relations with both the Narita and Haneda airport authorities and they readily accommodated our request for space to set up these help desks. We informed the airlines and airport management to refer American citizens needing help to these temporary help desks. As it turned out, the Japanese airports and the airlines were extremely well organized despite the chaotic situation outside. Few Americans needed our assistance at the airports.

Yet, these airport help desks served an important public relations function. Many Americans who traveled home at this time later told me "I saw your table at the airport. I didn't need help, but I was really glad to know the U.S. embassy was there." On one team's third day at the airport, the consular officers told me that they were talking to more reporters than American citizens. I encouraged them to take the opportunity to talk to the reporters and explain to them the consular work that the embassy was performing in response to this crisis. I told them that all foreign service officers had a public affairs component to our jobs at this time. Later, the White House sent us a young political-appointee public relations employee who shut down these interactions between our consular officers and the media. He wanted to control the public messaging himself. I thought this decision was a mistake because our consular officers had a good story to tell the media and he didn't really understand the role of an embassy in a disaster.

We also dispatched mobile consular teams to Miyagi and Iwate prefectures, two of the prefectures hardest hit by the tsunamis. We decided against sending a team to Fukushima over concerns about radiation. The Japanese government did not want to deal with disaster tourism, so they had established security perimeters limiting entry around the affected areas to essential personnel. Our RSO worked his police contacts to obtain special entrance passes for our mobile consular teams. The police warned us that we shouldn't expect many public services — there was no gasoline, no electricity, no food, and no potable water.

Our motor pool drivers stepped up to support these mobile consular teams. I went down to the motor pool lounge to inform everyone that we needed two volunteer drivers and a mechanic for a difficult task; many raised their hands. Our mechanic was eager to volunteer. An avid surfer, he had spent his summer vacations at the beach towns that were now devastated. He wanted to go and help the communities that had been so hospitable to him since his youth. One of our volunteer drivers hailed from Iwate prefecture and he was also quite motivated to support our team as it sought to help his community.

Later, as we needed to drive people to Fukushima, even during a time of concern about radiation, we experienced no shortage of volunteer drivers. This work was unsettling because, when the cars returned, the drivers had to walk through our radiation monitoring equipment outside the embassy. (I'll explain how this equipment got there in a bit.) If they tested positive for radiation, they needed to remove their clothes and be hosed off completely. No one ever tested positive, but our drivers understood the risks of driving in the Fukushima region.

One mobile consular team remained a week in Sendai. They performed exceptional work under challenging conditions. Roads were blocked with rubble, city services like public transit and trash collection had broken down, and there was no heat, running water, or electricity. For this challenging assignment, our consul general selected the most resourceful and resilient entry-level consular officers. They had both lived in Japan prior to joining the Foreign Service and spoke good Japanese. These language skills were essential to communicate with local personnel at hospitals and shelters. We sent them up with two drivers, a mechanic, and two locally engaged consular staff. They brought all of their supplies with them — down parkas, boots, drinking water, meals-ready-to-eat (MREs), gasoline, sleeping bags, a camp stove, medical supplies, and tents — they were prepared.

The consular team in Sendai discovered an empty hotel whose helpful manager agreed they could camp out in an unkempt second-floor room. Their rooms were cold with no heat and they needed to walk up an unlit staircase with all their gear, but at least they weren't outside where the temperatures dropped below freezing at night. They set up their sleeping bags on top of the unmade beds. Snow covered the ground, so our teams were glad they brought hiking boots, ski gloves, and down parkas. After each long day of searching for missing Americans, our consular officers and their LES staff would return to this dark hotel room and heat up their MREs and boil water for tea on a camp stove. Then they called in reports on their battery-operated satellite telephones. Their days consisted of visiting morgues, churches, and temples, talking to local police, government officials, and community leaders who might have information about our list of missing Americans. People had started using these churches and temples to post notices like "I'm so-and-so, I'm okay." (Nowadays, people use tools like Facebook to announce they are fine, but these social media tools were only just being invented during this crisis.)

The team in Sendai reported that they'd encountered consular teams from the Australian and the UK embassies. These officers exchanged information on who they were looking for and began to divide up the large city into zones to avoid duplicate visits to the same places. Then they assembled in the evening to exchange information. Our team would report back "I didn't see so-and-so, but the Australian consular officer saw her and reports that she is fine." Then we could report back to relatives that their loved one was safe. Over the course of a week, our consular teams gradually reduced their list of missing Americans.

At the end of the week, the embassy's administrative section contracted with a bus company to organize an evacuation caravan from Sendai. I think we chartered three buses, so our team had to re-contact these Americans to inform them of where and when to meet to take these buses to Tokyo. We had some extra space, so we agreed to transport a few Australians and UK nationals back as well. I think there were about a hundred evacuees overall. There were a few people who chose not to leave but most wanted to do so; some needed assistance for return travel to the United States, so we provided repatriation loans to a few Americans.

When this consular team returned to Tokyo, our consul general hosted a welcome home party in the office. He had decorated their offices with signs and balloons and we served refreshments and drinks. I came downstairs to this party to thank all of our consular officers and staff. It was a discouraging time, so people needed something to celebrate. Our team had made it home safely from a difficult assignment. The arriving team was exhausted; they had not slept well in a week. But they appreciated the recognition. We of course nominated them for richly deserved awards. Much later, we received nice thank-you letters from parents and relatives saying they appreciated our help. Their outstanding performance made me feel good about the Foreign Service and particularly about the young officers and staff in our consular sections.

*KENNEDY: Jim, let's talk about the earthquake. Had communities along the coast prepared in advance to mitigate tsunami risks?*

ZUMWALT: Tokyo itself is not that vulnerable to tsunamis because it lies in a large bay some distance from the Pacific Ocean. But coastal areas of Japan that face the Pacific Ocean are vulnerable to tsunamis.

Parts of the coast that were most affected are very rough and rocky with steep cliffs and narrow river valleys. The severe force of the incoming tsunamis funneled the seawater into these valleys. In places, the tsunamis traveled inland faster than forty miles per hour. Whole buildings were uprooted and washed away. Most of the deaths and homelessness were caused by these tsunamis. The ultimate count was 22,000 killed, 400,000 people homeless, and \$300 billion of property damage. Japan needed to cope with a major disaster beyond the scope any of us had ever imagined. The United States was in a position to help.

*KENNEDY: Did we have any — I hate to use the term — assets, basically people, particularly military bases or anything like that?*

ZUMWALT: The earthquake itself and the tsunamis occurred between our consulate general in Sapporo and the embassy but the affected areas were far from both diplomatic facilities. The most affected area was in Sapporo's consular district, so they had the better connections with local officials.

*KENNEDY: As I recall, only one American, a young girl —*

ZUMWALT: There were two Americans who were killed. Both were with the Japan Exchange and Teaching program. Their names were Taylor Anderson and Monty Dickson. Taylor was from Richmond, Virginia. Taylor had been a teacher based in Ishinomaki in Iwate prefecture. As days wore on and we continued efforts to establish contacts with Americans in the region, we crossed people off our list after having discovered that they were safe. Many people, by the way, found themselves — often we would receive a call from a relative saying "So-and-so finally called me and she's okay." As we winnowed down our list of names of missing persons, we became more

and more concerned about our inability to locate Taylor. Our consular officer twice visited her school to interview teachers who said they had seen her after the earthquake. They reported that she had led a group of children to the school's emergency tsunami evacuation point on a nearby hill. One observer said she last saw Taylor on her bicycle riding away. But several days later, the police called us with the sad news that they had found her body. Taylor had drowned while bicycling from her school to her home. It was very difficult to inform her parents in Virginia of her death.

The other deceased American, Monty Dickson, was an Alaskan. He had been working in Rikuzentakata, a town in Iwate that had been devastated by the tsunami. The authorities did not find his body for over three weeks because it had been swept out to sea. Finally, on April 6, the Japanese police identified his body based on a DNA sample provided by Monty's brother. In both cases, the parents told us that it gave them some comfort to know that the U.S. Embassy had been looking for their loved one. Even though we were not able to help these two young Americans — our effort had been appreciated and noted. The deaths of these two Americans were a tragedy, but of course, so many Japanese were killed that day. It was an emotionally draining period.

We needed to set those emotions aside in order to help Japan; those assistance efforts demanded our full energy and attention. One big challenge was logistical — 400,000 people had been left homeless when it was still winter in this northern region of Japan. People had moved to makeshift shelters in schools and community centers, but these shelters lacked electricity, running water, and heat. Most of these shelters needed bedding, medical supplies, food, potable water, and blankets. Yet the roads were blocked, crumbled and buckled by the earthquake, and covered in debris by the tsunamis. The Sendai airport runway was literally under a foot of seawater. Japan mobilized half of the Self-Defense Forces personnel to assist affected communities.

USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) stepped up to this challenge. The closest OFDA representative to Tokyo lived in Bangkok. Bill Berger was quite experienced, having worked on earthquake preparedness in Nepal and on the U.S. humanitarian responses to many disasters such as the Christmas Eve tsunami in Indonesia. When Bill heard about the disaster in Japan, on his own initiative, he traveled to Tokyo. He boarded a plane out of Bangkok on Saturday, twelve hours after the disaster. There were no flights into the Tokyo airports yet, so he flew to Seoul and landed there Saturday evening before catching an onward flight to Tokyo. By Sunday, this expert on disaster response had joined our team to support our planning efforts. Bill's contributions were critical because we lacked training on how to mobilize and organize a disaster response. His mantra was "logistics, logistics, logistics." "The key," he said, "is not food or water or blankets, it's moving those items to where they are needed."

President Obama quickly declared a disaster. We had a disaster relief fund of \$100 million to tap. Bill Berger began working to set up a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to coordinate U.S. civilian and military disaster response work.

In the short term, our best logistics capability in Japan was the U.S. military. However, using our military is also expensive. The key was to work out plans where the military would provide needed capability quickly, but then turn things over to civilians as the civilian agencies geared up to respond to the crisis. The United States Marine Corps engineers are good at rebuilding airfields and moving rubble to clear roads. The marines flew helicopters into the damaged Sendai

airport and began clearing the airfield runway so that civilian transport aircraft could begin to ferry in needed supplies to that gateway airport.

I will focus this account on ways the U.S. Embassy became involved in this relief effort but do want to acknowledge the outstanding work of the U.S. Armed Forces in Japan and other military forces under the Pacific Command in Hawaii. Over 22,000 American marines, sailors, and airmen became involved in the relief effort. Their work was quickly dubbed Operation Tomodachi. (Tomodachi means “friend” in Japanese.) For the first week or so, the U.S. military supported the Self-Defense Forces efforts to transport critical supplies — food, water, blankets, medicines, and other supplies — to these shelters. The Japanese media carried extensive reports of American helicopters and trucks arriving at beleaguered shelters with needed supplies.

The U.S. military performance at this time was truly extraordinary. After the marines cleared the airport at Sendai so it could accept civilian cargo aircraft flights, they worked together with the Self-Defense Forces to clear debris from roads and helped rebuild bridges. The U.S. Navy positioned its aircraft carrier offshore and began flying helicopters to remote areas with relief supplies. U.S. Army trucks navigated damaged roads to bring relief supplies to remote villages. The U.S. military won tremendous and well-deserved accolades from the Japanese media for its disaster work. I remember one photo of a blonde female sailor who was loading a helicopter from the aircraft carrier deck. On her arm was a large patch that said in English and Japanese “Operation Tomodachi.” That image resonated positively with the Japanese public. I was not directly involved in the military’s work other than efforts to coordinate our personnel policies and our communications with the Japanese government, so I’ll focus this account more on the civilian relief efforts, but I do want to acknowledge the military contributions.

I heard from many American military officials that they were impressed by the social order in Japan, despite the chaotic situation. For example, a U.S. Army truck driver told me that the vast majority of shelters he visited had organized themselves despite the privations they faced. When the army truck arrived with supplies at a school converted to a shelter, the schoolteachers had already organized a volunteer human chain to quickly offload the cargo from his truck. When supplies of food or drink at one shelter were inadequate, the teachers had rationed supplies among the victims, prioritizing children and the elderly. But still there were a lot of needs. This driver told me that he would radio in new requests for diapers, food, and medicine after each delivery.

Our first hours focused especially on our consular and victim relief work, but by Saturday afternoon, we began hearing alarming reports about a nuclear emergency at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant complex. Two of the facility’s six reactors were shut down for maintenance, but it was unclear if the reactor operators had maintained control of the other four to bring them to cold shutdown. (About ten kilometers away, a second large facility also experienced severe damage from the earthquake and tsunami, but its operators managed to shut down the four operating reactors safely.) After the first explosion at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear facility on Saturday afternoon, we began looking at this situation more closely, but we were still also focused on the earthquake and tsunami relief and search-and-rescue efforts. On Saturday March 12, however, the Japanese started to evacuate people within three kilometers (1.6 miles) of the reactor and we realized the problems at the Fukushima Daiichi complex were much more serious than we had thought. Later, they expanded this evacuation zone to twenty kilometers (12.4 miles). Tokyo began to experience rolling electricity blackouts since so much of its power had come from these large nuclear power plants. As we began paying more attention to

the nuclear component of the disaster, we were fortunate to be able to call upon the resources and expertise of the entire U.S. government.

When we heard these initial reports of a nuclear emergency, we quickly relayed to Washington DC the capabilities we lacked. Quickly — I think it was by Sunday evening — two engineers from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) arrived in Tokyo. They carried with them a nuclear power plant disaster manual that had been commissioned by the U.S. government after the 9/11 terrorist attack. This manual had step-by-step recommendations for responses to a range of crisis scenarios. These two engineers had already practiced for managing crisis situations at similar U.S. nuclear plants.

The embassy informed the Japanese government that we had invited these engineers to Japan and that we would like to share their expertise. We arranged for those two engineers to visit the Prime Minister's Office's Emergency Command Center to learn how Japan was managing the crisis and to offer our help. I accompanied these engineers to this initial meeting which, as I recall, began around nine p.m. on Sunday night. Prior to this meeting, I had not myself focused on Fukushima, because I was busy coordinating the embassy consular and disaster relief work.

When the three of us arrived at the meeting, we met someone from the Japanese Fire and Disaster Management Agency, an official from METI (the cabinet agency responsible for nuclear power), an official from the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency (NISA), some engineers from the plant operator the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), two engineers from Hitachi (the company that built the GE-designed plants), and one TEPCO plant operator who had come to Tokyo from Fukushima.

Our conversation in that meeting was as if someone had splashed icy water on my face. The TEPCO engineers were clearly frightened: their hands were shaking and their voices trembled. The plant operator had uncombed hair, dirty clothes, and smelled like he had not bathed in two days. He was clearly exhausted and became emotional during our meeting. They explained that a fifteen-meter tsunami had flooded the reactor building, disabling the emergency power generators and the cooling system of three nuclear reactors. The backup gravity-fed water-cooling system had failed because the earthquake had damaged the canal that was to flow emergency cooling water from an artificial lake downhill to the reactors. Without electricity, the backup battery-operated sensors had begun to fail. The two NRC engineers remained calm and kept asking questions. I didn't understand many of the technical questions about the temperature of this chamber and the pressure on that gauge. But I did understand the chilling answers to almost every question — "We don't know." As the NRC engineers later told me, we were almost blind because the sensing equipment needed to measure data in order to make informed decisions had either been destroyed by the tsunami or lost power as the batteries expired. For the second time in three days, I began to fear for my safety and for the safety of my staff, both American and Japanese.

*KENNEDY: How'd your Japanese hold up?*

ZUMWALT: These Japanese scientists and engineers all spoke good English, but my language skills came in handy. I could interpret for our American engineers the side conversations among the Japanese participants and sometimes I could fill them in on the nuances that did not come across in their English. The Japanese engineers were internationally trained, very well-educated,

qualified scientists and engineers for running the nuclear plant in a normal situation, but of course it was easier for them to communicate in their native Japanese.

I returned to the embassy with the two NRC engineers in our car. They began discussing the situation at the plant and how to prevent a nuclear meltdown. I interrupted the conversation to ask them, "How bad is this for Tokyo? Do we need to start thinking about an evacuation?" Their answer was the plant was 160 miles away; if this were in the United States, we wouldn't evacuate a city that far away from a nuclear power facility. They said that a large-scale, rushed evacuation could cause a panic resulting in many deaths and injuries. If there were large amounts of radiation emitted into the atmosphere, they advised, it was less risky to urge the city population to remain indoors rather than to flee outside onto roads where they might be exposed to even more radiation. I took a deep breath as the engineers returned to their technical conversation. Despite my fears, I decided that I needed to listen to this expert advice. For the next six weeks, coordinating the U.S. response to the nuclear crisis would become almost all-consuming for me.

By Monday morning, our consular team was geared up and operating smoothly — our Consul General Paul Fitzgerald and our former Consul General Ed McKeon had that operation well in hand. One of my main roles was to assist them with staff morale — to welcome new arrivals and to meet with the officers and Japanese staff daily to encourage their work. I would visit the consular section after every team's shift and they took pride in informing me about how many welfare and whereabouts cases they had resolved each day. Bill Berger from the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance continued to do an outstanding job coordinating and mobilizing the U.S. disaster response. I talked to Paul, Bill, and Ed frequently but, by Monday, my main focus shifted to working with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission engineers on the nuclear crisis.

The NRC team needed reinforcements. On Monday afternoon, I visited our fifth-floor economic section conference room which our admin section had set up as the NRC Tokyo office. I was surprised to see that their suitcases were still in the office; 24 hours after their arrival, these two engineers still had not had time to check into their hotel because they had been so busy consulting colleagues in the United States or talking to their Japanese counterparts. I knew they could not function without sleep, so we arranged transport to their hotel and for them to take an afternoon nap before our next meeting with the Japanese government Monday evening. We worked to bring in more NRC experts so that they could sustain their work over a long period.

Nobody really understood the current situation at the nuclear power plants due to the failure of the sensing equipment. The NRC team recommended venting internal gases to prevent a hydrogen explosion and flooding the reactor with seawater to cool the fuel. The Japanese political leadership resisted venting as they did not want radioactive particles to escape into the air. TEPCO management initially resisted the flooding proposal as seawater would destroy the delicate nuclear reactor equipment. TEPCO continued fruitless efforts to inject fresh water into the reactors to cool the nuclear fuel. Pressure inside the reactor containment vessels was building, making it difficult to inject water from the outside.

I returned home Sunday night (actually Monday morning) around two a.m. and woke up at five a.m. to return to the office. As I was getting dressed, I watched footage of steam and gases escaping from the Fukushima nuclear power plant as the result of an explosion. CNN and other networks were broadcasting breathless stories about the accident. My heart sank when I saw these images. Before I left home, I asked Ann to pack each of us a "go bag" in a backpack with a

change of clothes, our passports, medicine, credit cards, and some cash in case we needed to depart quickly.

Our NRC engineers told me that this explosion was probably caused by hydrogen pressure from inside the reactors. They surmised that hydrogen had built up because the plant operators did not open valves to reduce the pressure inside the containment vessels. Now, much larger quantities of radioactive gases would escape into the atmosphere. The question we now faced was how dangerous is this situation? Should Japan expand the zone of evacuations?

We realized we lacked expertise on the medical aspects of this crisis. Our embassy doctor was a wonderful physician, but he was not an expert on radiation sickness. Again, we asked for help and some important people came to our aid. One was from the National Institutes of Health, Dr. Norman Coleman. Norm had received his medical degree at Yale and had taught at both Stanford and Harvard medical schools with a specialty in radiation oncology. Norm was the Associate Director of the Radiation Research Program at the National Cancer Institute. As important as his specialized knowledge was, Norm's avuncular personality imparted a sense of calm in a very stressful environment. He rapidly became a valuable resource to help us evaluate our medical risks from radiation exposure. Norm was also widely respected by the Japanese medical community. His connections in Japan gave us insights into the advice that Japanese experts delivered to the Japanese government.

Norm advised us that it was important to communicate risk in ways that people can process the information and make decisions based on science. He encouraged us to bring a health communications expert onto our team. After conveying this request, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta sent a health-risk communications expert named Jena Telfer who had a Ph.D. in Communications. Jena provided us outstanding advice on communicating risk. She noted that our audience's ability to process information was affected by their psychological state. She explained that emotions like fear and anger can interfere with messages conveying health information.

Our embassy website became one of our most important communications tools. Despite the lack of working mobile phones and the electricity blackouts, the internet continued to function and many people visited our embassy website to read our travel advisories. The fast-moving crisis situation meant that we needed to update our website frequently. We began uploading information from the U.S. government about topics like drinking-water safety, radiation in seafood, and atmospheric radiation exposure risks. Our website rapidly became a portal to refer our audience to existing information from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the CDC, and the American Cancer Society, among others. We needed to convey good medical advice to counter the uninformed rumors and unscientific information on the internet. We wanted the website to serve as a reliable place where people could find credible information.

*KENNEDY: Did Japan suffer from a scandal-type press?*

ZUMWALT: The Japanese media reports on the crisis were largely responsible and accurate. Even though the purpose of Embassy Tokyo's website was to advise American citizens, many Japanese, especially in the media, came to consider the U.S. Embassy to be a reliable and credible source for information about issues like radiation exposure risks. Because of the State Department's clear "no double standard" policy that we must provide the same safety information to the American public that we provide to our own employees, we would post online

our advice on health risks in Japan. We updated this health information on our website daily, sometimes more frequently. We began seeing Japanese media reports that would quote the U.S. Embassy about a topic like drinking-water safety or radiation residues on seafood, fresh fruits, and vegetables.

Nobody could predict how the problem at Fukushima would develop. The initial response from the Japanese government was to calm the public. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yukio Edano, the primary government spokesperson, issued a reassuring statement that the government had the situation under control. I knew this statement was not true from my own meetings with the plant operators. Jena advised us that our most important communications asset was our credibility. If we did not know something, then we needed to be honest. Edano lost credibility when, less than a day after he said the situation was under control, the public saw televised images of the first Fukushima nuclear plant explosion.

After the first explosion, the Japanese government communications approach moved to the other extreme. They began communicating data points without providing context to help people assess new information. For example, one day — maybe Monday or Tuesday — the water authority measured a very small elevation in the amount of radioactive iodine-131 in one of the scores of city water samples that had been tested. We asked our experts who said that this single, low-level reading was not of great concern. They explained that there are many places with low levels of naturally occurring radiation and they would want to see data from multiple sources before recommending steps to address any potential problem. But the Japanese government conveyed this information to the public without this important context. The government instead said that, as a matter of precaution, people preparing baby formula might want to use bottled water. In the atmosphere of fear, many citizens concluded that Tokyo tap water was unsafe to drink. This caused panic-buying and soon there were no bottled drinks of any kind to be found in Tokyo. Tokyo is a city filled with vending machines and convenience stores but, in a matter of hours, they had been picked clean of any beverages.

Because our embassy had prepared in advance for emergencies, our management section had already stored a one-month supply of drinking water on our compound. Coca-Cola assured us they could produce as much bottled water as we needed. Many on our staff became stressed about drinking-water availability, so we informed them that we had an adequate supply of bottled water for everyone. I noticed that many embassy staff began bringing bottled water to our meetings, so I began to bring my glass which I filled from the drinking fountain in the auditorium before our all-hands meetings. I wanted our staff to see that I was drinking the tap water.

Jenna advised us that we needed to put information in context to help the public understand what it means. Henceforth, as we published data from the Japanese government about radiation levels, we would say something like “this amount of radiation is the equivalent of eating two bananas.” She was good at finding contextual statements we could post on our website from reputable sources like the NIH or the CDC.

The mental health of our embassy staff remained an important concern for me. Some were afraid for their own health and I faced demands from some staff to evacuate the post. Some of this fear was caused by the many aftershocks, but for others the greatest fear was the unknown nuclear radiation. We talked to the State Department and agreed on a “voluntary departure” for family members but not for employees. Under Secretary for Management Pat Kennedy and his team

arranged a charter aircraft on March 16 to fly out embassy families who wanted to depart. I recognized that this movement of embassy families would garner media attention, so I worked with our public affairs section to message the context of this decision. Our main message was that the United States was standing by Japan, that we were confident that Japan would recover and rebuild, that the U.S. Embassy staff would remain in Tokyo to continue our work, but family members would be allowed to go home if they chose. Most family members chose to leave, some because they were afraid and many because the schools had closed and, with a two-week spring break ahead, they thought it would be nice for their children to spend time in the United States.

My wife has subsequently become a disaster mental health volunteer for the Red Cross; she obtained a master's degree in Social Work after she retired from the Foreign Service. Ann told me that, in any disaster, about fifty percent of people experience some degree of psychological trauma. Some Embassy Tokyo employees were fine, some had mild psychological trauma, others had more severe symptoms. The vast majority of the embassy staff handled the situation well, managing their personal stress and performing well on the job. But there were a few people on the far end of the trauma spectrum who were no longer able to contribute positively to our mission. Our regional psychiatrist proposed a good plan for this situation. He said, "The children of some tandem couple parents need a medical escort, so why don't we designate these people who really need to depart as the medical escorts for the children?" In this manner, we sent two or three employees home to escort the unaccompanied children on the voluntary evacuation flight.

Later, several Foreign Service employees approached me to say "Thank you so much for letting my family leave. Now I can focus on the job." They were willing to work hard and expose themselves to risk, but their concern about their families had been a burden and a distraction. By removing their families from this chaotic scene, they could focus full-time on their important jobs. After the evacuation, morale immediately improved. Those family members in the community who had been a negative influence had departed.

After most of our family members left post, our management counselor proposed another way to boost morale. The State Department has a system of hardship pay whereby staff working at posts with difficult conditions can receive extra pay. He applied for and received a special decision whereby Tokyo was designated a hardship post for one month due to the risk from radiation and due to the harsher living conditions. Because it only lasted one month, I do not think our employees received much in the way of increased pay, but they appreciated that our embassy management and State Department leadership had acknowledged their extraordinary efforts — this step did boost morale.

*KENNEDY: This brings up a question. I haven't been in an embassy that had a psychiatrist. Was this something relatively new? What role do they play?*

ZUMWALT: In Asia, the State Department had four regional psychiatrists, assigned to Tokyo, Beijing, Bangkok, and one other post. Each had regional responsibilities. Much of their work is with embassy employee children who need counseling and advice. The Tokyo-based regional psychiatrist, Fred Summers, traveled frequently; he had patients in twelve or fourteen posts and would visit each post maybe quarterly or twice a year. We were fortunate to have a psychiatrist located in Tokyo to help us with stress management and coping strategies.

I began meeting Fred daily. He was a wonderful advisor on the status of community morale. The day after the evacuation flight with American embassy dependents departed, he told me, "Ninety

percent of my workload departed on that plane!" He told me that especially small children had been experiencing difficulty coping. He explained that the frequent aftershocks interfered with children's sleep patterns. We never discussed any individual patients as I didn't want to learn private medical information, but I did want to understand our community's mental health situation. Fred became an important source of information on that issue.

Fred also followed his own advice on self-care and mental health. One day, he came to me and said he really needed to go on a scheduled vacation for his own mental health. He then added that he had a solution. Our previous regional psychiatrist, now posted in Bangkok, was willing to come to Tokyo to fill in for two weeks while he was away. We said fine, so Dr. Marcia Meckler came and filled in very admirably during that two-week period. It was interesting to me that even a professional whose job was to help others was himself stressed. His attention to monitoring himself taught me something about my own self-care.

Many embassies in Tokyo closed during this crisis. I stayed in close contact with the UK, Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand embassies and they, like us, remained in Tokyo throughout. However, other large embassies closed, including the French, Italian, and German embassies, as well as the EU Commission.

My chef at the DCM residence was a French national. About a week after the earthquake, he called us in a panic since the French embassy had informed him that he needed to leave immediately for Haneda Airport, where the French government had arranged for an evacuation airplane for French nationals. He needed to arrive at Haneda within the next four hours or they would leave him behind. He asked us what he should do. We told him that it was his choice, but we were staying. Ultimately, he decided to stay. I then called my counterpart DCM at the French embassy and heard an out-of-office message saying "We have left Tokyo and are now at our cultural center in Kyoto if you need to reach us." This was how I learned that French diplomats had fled Tokyo. I called the German DCM and there wasn't even a voicemail, the phone just rang and rang. After the earthquake, the Japanese media ridiculed the large number of embassies who had left, but many of these reports also noted that the American embassy had remained.

With the inflow of volunteers from the State Department and other agencies (at one point, we hosted fifteen staff from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in Tokyo), the embassy expanded from about 150 to 400 direct-hire Americans. That increase presented a challenge for our management section — these new arrivals needed visas, computers, computer logins and accounts, office space, security and health briefings, hotel reservations, currency conversion, and transportation to and from the airport. We requested a few volunteer general services officers (GSOs) and a budget officer who had previously worked at Embassy Tokyo to come temporarily to help manage this increased administrative workload. Since many expatriates had begun to flee or cancel their business travel to Tokyo, the Hotel Okura Tokyo next door to the embassy was delighted to furnish us as many rooms for employees on TDY orders as we needed. They had shut down one wing completely and, for a few weeks, most of the guests in the other hotel wing were U.S. Embassy temporary visitors.

*KENNEDY: What about your economic and political sections? What were these officers and others doing?*

ZUMWALT: I described how the consular section and management sections were quite busy. Our public affairs section was also busy managing our dynamic website and our almost-daily

press releases. Ambassador Roos had just launched his Twitter account, so our public affairs section worked closely with him to populate his Twitter feed with content related to the U.S. support for Japan's efforts to provide disaster assistance. In contrast, the economic and commercial sections had extra capacity because they were no longer supporting trade negotiations or promoting U.S. exports. Nobody was interested, for the moment, in political or defense attaché reporting either. I turned to these four sections to staff our new embassy operations center. Because of the time zone difference, most phone calls from Washington came during Tokyo's night and most of our communicating with the Japanese government occurred during the daytime. We realized we needed a 24/7 operation separate from consular just to handle the volume of policy communications among the embassy, Japanese government agencies, Washington government agencies, the Pacific Command, and U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ). I appreciate that both the commerce and defense departments allowed us to "borrow" officers to staff this operations center.

Our embassy staff included two State Department Operations Center veterans who had been senior watch officers, Economic Officer Paul Horowitz and Political Officer Evan Reade. I asked them to create a plan for staffing a sustainable round-the-clock operations center at the embassy. They recommended that we establish four eight-person teams — a captain, a deputy, a keeper of the log, two press monitors, a military liaison, an office management specialist, and someone for technical and IT support. (Later, we added military embeds from USFJ to each team.) They recommended that we organize four teams that would work from eight a.m. to four p.m. two days, then four p.m. to midnight two days, then midnight to eight a.m. two days, then take off two days before starting the cycle over again. This arrangement allowed us to sustain our operations for an extended period while avoiding employee burnout. This proposal meant we needed 32 staff for these positions. I did not want outside volunteers for these teams because working in this nerve center required the Japanese language and government contacts. We did incorporate one volunteer. John Nylin came to Japan on his vacation from Embassy Baghdad to work for two weeks during the crisis. John had been a Pol-Mil officer in our political section and had wonderful contacts with USFJ and the Japanese Self-Defense Forces. I remember asking John if he really wanted to work for us during his well-deserved vacation from Baghdad, but he was eager, so we gratefully accepted his help.

We set this center up in our shuttered basement cafeteria. Every eight hours, a replacement team arrived for the next work shift. The function of these teams was to gather information in one place into our log of activities, monitor the Japanese media, report to Washington, receive and act on phone calls and emails from Washington, liaise with USFJ, and to alert the front office to important developments, much like the Operations Center does at the State Department. Fairly quickly, we launched a sustainable operation to handle events as they unfolded. At the end of this crisis period, we sent our log of the incoming and outgoing phone calls, meetings, and decisions back to Washington as a written record of Embassy Tokyo's actions during the crisis.

Our political, public affairs, and economic sections, the Foreign Commercial Service, and our defense attaché offices contributed most of their staff to this round-the-clock watch office. In addition to Paul and Evan, I asked Ann to serve as one of the watch team captains. She became an important source of information for me on developments in this crisis management center. Each team included Japanese nationals from the press section who reported on Japanese media stories of interest. Our Pol-Mil officers performed the military liaison function. Our entry-level officers became the scribes who kept a 24/7 log of embassy activities.

We quickly learned the importance of open communications with the U.S. military. One morning early in the crisis, the U.S. military broadcast service, the Armed Forces Network (AFN), suddenly began transmitting public service advertisements urging parents not to let their children play outside out of an abundance of caution regarding the radiation risk. That announcement caused panic among some of the embassy staff and their families. They demanded to know what the military knew and expressed concern that we were hiding information. We quickly told USFJ that we needed to coordinate our messaging on the health risks to the public and to our employees. We explained to them the State Department's "no double standard" policy about risk communication. After that incident, we worked together more closely on our respective public messaging. We also worked to share with USFJ the opinions of the subject matter experts who had joined our staff. We dispatched our consul general in Naha, Raymond Greene, to work at Yokota Air Force Base full-time as our embed with USFJ. Prior to his assignment in Okinawa, Ray had been our Pol-Mil unit chief in Tokyo and he was well-respected by the USFJ leadership. Likewise, USFJ sent four army colonels to embed with our embassy operations center teams to improve embassy-USFJ communications.

A few days into the nuclear crisis, the State Department asked us to begin contingency plans for evacuating Americans and for closing our embassy in Tokyo and moving the ambassador and a small staff to Consulate General Osaka. Because our in-house experts advised us that we were unlikely to experience health-threatening radiation in Tokyo, I was confident we would not evacuate Americans from Tokyo and that this plan was unnecessary. But we did ask some of our consular and Pol-Mil officers to work with the U.S. military on a plan to evacuate American citizens from the Tokyo and Tōhoku areas using military and chartered civilian transport. I asked our RSO to begin to work on "tripwires" for decision points on an evacuation. Most of these tripwires were health and safety related — for example, if safe drinking water was not available or if there was civil unrest that made travel in the community unsafe. I was confident that we would not face this sort of situation in Japan, but recognized the need for planning.

We also began contingency planning for closing our embassy about a week after the earthquake. We began to shred classified materials, a challenging task for those agencies who had stored a large volume of materials. We told every State section and every agency to reduce their classified holdings to a one-hour burn time in case we needed to depart suddenly. Having come from Embassy Beijing where we had been quite disciplined about minimizing our classified holdings, I was surprised to learn how much classified material was stored inside our building. Embassy shredders began operating continuously. Our communicators became busy accepting bags of classified material to burn in their chemical incinerators.

We began quiet contingency planning to move our embassy operations to Consulate General Osaka. Only a few people in the embassy were aware of this effort because I wanted to avoid unfounded rumors that we were planning to evacuate Tokyo. I asked an officer from our political section, John Mark Pommersheim, who had been on an advance team that opened an embassy in a newly independent state of the former Soviet Union, to plan for a move to our post in Osaka. I called our consul general in Osaka, Ed Dong, to inform him and swore him to secrecy. We did finalize a contingency plan to move the ambassador and a few staff to Osaka if necessary. I believe we actually sent a truck down to pre-position some communications equipment. Our plan for the embassy chancery building in case we needed to evacuate staff was that a special Marine Corps team would secure the building and then hunker down in the embassy basement. I planned to stay with these marines inside the embassy as the last State Department employee if necessary.

We were fortunate with this planning for two reasons — we did not need to implement the plans and the rumors did not leak out.

For the first few weeks, we needed to pay close attention to embassy staff morale. The Japanese and foreign media were full of alarming reports about radiation risks. I was hearing very different advice from our experts but realized that our staff would be reassured if they heard directly from these experts. Full transparency was the best policy because our employees remained understandably concerned about their personal safety.

Dr. Norm Coleman from NIH spoke at many town hall meetings for the American community and for our employees and family members. Norm was reassuring and would explain how radiation worked, why it was a concern, how radiation occurs naturally, and that different parts of the world have different radiation levels. He tried to put our situation in context. We did about two or three large town hall meetings, one for the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan where they rented a hotel ballroom and hosted about three hundred people to hear Norm speak.

For the embassy staff, I decided to hold daily all-hands meetings in our auditorium. At eight a.m., everyone on our staff, American, Japanese, or third-country national, was invited to the embassy auditorium for an expanded country team meeting. Often, Ambassador Roos was busy on the telephone and unavailable to chair to these meetings, so most days I presided, sitting below the stage of the auditorium and facing the rows of chairs filled with our staff. Especially early on when anxieties were high, we might have as many as 250 people attending. I would start these meetings by asking the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to brief us on Fukushima nuclear power plant developments. I could hear a pin drop because people were paying such close attention to their briefing. We also then went around the country team for briefings from our newly formed embassy operations center, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), the National Institutes of Health, the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), the Department of Energy (DOE), the Defense Attaché Office (DAO), the Regional Security Office (RSO), the Community Liaison Office (CLO), and the consular, public affairs, management, and other sections. For example, the NRC would brief on the status of efforts to safeguard the nuclear reactors at Fukushima, consular would brief on its success in locating missing Americans, and the DAO would brief on U.S. military efforts in Operation Tomodachi. NIH's Norm Coleman would explain the minimal medical risks of the levels of radiation Tokyo was experiencing. Our press section would explain our public posture to remind everyone to stay on message.

Fred Summers, our regional psychiatrist, would remind everyone about steps we all needed to take to manage stress. He would talk about the importance of getting sleep and exercise and eating properly. At one point, Fred came to me to ask whether he needed to continue with his daily stress management briefings. I encouraged him to do so because his briefings gave permission to people experiencing stress to come see him for a private consultation. Everyone responds differently in a crisis and I wanted all of our employees to know that Fred was available if they needed individual professional help to cope with the crisis.

These meetings served three purposes. The first was to coordinate our efforts by providing everyone with what air force pilots call “situational awareness.” It’s important to understand what all other members of the team are doing in order to perform one’s own tasks successfully. The meetings also served to reassure our staff that we were striving to provide a safe work and living environment. The third goal was to provide positive reinforcement so that everyone

remained motivated. Many of the contributors to these meetings were proud of their accomplishment and I wanted them to be able to showcase their outstanding work to their peers.

There was one comical incident during one of these all-hands meetings. The Japanese phone company had begun to send out mobile phone alerts four or five seconds prior to an earthquake. This meant that our telephones would vibrate prior to each major aftershock. I happened to be talking from my seat on the auditorium stage when my remarks were interrupted by the buzzing of hundreds of mobile phones resonating in the crowded confines of our auditorium. A few people got up to evacuate the room and others stirred in their seats. Since our auditorium was one of the safest places to be during an aftershock, I made a point of remaining seated and continuing to talk calmly. After a while, most people returned to their seats and we continued the meeting.

One unsung hero that helped shape Japan's response to the crisis was the DOE. In the early days after the first and then second explosion at Fukushima, the Japanese were hamstrung by the lack of information on the amount of radiation that had been released into the atmosphere. They did not know if the outer chamber of the reactor had contained the radioactive fuel or if the fuel had burned through and was leaking into the groundwater or the atmosphere. They were also concerned about the large quantity of spent fuel stored in the reactors. If the ponds cooling this spent fuel had leaked, these used fuel rods would soon begin to release large quantities of radiation into the atmosphere. After the initial effort to flood the reactors with seawater and boric acid, we thought the nuclear fuel in the reactors was covered in seawater, but we didn't know how much radiation was leaking into the atmosphere or the groundwater. With so little information, it was impossible to assess accurately the radiation risks.

The DOE provided some sensitive equipment that could be loaded onto an aircraft and flown overhead while it measured the ground radiation below. The U.S. Air Force flew this equipment and technicians to operate it to Yokota Air Force Base. Fairly soon, a small U.S. Air Force aircraft with this equipment began flying lazy S-shaped patterns over areas around the reactor. After returning to base, the data was offloaded and the DOE could print out a map showing precise ground radiation levels on different areas around the Fukushima nuclear plant.

Their first report was reassuring since far less radiation had escaped than people had calculated using worst-case scenarios. We realized that there had been two radiation plumes, one north and one west, which reflected the different wind patterns when the explosions occurred. Thanks to this data, we could be much more accurate in determining where it was unsafe to live or travel. I believe this aircraft flew patterns in the sky for about fifteen days gathering additional data. With this information, the Japanese government could safely send in technicians for a short period of time to install ground equipment to continuously monitor radiation levels. Thanks to the efforts of these DOE technicians and the air force team that flew the airplane, we could dramatically reduce the fear of radiation and make informed decisions to protect the safety of workers in the initial period after the nuclear meltdown.

*KENNEDY: Were there references to Chernobyl?*

ZUMWALT: There were references to Chernobyl and Three Mile Island. This accident was not as bad as Chernobyl but was more serious than Three Mile Island. The Japanese government initially claimed that this accident was less severe than Three Mile Island, but they needed to change this assessment as more information became available.

Many amazing local employees accomplished incredible tasks over several weeks. Many were motivated because they understood that the U.S. Embassy had mobilized to help their country and they welcomed the opportunity to help us to respond effectively to Japan's needs. The morning after the earthquake, I was walking to work along a busy four-lane street with an elevated highway overhead shortly after seven a.m. It was Saturday morning and the street was deserted. I spied one of our drivers running down the opposite side of the normally busy street. I wondered why he was running and hurried my pace to catch him as he crossed to my side of the street.

I asked, "Why are you running?"

He said, "I'm late for work. I was supposed to arrive at seven!"

Knowing that the trains and subways were not running, I asked him, "How did you get here?"

He replied, "I walked. I started walking at four a.m. because it takes me three hours on foot to come into the embassy."

I said, "You don't need to run. People will appreciate that you came in, nobody will complain that you were five minutes late."

But I was impressed with his work ethic. He understood that he filled an important job; we needed him to drive us to crucial meetings and he did not want to report late for work. His attitude was typical of so many of our Japanese employees.

*KENNEDY: After a couple of days, the emphasis had gone from identifying and getting Americans out to concentrating on helping.*

ZUMWALT: We needed to perform all of these tasks, ensure the safety of our staff, help Americans in distress, and assist our ally Japan all at once. But you are right that the focus shifted over time, particularly after the voluntary departure of most of our dependents.

Our consular local staff was also amazing. Our Consul General Paul Fitzgerald came to my office one day, about three or four days after the tsunami. He asked me to visit the American Citizen Services section and to talk to Mrs. X, the senior LES of that section, a really valued and resourceful employee. If we had a vexing ACS problem, she would be the one we would ask for advice. Paul told me that she was from the Pacific Ocean coast of Aomori prefecture and her hometown had been inundated by the tsunami. Paul said, "I've been trying to send her home because she has not heard from her parents and she doesn't even know if they're alive." He felt badly for her.

I accompanied Paul down to the consular section to talk to her and said, "I really appreciate what you're doing. Your work is important. But if you need to go, we understand. Your parents are important too."

She turned to me and said, "I don't know whether my parents are alive or dead, but if I go now, it doesn't make any difference. Whatever happened to them happened; I want to be useful here helping others."

She was so stoic, I had to stifle a tear because her personal situation was so hard for me to accept. In this moment, I felt completely helpless. I'm not sure how I would have handled a situation like hers myself. Later, we heard her parents were fine. Her cousin had come to transport them outside the tsunami-affected area.

Although most of the embassy family members departed Tokyo on March 16, five days after the earthquake, there were perhaps fifteen spouses who remained behind. They needed to participate in our efforts in order to reduce the time they spent mulling over the horrible news about Fukushima on the television and the internet.

I talked to one of our CLOs (community liaison office employees) who had stayed behind. I asked her to organize a project for spouses who wanted to contribute to our efforts. By this time, Tokyo's food distribution network had broken down. In normal times, we had a choice of perhaps eighty places to eat and six convenience stores within a ten-minute walk of the embassy. But after the first weekend, all of the restaurants had shuttered and the convenience store shelves were completely barren. For some of us working long hours at the embassy, this lack of food options was a hardship.

Our CLO organized a "food-support network" to feed our embassy staff. She set out a schedule where spouses signed up for times when they would cook a hot meal for those working at the embassy. I must say that morale at the embassy increased when they learned that family members began raiding their freezers and pantries to prepare donated food for us at work. When the meal was ready, someone would announce on the embassy loudspeaker that lunch (or dinner or breakfast) was served. Family member morale also improved after they were provided an opportunity to contribute to our efforts. I made a point to visit the cafeteria as often as I could to thank our volunteers. Susie Roos and Ann mobilized our chefs to cook for the office during this time as well.

In the rush of business in Tokyo, we did not pay adequate attention to our family members who had departed post. With our voluntary departure, our family members were scattered around the United States. We began to realize they were feeling lost and isolated because they lacked sources of information on our activities. We asked two of our CLOs, who had departed post to work from Washington, to reach out and communicate with our family members now scattered around the United States. We communicated with them closely about the situation in Japan and their spouses' good work. The CLO office set up a Facebook closed group to post information and pictures of their spouses at work. Removing family members from the country was not the end but just the beginning; we needed to stay in touch with them so they could continue to feel that they remained a part of our community.

Several times early in the crisis, Under Secretary for Management Pat Kennedy called to talk to me directly. Kennedy's focus was on embassy staff morale and our ability to manage the workload during this crisis. Our calls were usually brief and I always thanked him for the outstanding support we were receiving from the State Department.

The second time he called, Kennedy must have been surprised. His call came in the day I had ordered all embassy offices to reduce their classified holdings to less than a one-hour destruct time. Our colleagues from another agency just one floor below me had begun continuously feeding papers into their shredders. Suddenly, one shredder overheated and began smoking and that event set off the chancery fire alarm. I had begun to descend from my ninth-floor office down the fire escape when Pat Kennedy called my mobile phone. As I answered, Kennedy could hear the fire alarm reverberating and the echo of feet pounding down the metal stairs in our fire escape as I exited the building. He asked me what was going on because he could hear the alarm and people running. I just said, "We have a fire alarm and the embassy staff is evacuating the

chancery. I don't think the situation is serious, but I need to find out. Can I call you back?" I'm sure he must have wondered how well we were managing the situation.

I wouldn't be honest if I didn't admit that the United States government made three big errors that I wish we could take back. In hindsight, I wish I had pushed harder to avoid these mistakes.

The first two mistakes were the State Department travel warnings of March 16 and 17. The Japanese government had announced an evacuation zone of three kilometers around the Fukushima nuclear plant and then later expanded that zone to 20 km (12.4 miles). This second evacuation order affected about twenty thousand Japanese residents. We informed Washington that very few Americans lived in this rural area and that the Japanese government had promised to assist in the evacuation of any foreigners as well as Japanese living in this zone. The State Department, however, was increasingly nervous about the health impact of radiation leaks for Americans living near the Fukushima nuclear reactors. One day, the department asked us how many Americans lived within 50 miles (80 km) of the reactor and we estimated there were at most about 150 American citizens living in this zone. What we should have said was "There are only about 150 Americans living within 50 miles of the reactor, but there are tens of thousands of Japanese living there, so before issuing a State Department travel advisory, we strongly recommend that we consult first with the Japanese government as such a broad travel advisory that is so different from Japanese government advice would have a major impact on citizen perceptions of Japanese government credibility." Our failure to explain the context of our answer led to a big problem.

We awoke the next morning to a firestorm. The State Department had overnight issued a travel advisory urging American citizens to immediately leave from the areas within 50 miles of the reactor. The Japanese media reported on the disconnect between our 50-mile (80 km) radius announcement and the Japanese government's 20-kilometer announcement and asked us to explain why we had chosen to announce a larger zone than Japanese government. The expanded zone in our travel announcement included a medium-sized Japanese city where a panicked evacuation would have clogged roads needed by relief vehicles and generated unnecessary hardship for tens of thousands of Japanese evacuees. The Japanese government understandably was angry at us for not informing them before we contradicted their public statements. I thought Washington's attitude was cavalier — when we complained, they replied that "Only 150 Americans are affected." They didn't realize this announcement would reverberate across Japan, further exacerbate Japanese citizens' mistrust of their government, and complicate our efforts to coordinate closely with Japan.

The following morning, the situation became even worse. Overnight, the State Department had issued a travel warning that said, "The State Department strongly urges U.S. citizens to defer travel to Japan at this time and those in Japan should consider departing." The warning should have advised against travel to the Kanto (the region near Tokyo) and Tōhoku regions only. That would have made sense as the major Kanto airports were busy with many foreigners leaving the country. As we pointed out, Osaka, Fukuoka, Sapporo, and Okinawa, among other cities, were far away and not directly affected by the disaster.

On this second morning in a row with a travel warning headache, I was tired and cranky. My anger came through in my conversation that morning with Joe Donovan, who had been my predecessor as Embassy Tokyo DCM and was now State's EAP Deputy Assistant Secretary for Japan and Korea. Joe had been a tremendous help to me and to the entire embassy throughout the

crisis. We spoke every morning and he was always most responsive to our requests and helpful in running interference to head off unwise Washington initiatives. Joe had not been the person who had devised this travel guidance but was the one to hear the force of my anger in that morning's phone call. I remember asking him rhetorically, "You mean, if we had a nuclear power plant disaster in Vladivostok, we would tell people to evacuate Moscow? This makes absolutely no sense." Joe listened to me patiently and let me blow off steam. He did his best but, later that day, I was told that the State Department "only does countrywide travel warnings, not regional warnings." That reply was not in accord with their previous recommendation for Americans to evacuate from an eighty-kilometer zone.

The State Department blanket travel warning made no sense. Japan was not confronting a countrywide problem. The State Department travel warning contributed to the sense of crisis and fanned Japanese public perceptions that the U.S. government didn't trust the Japanese government to manage its crisis. The American business community, especially the airlines, were quite upset about our nationwide travel warning. I agreed completely with the American business community but could not contradict the State Department in public. I absorbed a lot of criticism from friends in the business community that week but could not acknowledge that I agreed with them. I met with about twenty members of the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan to try to dissipate the tensions. This time, it was my turn to absorb the blows and let them vent. I enjoyed excellent relations with the American Chamber and knew most of these businessmen and considered them my friends. But that day, they let me have it. They were very angry with the State Department travel warning that had in their view unnecessarily damaged their business. I agreed with them but did not say so at this meeting. This was a time for me to remember former Secretary of State Colin Powell's maxim, "Get mad, then get over it." After all, we still had a job to do working in coordination with the State Department and the Japanese government.

We tried to convince the State Department to reissue the travel warning. We acknowledged that we wanted to reduce unnecessary travel into Tokyo's airports, but travel to Japan's other international hubs — Nagoya, Osaka, Naha, and Fukuoka — was not dangerous. Ambassador Roos was especially energetic in this regard. However, the Bureau of Consular Affairs was risk-averse and did not lift their nationwide warning for quite some time.

*KENNEDY: It's known as "cover your ass."*

ZUMWALT: This action made our lives difficult at a time when we were faced with many other challenges.

The third mistake was caused by poor coordination between the U.S. military and the embassy. One medical response to radioactive iodine exposure is to take potassium iodide tablets to block the absorption of radioactive iodine in the thyroid. This reduces the long-term threat of thyroid cancer. The State Department arranged to send us hundreds of thousands of doses of this medication from the national stockpile in case we needed to distribute it. Our medical experts advised us not to distribute these dangerous medicines to individuals but instead to devise a distribution plan to implement should the situation worsen. They explained that this medication, while needed if one is exposed to radioactive iodine, should not be taken unnecessarily. But the U.S. military decided that they would proceed with distributing this medicine to their troops and family members "just in case." The military began broadcasting public service announcements informing people where on base they could obtain this medication for themselves and their families.

Upon learning that the U.S. military had begun distribution of the medication, there was an outcry in the resident American citizen community for these medicines despite the expert medical advice to refrain from wide-scale distribution. State decided this pressure was too much and instructed us to distribute this antidote to Americans living in the Tokyo area. We pushed back as we could not assess the medical implications for every American citizen in Tokyo, but once the military moved ahead, we really had little choice. Our Mutual Defense Assistance Office volunteered to organize our distribution effort and we recruited other embassy staff to help them with this effort. They mobilized volunteers to set up tables and take IDs, marking people off our lists as we distributed the potassium iodide tablets. We set up two distribution centers — inside the U.S. Embassy compound and at the New Sanno Hotel, which is a U.S. military rest and recreation facility in downtown Tokyo.

This was the first time in my life I was glad to be over fifty, because NIH advised males in that age group not to take potassium iodide in any case. The thyroid cancer risk after exposure would occur twenty or thirty years in the future, so the short-term risks for older men in taking these tablets outweighed the potential future benefit. I remember hearing Norm Coleman say, “If you’re a forty-year-old male, you have a 40 percent chance of developing cancer in your lifetime. With exposure to this radiation, you would have a 40.001 percent chance.”

I did not want to treat our local staff differently from our American employees when it came to health issues. We told our LES we did not think you need it but, if you feel better keeping this antidote on hand, we will provide you the doses for you and your family. Some employees chose to accept the potassium iodide. We did not ask Washington for permission to distribute this antidote to our Japanese staff because I was afraid their answer would be negative.

We had a disconnect — the Japanese government wisely was saying they would not distribute its stockpile to the public before it was needed. Our experts agreed. But the U.S. embassy acted as if it did not believe the Japanese government’s advice. The genesis of this problem was poor coordination with the resident U.S. military. From their perspective, they decided to distribute this drug because they had a better chain of custody and they could educate their disciplined community about how to handle this potentially dangerous drug. But they did not consider the spillover impact of their actions on the American and Japanese civilian communities.

*KENNEDY: Not quite the same, but a somewhat similar situation to what happened during the first Iraq War with gas masks and our embassy in Tel Aviv and all. The military was distributing gas masks to its people but not to embassy people — what the hell is this?*

ZUMWALT: Exactly.

Around this time, we began to require post permission for government employees to come to Japan on TDY travel. Most of our visitors played constructive roles, but some burdened our management section without advancing our mission.

One group of visitors who came was a team from the State Department Bureau of Diplomatic Security’s Weapons of Mass Destruction Countermeasures Division. They were trained in mitigating chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) threats. Without consulting with me or the ambassador, this team set up equipment at the embassy entrance that would scan everyone coming and going for radiation. I learned about this when my driver asked me whether we were installing this equipment because the radiation in Tokyo had gotten worse. When I next exited the embassy, I told the team members, “This technical capability is amazing — but what is

the plan if someone tests positive for radiation?" I also asked for the percentage of false positives that might be generated by this equipment. No one had answers. I told the team to disassemble the equipment immediately and that we could discuss later how to employ it. I was concerned that the appearance of this equipment could send the wrong signal and increase our employees' fears that we were living in a dangerous environment.

In making the decision to dismantle this equipment, I relied on our experts' advice. The NRC engineers had assured me that people in Tokyo were unlikely to be exposed to radiation from the Fukushima nuclear power plant. This State Department CBRN team wanted to install the equipment because they had the technical capability to do so, but they had not considered the policy implication or the message that would send to our staff. Finally, after much discussion, I compromised by allowing this team to set up this screening device in an unobtrusive location by our motor pool garage. We used it solely to test personnel who were returning from an area known to have radiation. I saw no need for universal testing of all of our employees and visitors as they came and left. Since we did not allow embassy employee travel to Fukushima without permission, we would only need to test a small number of our staff.

Jim Forbes, the embassy management counselor, told me that this CBRN team also wanted to offer their chem-bio-radiation training course to all embassy staff. At such a busy time, I was not convinced that this training would be a good use of our staff's time. I asked to see their course materials before scheduling any training sessions. This team showed me their PowerPoint slides. The very first slide showed a photo of a withered hand that had been exposed to excessive nuclear radiation. That slide may have been useful to seize the attention of bored audiences, but this graphic warning was not what our staff needed to see at that moment.

I said, "No, we will not allow that training right now." What I thought to myself was "We are in the middle of a crisis, our staff is overburdened and stressed, and this is not a good time to scare our employees even more about the dangers of radiation." The CBRN team was quite angry with me because they did not understand or appreciate the mental health situation among our employees. They asked their bosses in Washington to overturn my decision to cancel their training programs. I told these people, "Look, you're welcome to go home if you don't have anything productive to do here, but we are not allowing this training of our overburdened staff during a crisis." I called Joe Donovan and said, "Joe, I'm too busy. Please turn this training off. I do not have time to deal with this issue right now." Joe totally agreed and I did not hear about this issue again. It was good to have support from Washington. Joe was a wonderful backstop.

As a result of this visit, we announced that all official U.S. government visitors must be approved by the front office before they could come to Japan. Jim Forbes had very good judgment, so I asked him to screen these visit requests. Most visitors were not a problem, but I had learned my lesson: restricting visitors was something we should have done sooner. We needed reinforcements, but we needed problem-solvers not problem-creators.

One visitor who was most welcome was Secretary Hillary Clinton, who arrived five weeks after the earthquake. To be honest, preparations for her stay represented a major extra workload on a busy embassy. But her visit provided an important opportunity to express sympathy with the Japanese people and support for its recovery efforts. Her visit was also very positive for embassy staff morale. She came to an employee town hall meeting and said all the right things to our staff about the important work they were performing.

However, behind the scenes, I could see that her advance staff was frightened to visit Tokyo. By this time, five weeks had elapsed after the disaster and Japan had mitigated the immediate dangers at the nuclear power plant. We had gotten accustomed to living in the shadow of Fukushima, but Secretary Clinton's staff was not. I thought their concerns were exaggerated, but seeing the secretary's staff operate with these underlying fears helped me understand why Washington was, in our view, sometimes overreacting to the nuclear crisis. They were more afraid for our health than we were. Because of health concerns, Secretary Clinton's staff only wanted her to remain on the ground for four hours with no outside activities and no overnight stay. I tried to shield my staff from the fears of her advance team as much as I could. Secretary Clinton herself was fine; she did a good job in her government meetings and her town hall meeting lifted the spirits of the embassy staff.

In August, Vice President Joe Biden came to Japan. His visit showcased our solidarity with Japan and our commitment to helping Japan's recovery efforts. Vice President Biden displayed a great deal of empathy during his visit to the Tōhoku region, which reinforced our public diplomacy messages. His visit to the Sendai airport reminded many Japanese of the heroic efforts of the U.S. Marine Corps to clear the airport runway to receive emergency support flights in the early days after the disaster. Vice President Biden's town hall meeting with embassy staff and their families boosted embassy morale.

Throughout the crisis response period, a lot of people in Washington were monitoring and evaluating our performance from afar. On one hand, I recognize that oversight of our decisions was needed. But on the other hand, sometimes I thought their monitoring showed a lack of trust. State's Bureau of Medical Services (MED) sent many visitors to evaluate us. They said their purpose was to help our medical unit, but often their doctors would only stay three workdays. Later, I realized that MED wanted to monitor how the post was holding up. That was a reasonable concern in such a challenging situation. But I thought they did not appreciate how supporting each visit burdened us at a busy time.

My daily post-disaster routine was to rise about 5:15 a.m., leave home at 6 a.m., and walk to the embassy, arriving at 6:30. These half-hour morning walks to the embassy were the only time I had to myself all day. I also sometimes grabbed a half-hour nap on my office couch during the day. These walks and my nap were most important for my mental health.

I began the workday by meeting the night-shift watch for a briefing on overnight developments, then would go to my office to call Joe Donovan to touch base with Washington. I then led our eight a.m. all-hands meeting in the auditorium, where all of the offices briefed on the upcoming day. At nine a.m., the workday officially began. I would visit our embassy operations center and consular team each work shift.

After a day working with our various teams, I would go to the prime minister's office at eight p.m. for our nightly meeting with the Japanese government disaster team. When these meetings ended, I would return to the embassy in order to follow up on any tasks that came out of this meeting and I would call Joe Donovan one more time, since it was now morning in Washington DC, to report to him so he could brief his superiors at the beginning of his workday. Most days, I did not return home until well after midnight. After leaving the embassy, I would return home, shower, sleep for four hours, wake up, and return to work. I ate all my meals at the embassy during this period and sometimes Ann would join me to eat in my office. I saw Ann a lot in the

office since she led one of our watch teams, but we often did not interact much at home due to our different work schedules.

*KENNEDY: This raises a question: with all these embassies leaving, did they leave you with responsibility for their nationals?*

ZUMWALT: Many embassies moved their operations to western Japan, so they had not left the country. The British embassy initiated a daily phone call with DCMs of five English-speaking embassies — Australia, New Zealand, the UK, the U.S., and Canada. The UK DCM, named David Fitton, would email us an agenda and we could send him a note to add a topic if we wished. He chaired these sessions, which I welcomed because I was so busy. Mostly, these calls allowed me to inform them of the U.S. military and civilian agencies' actions. For me, these calls were a good way to receive a reality check. Many of the other embassies had left town — the French, Germans, Italians, and EU all just left — so there was no reason to talk to them as they weren't present anymore. The British embassy had also brought in nuclear scientists and engineers, so it was reassuring for me to hear their conclusions which validated those of our own experts. Our nuclear experts worked closely with their UK counterparts. The Canadians, Australians, and New Zealanders relied on us for information; we wanted them to remain in Tokyo as a sign of confidence in the Japanese government, so we told them what we knew about the risks.

*KENNEDY: Did you run into any bureaucratic obstacles?*

ZUMWALT: Bureaucratic obstacles are a fact of life and it's important to learn how to work around problems. But I must say, in this instance the State Department was extremely responsive to our needs. My counterpart in Washington DC, Joe Donovan, would run interference for us. Every morning at eight a.m., I would make that call to Joe. It would be seven p.m. in Washington DC. He would tell me all the things he had helped us with that day and then say "What do you need?" Each morning, I asked many favors from him. For example, early on, I told him that we needed more officers to help with the increase in management work. The next day, he responded, "So-and-so is coming in from Manila." Another day, I told him that the presence of Fred Summers, our regional psychiatrist, was extremely important and Joe then worked with the State Department's Bureau of Medical Services to offload all of Fred's casework outside Tokyo to other regional psychiatrists so he could focus exclusively on Tokyo's urgent needs. It was wonderful that Joe had our back, doing all of that work for us. Under Secretary for Management Pat Kennedy opened his purse. I never once heard of a TDY request that was denied due to budget reasons. It was recognized that responding to this disaster in Japan was a priority and the entire U.S. government was going to work together as a team.

*KENNEDY: What about on the Japanese side? Did you find that when trying to help, you were running across bureaucratic obstacles?*

ZUMWALT: Japanese bureaucratic politics were an issue in working together to assist the victims in the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami. Early on, poor communication among Japanese agencies contributed to difficulties in coordinating our response. I think the Japanese recognized that we were trying to be helpful and we did bring something important to the table — our expert advice. Prime Minister Kan appointed a forty-year-old minister in the government named Goshi Hosono to coordinate Japan's whole-of-government response to the crisis. I knew

Hosono, one of the rising DPJ stars, fairly well. Hosono began by forging bureaucratic collaboration across Japanese ministries and the situation slowly improved.

Every evening, Minister Hosono would chair a bilateral meeting with the Japanese side consisting of maybe twenty different Japanese agencies, including the Self-Defense Forces, the National Police Agency, the ministries of the environment, defense, health, justice, foreign affairs, transport, education, and METI (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry) among others. On our side, we included our representatives from the U.S. Embassy, U.S. Forces in Japan, the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, the Department of Energy, National Institutes of Health, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Each side had an important objective for these meetings. We wanted to share expertise with the Japanese government. The Japanese wanted to avoid public airing of differences between us. After our travel warning urging Americans to leave an area that was much larger than the Japanese government evacuation zone, the Japanese wanted to be sure we would not again work at cross-purposes with their disaster response.

Our bilateral nightly meetings continued for over a month. We would gather seven nights a week at eight p.m. in the Prime Minister's Office's Emergency Command Center. Initially, these meetings included maybe thirty people on our side and sixty on their side; the room was quite crowded. Every day, the deputy commander from U.S. Forces Japan, a Marine Corps brigadier general, flew into Tokyo by helicopter from Yokota Air Force Base to participate. The U.S. military had many questions — they were sending U.S. troops to help and wanted to make sure they were not sending them into harm's way. I dubbed these meetings the "Hosono process." This process really was quite remarkable and ensured that the United States remained fully informed about Japanese government intentions and policy actions. I do not think that any other foreign country enjoyed such remarkable access.

The U.S. side was co-chaired by me and Dr. Charles A. Casto, the head of our NRC team, who was quite experienced, a former nuclear plant manager. Chuck was a truly outstanding leader. He would focus on the nuclear issues and I would cover the disaster response coordination. Even in the darkest hours when we feared the worst, Chuck always began a meeting with a positive comment about progress made or a task that was completed. He was most respectful of our Japanese counterparts, making it much easier for them to accept his advice on how to resolve the crisis at the Fukushima nuclear plant. Chuck later wrote a book called *Station Blackout*, which is one of the best explanations I have read in English about what happened at the plant when the tsunami struck.

The Japanese agencies learned quickly that they would make Minister Hosono unhappy if they had not coordinated among themselves and with us. By the third day of our meetings, U.S.-Japan communications had improved tremendously. After about a week, that meeting became more of an action-forcing event than a planning meeting. Each Japanese agency would report to both sides the decisions that were made in advance in U.S.-Japan side meetings. But in the first few days of this process, these meetings lasted for several hours as we worked through challenges together. We were tired, but the Japanese were tired too — they weren't sleeping much in this stressful situation. It was a challenging period for everyone.

At one of the very first meetings, I told Minister Hosono that we had received numerous requests for supplies like drinking water. We wanted to help but asked him to prioritize the items needed most urgently. In the first few days after the earthquake, we began hearing from many parts of

the embassy and from Washington DC counterparts that so-and-so at this ministry has asked us for this or for that. Bill Berger from the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance encouraged us to prioritize and “validate” these requests with the Japanese government. His point was that logistics were in short supply and if we clogged the logistics pipeline with low-priority goods, then our good intentions would only block the delivery of more urgently needed supplies. I asked the economic section to build a spreadsheet of all of these Japanese requests. They devised an excellent spreadsheet with hundreds of requested items that listed the requester, the amount, the request date, and the embassy contact who had received the request. Some of the requests, such as a request for drinking water, seemed odd so that was the example I raised with Minister Hosono.

When Hosono replied that the government didn’t ask for drinking water, we handed over the hundreds of separate requests on the spreadsheet that our economic section had prepared. Hosono was amazed to see hundreds and hundreds of separate requests for help from various parts of the Japanese government on our spreadsheet. Often, the request had come from someone in the Japanese government talking to a friend in the U.S. government. We told Hosono that we would do our best to deliver supplies they needed but we wanted first to understand Japan’s priorities so we could focus on the highest ones.

Minister Hosono then asked his people to work with our economic section to validate the requests. They met the next day and, by working together, they crossed off over eighty percent of the requests on this spreadsheet. Bill Berger’s idea to validate requests and our economic section’s good work on this spreadsheet really helped both sides identify the most critical supplies so that the strained logistical system could deliver the highest priority goods where they were most needed. The pared-down list focused on life-saving goods like medicines, oral rehydration pills, low-dose potassium iodine for children, and those sorts of things. Through this collaboration, we could eliminate requests like drinking water. The Japanese government was quite capable itself of asking private companies like Coca-Cola to supply bottled water and did not need our help for this item. The same was true for many other requests like for toiletries, instant noodles, diapers, bandages, and other supplies that were plentiful in Japan. Though this process, we learned where we could be most helpful and focused on furnishing these items.

The bigger problem than the Japanese bureaucracy was what Clausewitz called “the fog of war.” Including a disaster response expert like Bill Berger on our team to guide us through these challenges was critical to our success.

The Hosono process met every single night starting about the 15<sup>th</sup> of March for thirty or so days in a row. One reason I was working so late every night was that, after attending this eight p.m. meeting, I would then return to the office, finish follow-up tasks coming out of that night’s meeting, and then call Joe Donovan in Washington to report to him at the beginning of his business day.

*KENNEDY: What was the role of the ambassador at the time?*

ZUMWALT: John Roos played a very important role in conveying our views to senior levels of the U.S. military, to the White House, and to the Japanese government. He also served as the public face of the embassy in our messaging to the Japanese media. I remember he took a trip to the tsunami-affected region and the Japanese media disseminated a photo of him hugging an old

homeless Japanese woman who was living in a shelter. That photograph spoke volumes — we were Japan's friend and we wanted to alleviate their suffering.

*KENNEDY: What was his role?*

ZUMWALT: John Roos saw his role as managing the highest priority policy issues. He would talk to the Pacific Commander or to senior officials at the White House about our challenges. He was very persuasive at bringing these senior people around to our way of thinking. The National Security Council convened meetings frequently and John and I would participate via a secure videoconference link to the White House. After the fiasco with the travel advisory, we recognized that we needed to participate in these meetings to advance our views in these interagency discussions. Because of the time difference, these meetings started sometimes at two or three a.m. in Tokyo. We needed sleep too, so we could not attend these sessions every single night. Therefore, the ambassador and I began alternating — one night, I would remain awake to attend the meeting and, the next night, he would stay up to attend these interagency meetings via our secure video link.

These interagency meetings were generally chaired by Deputy National Security Advisor Denis McDonough. Other agencies would be represented at the assistant secretary level. The reason the meetings were so important was that we conveyed information that was often used to brief the president and other important decision-makers, so we felt we had to be there to make sure our views were taken into account in this process. This decision-making process worked but it was not without issues. It was also very time-consuming — I remember one midnight meeting where we listened to a USDA expert talk at length about the risk to the California asparagus crop if radiation plumes crossed the Pacific. From our vantage point in Tokyo, we thought we had more urgent and dire issues to address in this meeting.

John also spent a great deal of time beginning to organize charity events and fundraisers for disaster victims. As I recall, he worked with megastars like Lady Gaga, Taylor Swift, and Bono on fundraising initiatives. His personal assistant, Matthew Fuller, helped him with these fundraising activities, so I did not get involved.

My job as DCM was to fill in behind John so that we had a comprehensive front office response to the crisis. He tended to stay in his office to focus on urgent matters. He was frequently responding to or initiating phone calls and joining video conferences. A few days after the crisis began, I went to him and suggested that, while he engaged with senior levels of both governments, someone needed to engage embassy staff by visiting the consular section and our command centers. I offered to do this and he readily agreed. When I visited the various parts of the embassy who were working hard, I would say “The ambassador really appreciates what you’re doing,” because people needed to know that their contributions were appreciated. That sort of direct personal engagement work with the staff was not something John did instinctively.

*KENNEDY: There's something about the Foreign Service — you have a crisis, that's fun. I hate to say it...*

ZUMWALT: Ambassador Roos played an important role with our high-level communications. Soon after the crisis in Fukushima became apparent, the Navy began considering a drawdown of their forces in Japan. Ambassador Roos contacted the U.S. military leadership in Hawaii to insist that a withdrawal would send a bad signal to Japan and weaken our alliance over the long term.

He successfully delayed this decision until it became moot, as we obtained more accurate information about the actual radiation levels.

Earlier, I mentioned the issue with the consular travel warning. It was John who led the effort to try to reverse that decision.

*KENNEDY: Good division of labor.*

ZUMWALT: It was. We saw each other frequently because John was working long hours too and we worked in adjacent offices. I made sure he was aware of embassy staff accomplishments and morale issues and John and his special assistant Suzanne Basalla kept me informed of his activities.

We had very different roles to play. He was the public face of the embassy and the policy influencer whereas I was the inside person trying to sustain the frenetic work pace of our complex operations and high morale in the embassy.

*KENNEDY: Okay. Do you have final comments about the March 11 disaster?*

ZUMWALT: Let me talk about seven lessons I learned from the disaster.

The first is preparedness. A few days before the earthquake, the embassy held a fire drill. No one likes these drills because they disrupt our daily work. But now, I'm so glad we practiced. My office was next to the ambassador's on the ninth floor. When the fire alarm sounded the beginning of the drill, we tried to evacuate through our fire escape. We descended the fire escape to the eighth floor, but a gate blocking further descent was locked. Those doors were supposed to unlock when the fire alarm sounded, but at the time of this drill they did not, so we had to return up the stairwell to our ninth-floor office. But by that time, the ninth-floor door had closed and locked behind us, so the ambassador and I were trapped in the stairwell between the eighth and ninth floors. This fire drill identified a problem, which our engineering security office then promptly fixed. When we needed to evacuate the building after the earthquake, the building evacuation worked well.

I credit our management and consular sections for excellent emergency preparedness in the embassy's Emergency Action Plan. The planning for our alternate command center proved critical to our early response to the disaster. Without our satellite telephone, pre-positioned computers, and other office equipment, we could not have reported so quickly to Washington DC. Another area where preparedness mattered was equipping our school buses with emergency radios. Because Japan's mobile telephone network was overwhelmed after the earthquake, these radios allowed us to communicate with the children on the bus.

The second lesson is the importance of internal and external communications. During a stressful period when many on our staff were concerned about their personal safety, it was important for the embassy leadership to communicate clearly and consistently to our employees about the goals of our work and the risks we faced. Inclusive meetings were important. Every morning, the entire staff was invited to an all-hands meeting where anyone could ask questions. There were some ridiculous questions stemming from false information from the internet. I was glad when people asked these questions because for each person who asked, there were three or four others who wanted to ask but were embarrassed or afraid to do so. Rumor control was an important part of our internal communications. We needed to listen patiently and talk through the situation, often asking experts to explain. The most difficult issue in our communications strategy was

people's emotional fear of radiation. Accordingly, we engaged our regional psychiatrist as a part of our communications with our employees. He was very good. Every meeting, he gave a short talk on stress management. I wanted people to feel comfortable asking him for help.

Management communications were also important to showcase outstanding work and to instill a sense of pride in the overall efforts of our embassy team. People needed to hear that management appreciated their efforts. We sometimes needed to stop and celebrate small victories.

Outside the embassy, we had two audiences. We adopted a communications strategy to communicate proactively with the American community as well as the Japanese public. Our public outreach was so important because many people turned to the U.S. Embassy for guidance and advice. I appreciated that Consul General Paul Fitzgerald constantly reminded us of our "no double standard" policy. We worked hard to distribute to the public any information about risks that we conveyed to our staff.

We were fortunate to host a health-risks communication expert from the CDC who helped us devise our public communications strategy. We used a variety of tools including press releases, ambassador media interviews, our website, and in the early days of social media, the ambassador began to tweet as well. Our actions spoke volumes and became an important part of our public communications strategy. At a time when so many foreign companies and embassies began leaving the city, our public announcements that we were staying open affected public perceptions positively.

*KENNEDY: I was in Naples during a major earthquake — where 1,800 people perished. We had barrels of clothing and people just put in used clothing — cocktail dresses. If there's anything Italians have, it's the clothing business. A lot was sports stuff, but that's what you really needed for the cold weather. There were cries of outrage in the States when they saw big stacks of clothing being dumped.*

ZUMWALT: Americans wanted to help, but we needed to channel this desire in a positive direction. We encouraged people who wanted to help to make cash donations. In-kind donations of used clothes merely clog up the strained distribution system. We listed reputable Japanese charities such as the Japanese Red Cross Society on our website. We pointed out that, with money, the people on the ground in affected areas could decide what was needed and purchase locally those supplies that were available in Japan.

A third lesson was that we needed to organize our staff workload to sustain a long-term response. Crisis responders need time for eating, sleeping, and exercise if they are to continue essential operations throughout an extended crisis. The evening of March 11, as many of our employees rushed to our emergency command center to help out, I pulled several aside to ask them to go home. I said that they were valuable employees and that I really needed them to arrive the following morning fresh and able to work an entire day. In order to do so, they should go home, eat dinner, and get a night's sleep. Later, we organized a round-the-clock shift system that enabled us to sustain our 24/7 operations for over a month.

The fourth lesson was that we needed to promote our community's mental health as we asked them to respond to the crisis. In the first few days after the earthquake, many of our families were frightened. It was an incredibly stressful situation. I needed to remember that our first responders themselves came from a community in crisis. They too were crisis victims and some were experiencing some degree of mental trauma.

The fifth lesson I learned was that organization leaders must make decisions with imperfect information during a crisis. As more information becomes available, it may become necessary to shift course, so leaders must be flexible in changing previous decisions. Many times, we could have become paralyzed by waiting for more information instead of making a decision. Carl von Clausewitz called this dilemma “the fog of war” — it’s difficult to make decisions with such a large volume of incoming information, some correct and some wrong, even as other critical information is lacking. Good leadership means recognizing when it is necessary to make a decision, then making the best decision possible with existing information. At the same time, it is important to avoid wasting time criticizing past decisions. There will be time for a lessons-learned exercise after the crisis is over. But during a crisis, focus decision-making on the present and future, not mulling over the past.

*KENNEDY: Did you find that agencies such as the Atomic Energy Commission were wanting information, but you were too busy to give it? A lot of people — everybody wants statistics and information about things — did you find yourself overwhelmed by that?*

ZUMWALT: We were also fortunate that Embassy Tokyo included many agencies already at post. As I noted earlier, the USDA was interested in radiation emission levels because they were concerned about clouds of radiation crossing the Pacific that could pollute agricultural fields in California. I was much more concerned about our own safety in Tokyo, but since Embassy Tokyo had an agriculture office, I could task them to respond to USDA’s questions about the California asparagus crop and take that issue off our busy work agenda.

Your question brings me to my sixth lesson, to include experts — then listen to their good advice. During the crisis in Japan, the U.S. government consulted experts from the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Science Advisor to the President, and the Department of Energy. Their expertise was critical to forging an effective response to Japan’s triple disaster. Embassy Tokyo itself lacked the expertise in disaster response, nuclear physics, health communication, and radiation diseases, so we invited these outside experts into our decision-making process.

Some U.S. policymakers reacted emotionally to media stories and needed to be reminded of this expert advice. I had a few frank conversations with people in Washington who wanted to take more extreme steps than we thought were necessary. People like the president’s science advisor tended to be on our side because he could process this scientific information and calm other people who were rushing decisions on issues like evacuations or moving the embassy out of Tokyo.

We also learned a seventh lesson, to organize a whole-of-government response in a complex crisis. No one entity can manage a large-scale crisis alone. It is important to consult, communicate, and coordinate, then to organize all entities’ contributions into a coherent whole-of-government crisis response. On our side, we were bringing in people from across government to help us with our response. These people quickly became trusted members of our country team. Because they had a lot to contribute, people respected them.

*KENNEDY: Was there much interface with Japanese authorities on this? The Japanese of course were the ones to really suffer from this way back, but next to that, we had considerable expertise. Was this transmitted to the Japanese government?*

ZUMWALT: Yes, but initially, communications with the Japanese government proved challenging. The response of the Japanese government, especially in the initial 72 hours, was rather incoherent as they grappled with an overwhelming situation. On both the Japanese side and ours, this whole-of-government response contributed to forging an effective, comprehensive response to the crisis.

When the immediate crisis abated, we received tremendous praise from the Japanese media. Even outlets that tended to be more critical of U.S.-Japan relations recognized the United States had stepped forward in Japan's hour of need. Already high Japanese public favorability ratings for the United States increased by an additional fifteen percent in one year. This data showed me that the Japanese people recognized and appreciated our efforts.

*KENNEDY: When you think about it, it fits into two of the attributes of the United States. One, we're built to be helpful. Sometimes, this gets us into trouble or we get in over our heads. Not just charity, but helpfulness is part of our culture. The other one is, we have the means. Particularly, our military can do things that nobody else can do on the scale we can.*

ZUMWALT: Early on, the logistical support from the U.S. military was critically important. Civilian agencies also contributed in important ways. Many Self-Defense Force troops deployed in the disaster zone were working together with American counterparts under harsh conditions. That experience built a sense of camaraderie between our militaries. I am sure the future Japanese general officer corps will retain positive memories of working together with Americans to help Tōhoku disaster victims. That experience will have a long-term benefit for the U.S.-Japan security alliance. One Japanese friend later told me that the triple disaster was the worst tragedy to befall Japan since World War II. He then added, "However, this time we had friends."

There was no clean end to the U.S. support for the disaster response; the immediate crisis slowly wound down. Once the civilians were able to take over logistical support operations, the U.S. military withdrew from their support role. The sense of crisis at Fukushima abated and work began to focus more on building in resiliency and redundancy to the emergency reactor cooling measures and then the focus shifted to long-term remediation measures. In the zones affected by the tsunamis, the emphasis shifted from responding to immediate needs to economic and social reconstruction. U.S. direct assistance became less and less critical to Japan.

*KENNEDY: You certainly had your hands full. It was an exciting period.*

ZUMWALT: It was. That period from March 11 through the end of April was by far the most difficult and stressful time in my whole Foreign Service career. But I also felt a sense of accomplishment. I was blessed with an outstanding team and excellent support from Washington.

*KENNEDY: What was your radiation level?*

ZUMWALT: Actually, we did not experience much radiation in Tokyo. The children and spouses of our staff who flew to the United States and then returned one month later were exposed to more radiation by flying across the Pacific twice than those of us who remained in Tokyo for that month. (I had not previously known that each time I flew in an aircraft, I was exposing myself to additional radiation as the thinner atmosphere blocked less of the sun's rays.) The radiation level in Tokyo never exceeded natural levels of radiation found in Denver, Colorado.

*KENNEDY: We went through this with Three Mile Island.*

ZUMWALT: Nuclear radiation is scary because the threat is invisible.

*KENNEDY: Did you find the Japanese media going to these things and learning from them, too?*

ZUMWALT: Early on, the Japanese media learned to check our website where they could discover a lot of scientific information. The media would broadcast an image but they often did not explain the context. Many Americans left Tokyo out of precaution after watching these broadcasts. It was a challenge to counter that narrative by placing information in context so people could make informed decisions.

We were extremely busy from March 11 until the end of April. I finally felt the situation easing the morning of April 29. The situation at Fukushima appeared to be finally under control. On April 28, Minister Hosono proposed that we take the next evening off from our nightly bilateral meetings. April 29 was a Saturday and a Japanese holiday and I did not need to go into the embassy early that morning. When I said to Ann, “Let’s go out for brunch,” I realized that this sunny morning marked the first time we would sit down together for a relaxing meal out of the office since the earthquake had occurred six weeks earlier. We enjoyed a nice walk by a garden with peach blossoms on our way to one of our favorite restaurants for brunch. It had been such a stressful situation, but our workload was finally easing. Life in Tokyo was beginning to return to normal.

## Chapter XIII

### Final Months as Embassy Tokyo Deputy Chief of Mission, 2011

JUNE 4, 2018

*KENNEDY: This brings us to the end of your time in Tokyo.*

ZUMWALT: I was supposed to leave Japan the summer of 2011 for my onward assignment in Washington as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Japan and Korea in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. However, my replacement, Kurt Tong, wasn't able to come to Tokyo until later because he was the APEC Senior Official and needed to remain in Washington to complete his APEC year. John Roos called my new boss, Assistant Secretary Kurt Campbell, to say that, with all of the work in the aftermath of the March 11 disaster, I was needed in Tokyo until my replacement could arrive. I ended up staying in Tokyo until the end of November, four months beyond my scheduled departure date. Ann, however, went home since her new assignment in Washington DC started in September. This meant three months of separation — the longest we had been apart since we were married in 1987.

We vacationed together in the United States in July. At this point, I needed a break; it had been over three months of nonstop work to respond to the crisis. I went back with Ann for a relaxing visit to California, where we visited relatives and friends and enjoyed a week along the central California coast prior to returning to Japan for the final four months of my tour as DCM in Embassy Tokyo.

During this period, I worked on the arrangements for the assignment to Osaka of our new consul general and his same-sex spouse. I knew Patrick Linehan well, as he had been the press officer when I was posted in Embassy Tokyo previously. Patrick had also worked in a consulate before and had good Japanese-language skills. When I first knew Patrick, he was single, but while in Tokyo the previous tour, he had met a Japanese-Brazilian man named Emmerson Kanegusuke and they had become a couple. Patrick and Emmerson were not legally married in the United States since, at that time, the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) prevented same-sex marriages. They had married in Canada and considered themselves to be married. In the past, our mission in Japan had included gay officers, but prior to Patrick's assignment, we used subterfuges to request visas for same-sex spouses. For example, the same-sex partner of a previous consul general in Osaka came to Japan on a diplomatic servant visa. The Japanese knew the situation, but looked the other way.

In this particular case, Patrick's spouse was Brazilian, not American, so he did not have a U.S. passport. We decided to be honest and formally requested a diplomatic spouse visa for Emmerson in his Brazilian tourist passport. I delivered this diplomatic note in person to the chief of protocol at the Japanese foreign ministry to emphasize the importance of our request.

The ministry knew Patrick and understood that he would fill a prominent role in western Japan as the American consul general. The chief of protocol replied that he would be happy to issue the diplomatic visa for Emmerson, but they needed to see a marriage certificate. When I showed him Patrick's Canadian marriage certificate, he told me that the foreign ministry had issued diplomatic visas to same-sex spouses of diplomats from Sweden and New Zealand, but those governments had furnished an official government document showing that the two were legally married under the laws of that country. He asked me if the U.S. government recognized this

Canadian marriage certificate and I had to admit that we did not. I needed to return to the Chief of Protocol Office several times to try to convince them they should issue Emmerson a diplomatic visa even though the United States government itself did not recognize Patrick's and Emmerson's marriage. Since I was unable to furnish an official U.S. government document recognizing their marriage, instead I provided other materials such as speeches Secretary Clinton had made about gay rights.

I was starting to sweat the timing for resolving this issue because Patrick was scheduled to arrive in the late summer. I must have met four or five times with the foreign ministry protocol chief. Finally, he called me in and said, "We have decided to change our policy. Even though the United States does not recognize same-sex marriage, we will issue diplomatic visas to U.S. diplomatic spouses as long as the embassy provides us an affidavit that you consider them to be married." We quickly prepared the affidavit so that Emmerson could get his visa in time to arrive as scheduled. Since then, we have sent other same-sex couples to assignments in Japan and the visa process has gone smoothly.

I felt proud about this accomplishment. Patrick and Emmerson became quite prominent advocates for gay rights in Osaka. Patrick and Emmerson would march in Osaka's LGBT Pride parade with other consulate employees. Japanese magazines interviewed them about their loving relationship. Patrick was an experienced public affairs officer, so he handled this issue sensitively so as to advance gay rights in Japan without hectoring or appearing to be judgmental. Secretary Clinton was very supportive of this effort; her position on LGBT rights was ahead of the U.S. Congress and the Supreme Court in those days.

A second issue I had been working on for a long time with mixed success was to address the lack of diversity on our country team. The country team in Tokyo was a male-dominated group of Caucasians and Asian Americans. We did not have a single African American or Hispanic in a senior position in the embassy. We only had three senior women — the head of our agriculture section, our press officer, and our station chief. Once in our country team briefing of Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman, out of a group of about twenty people there briefing her, we had not a single woman. It was not right. We needed to work harder to recruit a diverse country team.

*KENNEDY: It really wasn't your problem. You were seeing the results of the problem. But you couldn't determine...*

ZUMWALT: We could not determine our staffing in the short term, but we could have an impact over the longer term. John Roos wanted to make changes; he thought that the lack of diversity was a real problem. I had to explain to him the assignment decisions we were making now would not have an impact for three years because we were assigning people to jobs via two years of language training. But unless we started, we would not get anywhere. Embassy Tokyo is a more diverse workplace now than it was before, but diversity remains as an issue. In general, the EAP bureau also had a reputation of not nurturing women. Kurt Campbell tried to change that too.

When I arrived in Tokyo in the fall of 2008, the Liberal Democratic Party regime was collapsing and the transition to the Democratic Party of Japan had begun. But by the end of my tour, the end of the short DPJ tenure was apparent. The DPJ had chosen its third prime minister in less than three years. Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda was an improvement. If he had stayed in office, we

could have worked together to strengthen our relationship but, by this time, the Japanese public was fed up with the DPJ and its poor performance managing the disaster.

We again had to reposition ourselves, reaching out to the LDP opposition but at the same time maintaining good contacts with the existing government. I kept explaining to Japanese counterparts “We are a democracy and are used to changes of party. We don’t choose sides, but we want to maintain good relations with both major political parties.” Senior DPJ politicians would ask us why we were talking to the opposition. Meanwhile, the opposition would ask why we would bother to talk to the DPJ who were about to lose office. We did a lot of press backgrounder to the Japanese media about our engagement strategy. We explained that we do not choose the elected government, but we wanted to be on good terms with both parties because in a democracy, power changes hands.

*KENNEDY: I’ve interviewed people — this goes way back — when Clement Attlee came in over Churchill, our whole political section in London was concentrating on the Tories. I think one guy far down had the Labor portfolio and he was all of a sudden top dog because he knew those people.*

ZUMWALT: Exactly. Managing the upcoming transition in power was another project in the last few months while I was DCM in Tokyo. By and large, we were successful in positioning ourselves for the upcoming change in government.

At the end of my three plus-year tour in Japan, I took satisfaction in knowing that Embassy Tokyo’s efforts to shape U.S. government policy had resulted in an improvement in U.S.-Japan relations. Many Japanese appreciated our help to a friend in need and these positive feelings were reflected in Japanese public opinion polls that showed an upsurge in positive feelings for the United States. It was a bittersweet time to depart. I would miss our lovely home, the wonderful Tokyo lifestyle, the interesting work at the embassy, and many Japanese friends. However, I was looking forward to rejoining Ann in Washington DC and to begin a challenging new job. I left Tokyo in late November, had home leave over Christmas, and started work in January in my new position as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Japan and Korea in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs.

## Chapter XIV

### Deputy Assistant Secretary for Japan and Korea, 2012–2015

JUNE 11, 2018

*KENNEDY: Did you find when you came back to Washington, you were debriefing people on the disaster?*

ZUMWALT: I didn't return to Washington until November 2011. By that time, the March 11 disaster in Japan was old news. FSI did invite me to lecture at their class in crisis management. FSI was training people responsible for disaster management, not only generalist FSOs, but also participants from other agencies like FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency). They asked good questions.

My new job title was Deputy Assistant Secretary for Japan and Korea. The Japan side of the job was comfortable for me because I knew Japan well. I had been working nine years in a row on Japan, seven of those years in Tokyo and two years as the Japan desk office director. My boss was Kurt Campbell, the dynamic assistant secretary for East Asian and Pacific affairs. Kurt believed in the Asia alliances and devoted much time to nurturing high-level contacts in Japan and Korea. He visited Tokyo and Seoul about once a month; it was crazy how often he went. His visits were usually very brief, perhaps 24 hours in each country. In both capitals, he enjoyed extraordinary access for an assistant secretary — he would see the prime minister, the foreign minister, and defense minister. Usually, I traveled with him to Tokyo and Seoul, so we came to know each other well and I understood his priorities.

I think Kurt Campbell was the most influential assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs since Paul Wolfowitz. I enjoyed working for him. Kurt was always available to speak to the Japanese or Korean ambassadors no matter how busy his schedule might be. He understood why those meetings were important. Kurt had a strong vision for the region, but also delegated implementation of that vision to his staff. We also appreciated that Kurt could involve Secretary Clinton when we needed her to engage. When it was important for a high-level visitor to see the secretary, we knew we could go to Kurt and he would use his back channel to help us obtain the appointment. Kurt talked Secretary Clinton into important events like a trilateral foreign ministers' meeting at the margins of the UN General Assembly.

During this tour, I was blessed with two extremely strong country desks. The Japan and Korea office directors, Marc Knapper and Edgard Kagan respectively, and their deputies, Karin Lang and MaryKay Carlson, were among the most impressive officers with whom I have worked in my career. Management of these two desks was easy thanks to their effective leadership. I particularly appreciated their willingness to disagree with me on occasion; each of them saved me from bad decisions I might otherwise have made. Under their leadership, morale on the two desks was extremely high. These two desks share a suite together and, when time permitted, they hosted fun office parties that enhanced teamwork and boosted morale. The two desks got along extremely well with each other, which enhanced our ability to advance trilateral (U.S.-Japan-Korea) initiatives. At times, I needed to call on individual officers on these desks to work long hours to manage a crisis and they always stepped up to perform above and beyond the call of duty.

The one thing I did not anticipate prior to coming to this job was the Korean sense of competition with Japan over relations with the United States. The Korean embassy came to me fairly intensively early on — the political minister, the economic minister, and the DCM were all reaching out — they wanted to make sure that I would remain even-handed in managing relations with South Korea and Japan. I had served on the Korea desk twelve years earlier, but no one in the Korean embassy remembered that period. I was careful not to exhibit any bias toward Japan over Korea.

Appearances are important, so I didn't display a single Japanese art object in my office. I had a nice photo from the day Ambassador Roos presented his credentials to the Emperor of Japan — but I waited until I had acquired an equivalent Korean photo to display alongside it. I shopped at several stores to find a picture frame exactly the same size for a photograph of Korean President Park shaking my hand on her arrival in Washington. Over time, I gained the trust of the Korean embassy and we enjoyed a productive and honest relationship. At the end of my tour, one Korean counterpart said, “We were worried about you because you had a Japan background, but we are glad that you were even-handed in how you dealt with things.”

*KENNEDY: It wasn't a love relationship, unlike say Formosa. Japanese-Taiwanese relations are quite good.*

ZUMWALT: That's true — Taiwan has more fond memories of Japan. The Japanese invested a lot in Taiwan, constructing a railroad and roads and other infrastructure. One of Japan's national universities was in Taipei. They taught Japanese in school and the ethnic Taiwanese seemed to adapt and learn Japanese. Whereas in Korea, the effort to force people to learn Japanese was largely resented.

*KENNEDY: Also, they made them change their names.*

ZUMWALT: There were many Japanese policies that Koreans understandably resented, such as the destruction of Korean temples and confiscation of art treasures.

*KENNEDY: You mentioned Asia alliances. Can you explain how they work?*

ZUMWALT: We now have a hub-and-spokes alliance system in East Asia. There is a U.S.-Japan alliance, a U.S.-Korea alliance, and bilateral alliances with Australia, the Philippines, and Thailand. However, there is no overarching security architecture as we enjoy with NATO in Europe. What that means is there is more burden on the United States as the hub to communicate separately with each of our allies. We were trying to enhance Japan-Korea relations to create an “alliance network.” The Japanese were eager and the Korean military also understood the importance of greater alliance integration. In any Korean war contingency plan, U.S. forces to Korea would flow through Japan.

Many of our naval and air facilities in Japan supported the UN command in Korea. Nine of the U.S. bases in Japan are also UN rear bases and have elements from U.S. forces in Korea based there. The Korean military knew this reality and recognized it was in their interest to work together with Japan.

The Japanese were not privy to our Korean peninsula contingency plans even though they were providing facilities to the United States to execute these plans. They wanted to understand our planning better because they would be affected too. It was a fair point and we acknowledged that

information-sharing was an issue. But there were information-security issues and a lack of trust between Korea and Japan. To remedy this situation, we tried to conduct more trilateral military exercises and other trilateral activities. We encouraged Japan and Korea to sign a military information-security agreement so they could share classified information directly and reduce the U.S. role as the “alliance hub.”

Our efforts to improve the bilateral relationship met with only mixed success. We made the most progress when we used our “convening authority” to invite Japan and Korea to meet in a trilateral setting. We hosted annual trilateral defense and foreign ministers’ meetings and more frequent trilateral vice foreign ministers’ meetings. Deputy Secretary of State Tony Blinken assumed this role with enthusiasm. Some of our work in EAP then was to devise a meaningful agenda for Blinken’s trilateral meetings. To prepare, the Japan and Korea desks would work with other government agencies such as the National Science Foundation, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Peace Corps, and USAID, as well as with other bureaus in the State Department such as the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, to devise a broad and global agenda that showcased ways in which the three democracies could work together to advance common goals.

For example, we set out an action agenda for joint work on cancer research, on space exploration, on forecasting tropical cyclones, on the human genome project, and on efforts to promote sustainable development in Africa and South and Southeast Asia. Japan and Korea each operate overseas development volunteer programs similar to the Peace Corps. We discussed ways in which these three programs might work together in developing countries. The point of these discussions was to showcase Japanese and Korean common democratic values and shared interests to help create a positive atmosphere in which they could overcome historical animosities. Blinken, who understood the value to the United States of our partnerships with Japan and Korea, was most enthusiastic about this project and he pushed us to develop a meaningful agenda. We were successful in identifying many areas where Japan and Korea might work together to advance shared interests, but we studiously avoided discussion of historical issues where there were such vast differences between Korean and Japanese interpretations of the past.

The Department of Defense (DOD) held Defense Trilateral Talks three times during the two and a half years while I was State Department DAS. Those talks were chaired at the assistant secretary of defense level with three- or four-star military components on all three sides. The Department of State and Japanese and Korean foreign ministries also participated. These meetings advanced our trilateral agenda in areas such as intelligence sharing, military exercises, and counter-terrorism cooperation. My relationship with DOD was outstanding. Their excellent Japan and Korea team wanted the State Department at the table and we worked together well to strengthen our alliances.

But historical issues such as the “comfort women” would interrupt these efforts. The Korean side believed that Japan had not apologized adequately for its trafficking of women into brothels that serviced Japanese soldiers in the 1930s and ’40s. The Japanese side felt that they had legally resolved this issue in 1965 with the Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea. This treaty re-established official relations between the two countries and Japan agreed to provide Korea with \$800 million to settle property and other claims. In Japan’s view, under this agreement the Korean government gave up all rights to individual lawsuits against Japan or

against Japanese companies. Korean courts, however, have ruled that this treaty did not take away an individual's right to sue.

For many years, this conversation was suppressed because the Park Chung-hee government had made a decision to normalize relations with Japan in order to obtain capital and technology for economic development. The Park government prioritized economic development. After Korea became a democracy, the leftist parties sometimes attempted to win favor with the voters by attacking the conservatives for having sold out Korea's interests. This political tension continues to the present day.

The United States has largely overcome negative feelings stemming from our war with Japan, but Koreans have not yet forgiven Japan for the 1910–45 period when Japan occupied Korea. Many Americans, in their efforts to improve relations between our two allies in Northeast Asia, dismissed these Korean historical memories. They thought Korea should forget the past as our alliances faced major problems now that required collaboration. That American attitude was not appreciated by the Koreans. I remember counseling many American officials not to ignore Korea's deep grievances about the Japanese colonial legacy. I do not want to blame one side or the other, but these negative feelings between our two allies in the region were awkward for us and frequently undermined our goals.

Of course, American veterans of World War II were interested in preserving their legacy and so, even as we worked to strengthen the U.S.-Japan security alliance and our diplomatic partnership, we could not completely forget the war that we once fought against Japan. These years marked the sunset of the lives of American war veterans. During my tour, we helped with arrangements for Japanese dignitaries who came for Senator Daniel Inouye's memorial service and we met with other veterans from the Japanese American 442<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment of the U.S. Army that fought so valiantly in Europe. Twice, I met with American survivors of Japanese prison camps in the Philippines. These aging veterans had formed an organization called the Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor and their mission was to ensure that later generations would not forget their sacrifice, having endured horrible deprivations after the surrender of Corregidor to the Japanese. The Japanese foreign ministry organized annual visits for these aging veterans to come to Japan on a journey of reconciliation. I was always amazed at the grace and dignity of these aging American soldiers as they prepared to travel to Japan. Their gait may have slowed and some may have been in wheelchairs, but they held their heads high with the knowledge that they had persevered through adversity to see their nation triumph in the end.

Ethnic Korean organizations in the United States are much more active than Japanese American organizations. The difference was striking. The Korean American community in the United States played a positive role in reinforcing U.S.-Korea ties. However, sometimes their involvement in these historical issues complicated our efforts to build a strong alliance network. We began to see citizen movements in the United States that advocated placing statues in public places to commemorate Korean comfort women. One example was in nearby Fairfax City. The Japanese foreign ministry was often heavy-handed in trying to convince local communities not to erect such statues, attracting media attention and reinforcing the impression that Japan still could not or would not acknowledge its wartime actions. Often, American local leaders were caught in the middle, not wanting to choose between friendship with Korea and friendship with Japan. I did have a few conversations with the Korean embassy about how disturbing it would be if we were to learn that the Korean government were involved in energizing local Korean communities on this issue. I told them that such actions would not be helpful to our security policies since we

needed a strong alliance system. I also talked quietly to the Japanese embassy, saying that their efforts to discourage local communities from installing these statues often appeared insensitive to the issues of violence against women. I think this issue was hard for both embassies in Washington, but they were under instructions from capitals to act as they did. Karin Lang told me that, on one or two occasions, her Japanese embassy counterparts were so embarrassed to present a demarche on this topic that they would call and ask if they could just send the points over.

*KENNEDY: You don't think of Japanese Americans as having issues.*

ZUMWALT: There are several reasons that explain the different levels of political activism among the two ethnic communities. First, the Korean community in the United States consists of more recent immigrants so they have fresher ties to their homeland. Second, the Japanese American community is less numerous in Washington than the Korean American community. The last reason the Korean American community was more active than the Japanese American community stems from history. A large majority of Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans living on the mainland United States were interned in prison camps in 1942. The internment experience resulted in the community seeking to avoid attention, eschewing political activism regarding Japan policy issues, and attempting to assimilate in the United States rather than celebrating their cultural and ethnic ties to Japan. The Korean ethnic community in the United States, of course, faces racial prejudice too, but it never faced such a searing crisis as the Japanese American community did in 1942. Korean American organizations who came to see me were proud to be Americans, but they cared about Korea too and were not averse to speaking up if they disagreed with our policies.

*KENNEDY: Koreans don't hide their light under a bushel, they push hard. I felt this as Consul General.*

ZUMWALT: I believe in the value of civic engagement. If a citizen group wanted to visit the State Department, I always tried to treat them with dignity and respect in our meetings. Several Korean American organizations visited me to complain about our use of the name "Sea of Japan" on official maps or about our unwillingness to criticize Japan for its atrocities committed when Korea was a Japanese colony. I would meet them in my office, listen patiently to their points of view, and also explain U.S. policy to them.

The issue of geographic names between Japan and Korea did not resonate at all with the American public, but nonetheless took up much of my time during this tour. The United States government refers to the body of water between Japan and Korea as the Sea of Japan. Korea refers to this ocean as the East Sea, because it is located east of Korea (and west of Japan). There is an entity connected to the United Nations called the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names that tries to standardize names for the world's geographic features. The United States is represented in this group by the Board on Geographic Names, whose members are made up of representatives of federal agencies concerned with geographic information. All the work naming features in this part of the Pacific Ocean has been completed but the official map has never been approved by this UN group because Japan and Korea could never agree on the name of the sea between them.

Prior to taking this job, I had been completely unaware of this issue. (I had been using the name "Gulf of Mexico" since childhood and never saw this name as a threat to U.S. sovereignty. It

seemed ludicrous to me to fight over the name of a body of water.) But the Korean embassy explained to me that when this issue was discussed by the predecessor to this UN body, Korea had been a Japanese colony and was not represented. For Korea, this naming issue had important symbolic importance as a vestige of Japanese colonization. The Japanese fought back fiercely against Korea's request to use both names, saying that the issue had been settled.

As this body prepared to meet and to conduct a vote to approve this chart, both Japanese and Korean embassies visited me many times. The Koreans asked us to vote "no" and the Japanese asked us to vote "yes." But after presenting these points, they would quietly say as they were leaving "If you abstain, we would understand." Both embassies recognized that a U.S. abstention could avoid causing a problem in our bilateral relationship.

The obvious solution to me was that we should abstain to avoid choosing sides on an issue that was less important to us than it was to each of our two allies. However, the responsible office in our Bureau of International Organization Affairs (IO) had other ideas. They were angry that a fight between Japan and Korea could block approval of their opus. They had worked hard on this chart of names and wanted to see it approved. They wanted EAP to manage this testy relationship between Korea and Japan in a way that allowed them to move forward with approval for this document. I had several meetings with the deputy assistant secretary in IO to discuss the U.S. vote. I also encouraged both the Japanese and Korean embassies to meet with the IO DAS Dean Pittman so that he understood their strong feelings on this issue.

Dean Pittman ultimately acknowledged that, even though it meant delay in this UN group's work, avoiding a conflict with either Japan or Korea was more important to the United States. He agreed that the United States would abstain in the vote. Some of the civil servants in IO who had worked on this issue for years were furious with this decision. Later, the Korean embassy called me to report that the U.S. delegation in Geneva was threatening to vote "yes" despite their instructions to abstain. I called Dean quickly and asked him to contact our delegation in Geneva immediately to make sure they carried out their instructions to abstain. The final vote count was interesting. There were three "no votes" — South Korea, North Korea, and Cuba. There was only one "yes" vote, Japan. All of the other participants from around the world abstained. In the end, the Japanese and Korean diplomatic missions had worked diligently to forge a global stalemate. It was unfortunate that both Japan and South Korea chose to spend so much energy on this kind of issue rather than more important national security concerns. But after the vote, I thought that the United States, thanks to our behind the scenes work, had come out in the right place by avoiding choosing between two important allies.

*KENNEDY: These things are not — I served in both Greece and Yugoslavia and, every once in a while, you'd get caught up in this Macedonia thing, before Macedonia became an independent state. Just to say "Macedonia" in Greece would set rockets off.*

ZUMWALT: At the end of my assignment as DAS, the Korean embassy told me how much they appreciated that I remained even-handed throughout this process. My goal was to maintain good relations with our two allies and to avoid choosing one friend over the other. That was the most important U.S. interest in this matter.

*KENNEDY: How did you find the Korean diplomats?*

ZUMWALT: Korean diplomats assigned to Washington were simply outstanding. They spoke excellent English, understood Washington, and energetically worked to advance Korean

interests. I am sure posts like the Korean mission to the United Nations and their embassy in Washington attract some of the best diplomats in the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs. South Korea also maintained an extensive network of constituent posts around the country.

On occasion, when Seoul and Washington were not aligned well, they would give me hints like “Why don’t you try this approach?” or “Why don’t you ask your ambassador to talk to so-and-so in Seoul?” They were being good diplomats, helping us to figure out how to solve a problem, and I really appreciated their sage advice. We may not have agreed on every issue, but we did agree that both sides should strive to strengthen our diplomatic partnership and our security alliance. In the office they tended to be a little formal, but they hosted many outside lunches which were useful venues for a more informal exchange.

*KENNEDY: I know we were concerned at one time about Japanese leaks to the press. The whole recognition of China, part of the “Nixon shock” to Japan, was because of concern something like this would be leaked.*

ZUMWALT: There were concerns about Japanese leaks to the press. There were also espionage concerns — the more people who know things, the harder it is to protect that information. We were talking a lot to the Japanese about improving their information security so that we could become more comfortable sharing intelligence secrets.

Despite these concerns, the Obama administration recognized that it was important to work closely with Korean and Japanese counterparts to reassure them of our security guarantees. The term they used was “extended deterrence.” The concept was that if our ally were attacked with a nuclear weapon, the United States would respond with overwhelming force. That is our stated policy and we believe that this policy will deter an attack on our allies. It was in our interest that our allies regarded our nuclear umbrella as a credible deterrent so they would not want to develop their own nuclear weapons.

We started an Extended Deterrence Dialogue with each ally separately. We would meet, alternating between Seoul or Tokyo and a site in the United States to discuss U.S. nuclear policy. Experts like Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear and Missile Defense Policy Brad Roberts and his successor, Elaine Bunn, would lead discussions about our nuclear doctrine and how we might respond to certain hypothetical situations.

Also, we would showcase our nuclear capabilities for our allies. For me, these dialogues were a fascinating learning opportunity. We would meet in places like the Sandia National Laboratories in New Mexico where the nuclear weapons are developed and tested. The Sandia scientists and engineers explained that their motto was “always, never.” The weapons would always be ready if the president made a decision to employ them but would never be involved in an accident. On the tour of the Sandia lab, physicists would describe their experiments with computer models to make sure our nuclear weapons were reliable, safe, and available. They showed the Japanese and Koreans that we invested in the means to match our stated policies.

One Extended Deterrence Dialogue meeting with our Japanese counterparts was convened at U.S. Naval Base Kitsap near Seattle. We toured the *Ohio*-class ballistic missile submarine the *USS Alabama* and spoke to the sailors, who explained their jobs. The Japanese were most impressed by the dedication and commitment of these sailors. We also visited a U.S. Coast Guard training center where the submarine crews and Coast Guard vessels responsible for protecting them in the harbor practiced on a simulator. Our Japanese guests were impressed by

the close cooperation between the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Coast Guard. I think these Extended Deterrence Dialogues with Korea and Japan helped reassure our allies that we were prepared to meet our commitments.

It was interesting for the Japanese and Koreans to see our capabilities and to learn more about our nuclear doctrine. As the weaker partner in our bilateral relationship, our allies will always feel anxiety, but I think the Japanese and Koreans both appreciated our willingness to showcase our capabilities and preparedness. For me, this process was like a graduate-school class in nuclear deterrence policy and I'm sure the Japanese and Koreans felt the same way since they asked many insightful questions.

*KENNEDY: How did North Korea play at this time?*

ZUMWALT: North Korea was an important issue for both South Korea and Japan. My title was DAS for Japan and Korea, but there was also a Special Envoy for North Korea Policy, Glyn Davies. His deputy was Clifford "Ford" Hart. Glen, Ford, and I knew each other well because Glyn and I had been junior officers together in Kinshasa in 1982 and Ford had served with me in Embassy Beijing. Glyn and Ford were the ones attending the frequent interagency meetings on North Korea. Both Glyn and Ford recognized that the Japanese and Koreans were going to explore if there were differences among us, so they kept me closely informed.

On February 29, 2012, they reached an agreement with North Korea. The Leap Day Agreement froze North Korea's nuclear development and permitted some inspections of North Korea's nuclear facilities in exchange for U.S. humanitarian food aid. That agreement broke down in a matter of weeks when North Korea conducted some provocative missile tests. There were a lot of recriminations and the six-party process broke down. But Glyn and Ford remained engaged in an active process with the other four parties — Russia, China, South Korea, and Japan — to attempt to revive the six-party process. I was quite happy Glyn and Ford were managing our North Korea diplomacy so I could focus on work to strengthen our bilateral security alliances with Japan and South Korea.

During this time, I also worked closely with Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights Issues Robert King. This ambassador-level position had been created by the North Korean Human Rights Act, enacted by Congress in 2004. This act established King's special envoy position "to promote efforts to improve respect for the fundamental human rights of the people of North Korea." King had rich experience on Capitol Hill and he provided me with invaluable advice on how to communicate with the House and Senate committee staff who were interested in East Asia. He also helped me prepare for congressional testimony. King was committed to advancing human rights, but he also believed in the value of dialogue. He would be the last person to demonize the North Korean regime, preferring patient engagement as a means to advance his agenda. King was also active in working with us to support Japan's efforts to return Japanese citizens who had been abducted by North Korea.

Another area we worked on with the South Koreans was civilian planning for contingencies related to the potential collapse of the North Korean government. We had done a lot of bilateral military planning but not much civilian planning with the Koreans. This was an interesting area, because if the North Korean regime were to collapse, South Korea would take the lead and the United States would take a supporting role. In order to prepare, we needed to understand how the

South Korean government might respond and their expectations for U.S. assistance. We began quiet exploratory discussions about ROK plans for civilian administration in the north.

The Korea desk took on much of the heavy lifting in preparing for these talks in conjunction with the State Department's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations and the Department of Defense. State Department Korea desk Deputy Director MaryKay Carlson ably led the process for planning and executing these bilateral meetings, which occurred at a military base outside of Washington DC. These sessions helped the U.S. side gain a greater understanding of Korean contingency planning and their expectations for U.S. support in case they needed to implement these plans.

*KENNEDY: Were the South Koreans concerned about integrating North Koreans who were malnourished, short, and poorly educated?*

ZUMWALT: The Korean government by this time had experience with integrating migrants from the north, because they had already welcomed twenty thousand North Korean refugees over the past few decades. The South Korean government had spent a lot of time trying to help these migrants assimilate into South Korean society. The government established a facility at Hanawan where the migrants would prepare for their new lives in South Korea for six months. These North Korean migrants needed to learn a lot of basic skills needed in a capitalist economy, such as managing a bank account and budget planning so assistance money would last for the entire month. I thought that the South Korean government appreciated the challenges of reunification. While the South Korean political goal was unification, they also recognized the tremendous political challenges and economic costs.

At this time, the conservative Korean government was more willing to talk to us about their civilian planning than more leftist governments had in the past. They also made it clear that this division of the peninsula was unnatural — Korea was a single country. Their country had been divided by the United States and the Soviet Union without consulting with Koreans. In the future, Koreans would determine the fate of the peninsula, not outsiders. Not only was I sympathetic to that viewpoint, I thought that the United States did not want to be in charge of such a massive and difficult undertaking. We wanted reunification to succeed and were willing to work with South Korea to mobilize the World Bank, IMF, and other institutions to help them. Our goal was to gain a better sense of their contingency planning so we could prepare to support them if needed. These talks were a useful bilateral engagement.

During this period, South Korea celebrated the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the armistice that ended fighting on the peninsula. The Koreans staged a big parade in Seoul and massive military demonstrations. I joined the official U.S. government delegation led by Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel. The Park government graciously invited veterans from the sending states; the largest contingent was Americans, but there were also Australians, Canadians, Norwegians, Brits, and others.

*KENNEDY: There were Turks, too.*

ZUMWALT: Yes, many countries participated in the UN action in Korea. For the elderly American veterans who had fought in the war, returning to Seoul was a meaningful experience. As young nineteen- and twenty-year-olds, they had departed Korea thinking the conflict had ended in a stalemate. When they returned to Seoul sixty years later, they saw tall skyscrapers, a prosperous economy, and a free society. President Park in her remarks said, "We Koreans simply

would not be here today living such a comfortable life were it not for you foreign soldiers who answered the call to defend us.” I think these ceremonies showed these elderly military veterans that their sacrifices had mattered.

*KENNEDY: I'm a Korean War veteran and coming back twenty-five years later in '76-'79 at the embassy — to see Korea at that time, which I'd written off as a basket case — it was very impressive. You really thought you'd done something.*

ZUMWALT: That's right. I do not want to give exclusive credit to foreigners because Koreans themselves did most of the hard development work, but President Park was gracious in acknowledging the contributions of the foreign Korean War veterans.

At this time, President Park was riding high. She came to Washington for an official visit in May 2013, which was quite successful. She addressed a joint session of Congress in fluent English. At the beginning of her speech to the Congress, she asked members who had served in the Korean War to stand. There were four or five, including Rep. Charlie Rangel. They received a round of applause from representatives of both parties. Then she asked descendants of Korean War veterans to stand and three or four members rose to their feet. She then acknowledged an invited guest sitting in the observation deck. He was a Korean American U.S. Army captain who had lost a limb serving in Iraq and whose father had been a Korean War veteran. She asked him to stand and said, “I want to acknowledge not only those who served in the past but also the brave Americans defending us today.” This message of shared sacrifice and common values resonated in our Congress. Then President Park talked about the importance of KORUS (the Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement). She convincingly reminded Americans that we have a stake in Korea’s success too. South Korea’s success means that our sacrifices in the Korean War were not in vain.

In her meeting and lunch with President Obama, they spent a lot of time talking about North Korea, but also about our economic relationship and implementation of our free trade agreement. That session highlighted for the world our solidarity and the alignment of our North Korea policies.

Park also joined a large, elaborate banquet given by the Korean American community at the large atrium of the National Building Museum. That dinner was meant to honor Korean War veterans, so even though the gala dinner was financed largely by the Korean American business community, many American veterans attended. At that banquet, I met a Korean restauranteur who told me that his company had won the contract to manage the State Department cafeteria. He told me that, as an immigrant to the United States, he was proud to furnish meals to his adopted nation’s diplomats. I told him that the State Department cafeteria had improved since I had first eaten there in 1981.

*KENNEDY: President Park lost both her father and mother to assassins.*

ZUMWALT: Yes. I cannot imagine what it must have been like to lose one’s mother to an assassin, then later to lose one’s father to another assassin. It seemed to me that President Park was an extremely hardworking, dedicated, and patriotic person who had overcome personal tragedy. She was saddled with the political legacy of her authoritarian father. I’m sure there are complex political issues regarding President Park’s legacy in Korea, but she was a good friend of the United States who acknowledged our alliance and our political partnership. I was proud to contribute to the preparations for her visit to Washington such as arrangements for Secretary of State John Kerry’s call on her at Blair House.

*KENNEDY: Did you find yourself almost trying to act as a go-between for the Korean embassy and Japanese embassy?*

ZUMWALT: The Korean DCM and the Japanese political minister were my counterparts. Each would visit me at least once a week for a long meeting to review our full agenda. Japan and Korea are both global partners, so our discussions were not confined to bilateral matters. We might talk about developments in Libya, G7 preparations, or our response to the Ebola pandemic in West Africa. Routinely, they also had demarches to deliver, such as an upcoming UN vote on North Korea or a Korean candidate for a high position at an international organization. Each time we met, we had a long list of issues to cover.

I always told my secretary to leave my calendar free for ninety minutes if either the Japanese political minister or Korean DCM were visiting. I thought they deserved as much time with me as they wanted. They always brought a note-taker and I'm sure they sent back detailed cables to Seoul and Tokyo regarding each conversation. I always included a note-taker from the Japan or Korea desk so that we too would send back a detailed record to our embassies in Tokyo and Seoul. So, I saw these meetings as excellent channels for communications. A few times, as one of them would leave, the other would be waiting outside my office so each embassy knew the other was also active.

*KENNEDY: What was your evaluation of Secretary Clinton?*

ZUMWALT: I thought she was an outstanding secretary of state. Secretary Clinton was hardworking and smart and had always mastered her brief. I attended many of Secretary Clinton's meetings with high-level officials. We would have prepared complex briefing memos for her with perhaps ten to fifteen issues to address. She would be careful and was very good about going through our list — a couple of times she turned to me and said "Jim, did I miss anything?" I would point to something like issue twelve, then she would look at her list and be reminded to raise the issue. She was well prepared, thorough, and took her role seriously. Had she been elected president, she would have been good for the State Department. She understood the foreign policy issues and worked closely with foreign service officers.

One of the highlights of this tour was the celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Japan's gift of cherry blossoms to Washington DC in 1912. Washington is proud of its cherry trees, which have become a world-famous tourist attraction, and the city worked hard to commemorate this special occasion. This hundredth-anniversary Cherry Blossom Festival was a positive and lovely celebration that highlighted U.S.-Japan friendship. The Japan desk worked with our Bureau of Public Affairs and the Cherry Blossom Festival organizers to take advantage of the public diplomacy opportunities, including a tree-planting ceremony with First Lady Michelle Obama — a descendant of First Lady Helen Taft, who had planted the first cherry blossom tree in 1912 — and Yoriko Fujisaki, the wife of the Japanese ambassador. Appropriately, the tree they planted was a new variety of flowering cherry called "First Lady" in honor of First Lady Helen Taft and First Lady Michelle Obama.

My tour as DAS for Japan and Korea was a satisfying one. Sustaining our alliances with Japan and Korea requires a lot of hard work across the government. In order to accomplish our goals, the State Department needed to coordinate closely with other agencies, each having its own interests. I was gratified to see firsthand that our interagency work to strengthen our alliances in East Asia was facilitated by broad and bipartisan political support in Congress and the

administration for these alliance policies. I completed my tour with the satisfaction of knowing that we had made progress in expanding our partnerships and strengthening our security relations with two key allies in Northeast Asia.

## Chapter XV

### Ambassador to the Republic of Senegal, 2015–2017

JULY 18, 2018

*KENNEDY: Jim is just back from a nice Italian vacation, but now we're going to go back to American diplomatic work.*

ZUMWALT: In late 2013, Hans Klemm, the deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Human Resources of the State Department, called to offer me the assignment as U.S. Ambassador to Senegal and Guinea-Bissau. After our marriage, Ann and I had always been assigned to overseas and domestic postings together. She had retired a year earlier and had begun a master's degree program in social work at the Catholic University of America. If I accepted this opportunity, Ann would have been halfway through her master's program when I departed for Dakar. We faced a dilemma: should I accept the assignment at a cost of either separation or her giving up her academic goal? We decided that we should each pursue our careers despite the year of separation that decision entailed.

Another challenge was my inadequate French-language ability. I had tested at the 3+ level in French after my assignment to Kinshasa in 1983, but my French had become quite rusty. Since the process for vetting, nomination, and Senate approval takes so long, I had time to brush up.

While undergoing the vetting process that took almost a year, I continued my stimulating job in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. My predecessor, Ambassador Lew Lukens, was still in Dakar, so I did not see any rush to get out to post. I began studying French two hours a night using Rosetta Stone and other materials. FSI was very accommodating.

*KENNEDY: I have to say, Rosetta Stone is a —*

ZUMWALT: Rosetta Stone is an interactive software program. I used it for a review to bring me back first to the 2 level before starting at FSI with individual instruction.

After I was nominated, I attended French class at FSI in the morning and continued as DAS in the afternoon. Finally, when my nomination had been announced in the autumn of 2014, I moved to FSI for full-time French-language study for two months. The Foreign Service Institute did a wonderful job in helping me recover my French-language skills. I took a one-on-one class with an experienced Senegalese French teacher four hours a day for several months. Many of his lessons focused on Senegalese history and culture. He introduced me to the role of Islam, Senegal's colonial legacy, and its ethnic composition. He covered issues that were difficult to address, like female circumcision. I certainly felt better prepared at the end of my time at FSI for this Dakar assignment.

FSI had made remarkable progress in the thirty years since I had studied French there previously. In 1981, the FSI French department teachers were almost all Europeans, even though the vast majority of the students were continuing on to assignments outside Europe. This situation meant that FSI students had been learning European French to use in regions of the world that had different French dialects. Moreover, some of the FSI French teachers from Europe know little about Africa and the Caribbean and a few were even disdainful of the countries to which we were assigned. I was pleased to see that FSI had since hired many more teachers from Africa and

the Caribbean — the regions to which we were going. This change meant that FSI students could learn about the customs and cultures of our assigned countries as we mastered the French language.

I do not have fond memories about the vetting process, although I recognize that screening ambassador nominees is necessary. The White House vetting official was a young lawyer — I never met him in person. He was doing his job and I understood that his numerous questions were not personal. But he was intrusive. I had to turn over all my tax forms and financial statements for the past five years. I am not wealthy but, even so, there were numerous detailed questions about individual stocks in my mutual funds. I remember spending hours researching the underlying holdings of the mutual funds that were in turn held by my mutual funds. Finding this information involved hours of research online and resulted in nearly a hundred pages of lists of stocks in these mutual funds' portfolios. There was no *de minimis* exception, so even though I owned these stocks indirectly through a mutual fund and even though the value of my share of the stocks owned by each mutual fund was quite small, I still needed to report on each indirect stock holding. After I submitted the information the White House wanted, I might wait for weeks or even months with no reply. Then suddenly, they would ask for more documents with another tight deadline of perhaps 24 hours. The person doing the vetting asked for the login passwords to all of my social media accounts and for copies of every single speech I had ever given since high school. We engaged in a back-and-forth with many detailed questions.

*KENNEDY: This was when?*

ZUMWALT: This process began in the first half of 2014 during the Obama administration. This vetting process took almost a year. Finally, they completed the background checks and the office at the State Department responsible for liaison with the White House and Congress scheduled a Senate hearing rather quickly. Prior to the hearing, I met separately with the Democratic staff and the Republican staff of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. They were quite professional. They were frank in saying “We know that FSOs who are nominated are usually qualified, but we want to ask you a few questions.”

*KENNEDY: I would have thought, given your experience with Fukushima and all that, there would have been normal curiosity about that.*

ZUMWALT: Nobody asked about my role responding to the triple disaster during my interviews with Senate staff. Both the Democratic and Republican Foreign Relations committee staff reviewed my qualifications for this nomination. They saw my résumé and said, “You were in Africa from 1981 to 1983 and then in Asia the rest of your career. Why are you qualified to go to Senegal?” This was a legitimate question. I answered that my national security background and my experience in managing large organizations and dealing with the U.S. government interagency process qualified me for this position.

Two senators met me prior to my nomination hearing — Arizona Senator Jeff Flake, the head of the minority side on the Africa subcommittee, and Delaware Senator Chris Coons, the Africa subcommittee chair. Jeff Flake had been a missionary in Namibia and had lived in South Africa, where he ran an organization sponsoring missionaries in Africa, so he was quite interested in the continent. He asked, “I don’t know much about West Africa. Tell me why Senegal is important.” Our meeting was a job interview, but it was also a chance for Senator Flake to learn about where I was going, so we had a pleasant conversation. He really cared about Africa and supported U.S.

engagement on the continent. I encouraged Senator Flake to visit Senegal, but he never did. Senator Coons did visit twice while I was in Senegal. He had previously been to Dakar; he was very interested in West Africa. I knew Coons was concerned about Senegal's ban on poultry imports, because poultry is a major Delaware export product. I had done my homework enough to tell him it was an important issue and I would address Senegal's import ban after I arrived in Dakar. (I did raise the issue while in Dakar, but failed to make much progress.) The senator was mainly interested in the political situation, the economy, and USAID and Peace Corps activities.

At my confirmation hearing, there were five ambassador nominees — four FSOs going to countries in Africa and the nominee to be United States Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, Rabbi David Saperstein. Almost all of the questions were addressed to David because that was the topic of interest to the senators. I think the other nominees each only received one question.

This would be my first Foreign Service assignment without Ann since we married in 1987. The university summer and winter vacations are long, so she could come and visit Dakar but I knew I would miss her and also miss her good advice. We had both seen too many ambassadors who had become self-important. When one is surrounded by a driver and a bodyguard and numerous staff saying "Your Excellency," it's easy to forget that they're showing respect for the position, not the individual. Without Ann, I needed to be careful to avoid becoming that pompous ambassador.

*KENNEDY: At least you had some credentials.*

ZUMWALT: I had served as a DCM in a large post and been a deputy assistant secretary in a regional bureau. I was confident about the leadership aspects of the job, but also conscious that I lacked recent experience in Africa. Assistant Secretary Linda Thomas-Greenfield and Bureau of African Affairs DAS responsible for West Africa Bisa Williams were very gracious and provided excellent advice prior to my departure for Dakar. However, as an outsider, I was careful to work hard to sustain good communications with the Bureau of African Affairs (AF) front office and the West Africa desk (AF/W).

*KENNEDY: Let's go back to a basic question. When were you in Senegal?*

ZUMWALT: I arrived in early January 2015 and left in late January 2017. I departed Senegal a few days after the inauguration of President Trump. It was a golden era in U.S.-Senegal relations because President Obama was so popular and American views carried weight with the Senegalese government. President Obama had just hosted the United States-Africa Leaders Summit in Washington five months before I arrived, so President Macky Sall had visited Washington and met President Obama at the White House. It was really a very positive time.

*KENNEDY: What are the U.S. interests in Senegal?*

ZUMWALT: Senegal is a small country with a population of 16 million. Its capital city, Dakar, had been the capital of French West Africa during the colonial period, so the city has always maintained a strong regional connection with neighboring French-speaking African countries. Senegal is bordered by three francophone countries (Mauritania, Mali, and Guinea) and Portuguese-speaking Guinea-Bissau to the south. English-speaking The Gambia cuts across Senegal's middle.

*KENNEDY: That was the center of the French empire.*

ZUMWALT: Exactly. Dakar hosts many regional institutions — Cheikh Anta Diop University, a major institution that attracts students from many francophone countries in West Africa, is located in the city, as is the Central Bank of West African States responsible for monetary policy for the West African Franc (Communauté Financière Africaine or CFA) currency countries — Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Mali, Niger, Benin, Burkina Faso, Togo, and Guinea-Bissau. President Macky Sall had a vision to build Dakar into a commercial capital and regional services hub that linked together the surrounding West African economies with a strong regional transport network and served as a regional base for multinational businesses much like Dubai had developed itself into a regional hub in the Persian Gulf. The country was investing in infrastructure in order to achieve this goal. Ongoing construction projects included a new airport, a commuter rail system, new toll roads, and a new capital outside Dakar to reduce congestion in the old city.

The United States Embassy in Dakar focused our work on five major U.S. interests. First, we wanted to support Senegal's democratic success story. Senegal's democratic process had been challenged in the 2012 presidential election, but it proved resilient. The citizens voted the previous president, Abdoulaye Wade, out of office and he conceded the election results and left the country, allowing for a peaceful transfer of power. The Senegalese media distinguished themselves as an independent information source during the election campaign. The Senegalese military stayed out of politics; they remained proud of their status as an apolitical, professional military. Senegal was a rare example of a majority-Muslim country that shared American democratic values. Therefore, we had a stake in Senegal's success so the country could continue to serve as a role model for others. We sought to advance the rule of law and to promote human rights and good governance.

Second, we wanted to assist Senegal's economic development. We recognized that stronger economic growth was a necessary condition to achieve all of our other country goals. Senegal would be a more stable democracy if its people saw the benefits of economic growth. The country could become a more effective regional partner if it had increased resources to engage its neighbors in the region. USAID, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the Peace Corps, and the USDA all managed development programs in the country. We also wanted to increase U.S. trade and investment with Senegal, but frankly, other than the offshore oil and gas sectors, most U.S. companies focused more on anglophone West African markets.

Third, we sought to promote regional peace and security by working with the Senegalese government and military to improve its capacity to contribute to multilateral peacekeeping missions and to mitigate terrorist threats by building the capacity of the Senegalese military and law-enforcement agencies and by strengthening our intelligence sharing. Senegal was a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council that year, so we worked with the foreign ministry to make sure they understood our views about UN Security Council votes.

Fourth, we sought to help Senegal respond to other transnational threats (including the threat of infectious diseases such as Ebola) by building Senegalese capacity in sectors like health care.

Fifth, we supported Senegalese government efforts to bring an end to the conflict in the southern Casamance region of the country. We supported Senegalese infrastructure programs to link the Casamance to the heartland of Senegal and promoted the political climate for reconciliation between the government and the ethnic groups who had been seeking independence for the region. We advanced these goals by providing financial support for NGOs engaged in

humanitarian demining and refugee-return programs. We also encouraged separatist groups to engage the government in peace talks.

*KENNEDY: What was it like when you arrived in Senegal?*

ZUMWALT: I felt extremely fortunate to arrive in Senegal right after the Christmas–New Year’s holiday. It was a beautiful time of year and the streets of downtown Dakar were lit up with festive holiday decorations. From October to March, Dakar’s weather is almost ideal. A typical Dakar day this season would be a low of 68° and a high of 78° Fahrenheit with sunshine and gentle sea breezes. We would not experience a drop of rain for six months. The climate during this period reminded me of my hometown in San Diego; it was perfect outdoor recreation weather.

My South African Airways airplane landed before dawn on January 15. When the jet door opened, I could smell the humid ocean air and hear the cries of seagulls in the pre-dawn darkness. That sea fragrance reminded me of the beaches of San Diego — I felt at home immediately. The chargé, Sandra Clark, met me, along with my driver, Mamadou, and my bodyguard, Mbaye. They bundled me into my armored car as our efficient general services officer Mark Jorgenson took care of immigration formalities and waited for my luggage. The streets were relatively quiet until we entered my neighborhood of Les Almadies at the western tip of Dakar. We inched along a street crowded with taxis parked two and three deep alongside this neighborhood’s many nightclubs. Women dressed in colorful West African wax print fabric dresses with their boyfriends in fancy slacks and open-collar shirts milled about the entrances of these clubs as lively dance music blared out into the street. Senegal may be a Muslim country, but copious amounts of alcohol and tobacco were being consumed on that street. I was glad to live a mile away from this nightly party scene.

Mamadou drove me to my residence, located just across the street from the new embassy chancery. I met residence manager Heidi Borman, who introduced me to my four-person staff. This residence was a bit ostentatious for my taste with cold marble floors, faux pillars in the large living room, and ornate wrought iron work on the staircase and balcony. But it was conveniently located and had a rooftop deck from which I could see the ocean. I converted the elaborate prayer room into my study with bookshelves and a large desk for my work and personal computers. I found this small room much cozier than the large imposing rooms in the rest of the house.

Prior to my arrival, Sandra and I planned my first-week schedule, this being when the entire embassy would form its first impression of the new ambassador. She was a tremendous help in getting me off to a positive start. I arrived on Thursday morning and had two workdays before a weekend of rest.

On my first day, I hosted a country team meeting to introduce myself and to talk about my key goals for the mission. Then Sandra led me downstairs to the large embassy atrium where over five hundred staff had assembled to hear me introduce myself. I talked about my management style and our mission goals. The embassy staff gave me a warm welcome.

Then the management counselor, Daniel Brown, and the building manager walked me through the chancery building and embassy grounds. I was interested in learning about this building, but also wanted people to see me visit their workspaces on my first day in the office. I wanted to be accessible and be seen as interested in each employee’s work. I always looked for excuses to

visit people in their workspaces. For my weekly meetings with agency heads, I would visit their offices. Later in my tour, after Ann arrived, I would bring in cookies she had baked to the motor pool lounge, then sip a cup of tea with the drivers. At lunchtime, Sandra took me to the cafeteria, where we ate with our staff at tables set up on a second-floor balcony with a view of the Atlantic Ocean. I came to enjoy this facility very much and ate there as often as I could because it gave me a chance to join conversations with our embassy employees. I never went home for lunch unless I was hosting a representational event.

On my first afternoon, I received a security brief from Regional Security Officer Michael Lombardo. I came to rely on Mike as a seasoned professional, adept at managing security risks in ways that allowed me to fulfill my mission. He made the excellent suggestion that I buy everyone a round of drinks at the Marine House happy hour Friday after work. (Every embassy guarded by Marine Corps security guards has a Marine House where the marines live. In most, there is a tradition of the marines hosting a cash bar on some Friday evenings for embassy staff to socialize in a casual atmosphere.) That event cost me a few hundred dollars but proved to be an excellent way to interact with many from the embassy American staff in an informal setting. Most of our Senegalese employees were Muslim and either did not drink or did not want to be seen drinking, so in Dakar, the Marine House happy hours were a mostly American event with a very few third-country national staff.

On Friday, I started my outreach to embassy offices, beginning a schedule of five or six office visits a week. These briefings were an excellent way for me to begin to learn about the activities of the many agencies at post. In particular, I was impressed by USAID as they pushed their Senegalese professional staff forward to conduct most of the briefings. I met the two Community Liaison Office employees to prepare for a town hall meeting with American citizens and the medical doctor to learn about health issues at post. On Friday, I hosted a lunch at my residence for twelve senior local staff. Sandra Clark joined me at this event, where I could engage with some of the key leaders among the local hires. I told them that I simply could not do my job without their advice and assistance. This lunch helped break the ice with some of the key leaders among our locally engaged staff and made it easier later to join one or another of them in the cafeteria, where they would graciously introduce me to others at the table as we consumed our lunches.

Fairly soon after I arrived, I met Foreign Minister Mankeur Ndiaye, a gregarious man who spoke excellent English. We got along well and would later work together closely to conclude our Agreement on Defense Cooperation (commonly referred to as a status-of-forces agreement or SOFA).

Since Senegal was a member of the United Nations Security Council then, I would also meet Ndiaye frequently to urge him to support U.S. positions on UN Security Council votes. Senegal would be reluctant to go along with the United States when our position differed from that of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation or the African Union, but otherwise Senegal generally voted with the United States in the United Nations.

Ndiaye arranged for me to call on President Macky Sall to present my credentials at the Presidential Palace a few days later. President Sall greeted me warmly and spoke about his time living in Texas. He could put on a fairly convincing Texas accent when he wanted. Sall mentioned how much he appreciated the International School of Dakar (ISD), where he had recently moved his son. Apparently, his son had not been doing well in the French school, but he

flourished in the English-language environment. Sall also talked about his recent travel to the United States and his meeting at the White House with President Obama. We did not talk too much about policy issues in this initial courtesy call, but he did thank me for the large Millennium Challenge Corporation program that was providing grant funding for \$540 million of infrastructure projects in Senegal.

My second week, our consular section organized a town hall meeting for American citizens living in Dakar. ISD allowed us to use its large auditorium and, as I recall, we attracted about 120 Americans resident in Dakar. This was a good opportunity for the entire embassy to engage with the American community, so after introducing myself, I asked our consul to speak about voter registration and other American citizen services. Then our RSO spoke about security awareness and our embassy doctor talked about health issues. We then opened the floor for audience questions and that interaction allowed me to better understand our small resident American community. The largest number of Americans in Dakar were teachers at the two English-language schools and American missionaries. There were also a few Americans married to Senegalese nationals and a few American exchange students. There were almost no American citizens in the business community. Generally speaking, the American community in Senegal was a self-sufficient group experienced in living in an international environment.

On my initial walk-through of the embassy chancery and grounds, I felt fortunate to inherit a brand-new embassy compound. My predecessor had lived across the street from a dusty construction project and had to drive forty minutes every day to work at the downtown embassy chancery. Whereas by the time I arrived in Dakar, I could walk from my front door across the street to the magnificent new embassy chancery.

On my first day of work, my car and driver appeared in my residence driveway but I told them I would walk to the office. It would have taken longer to take the car out of the narrow driveway and then drive through the embassy security gate than it did to walk across the street to the embassy on foot! Also, I did not like the image of the ambassador arriving in an armored vehicle when many on our staff walked or bicycled to work. Unless it was pouring down rain, which only occurred two or three times, I would walk. My short commute was a real blessing.

Prior to construction of this new chancery, USAID had been located about an hour's drive from the old embassy chancery at a satellite town called Yoff. It seems that this physical separation had created a bit of a barrier between USAID and State. During my pre-departure briefings at USAID's headquarters in Washington, I had heard about a few interagency tensions, particularly over management issues. This information had concerned me because USAID represented about a third of all the 180 direct-hire American personnel at post. I made a point of walking across the hall from my office to talk to the USAID director rather than to call her on the telephone. The first time I did this, she was busy and her secretary was startled to see me appear in the USAID office. I asked her to tell the director to call me when she was free. I continued to pop in on the USAID director almost every workday. I actually welcomed the times when the director was in a meeting because it gave me the opportunity to walk around the USAID office and talk informally to other USAID staff. A group might be standing around a table poring over a detailed map and I could ask them to tell me about the project they were working on. Or someone might pass me in the corridor between cubicles and update me about her health project.

*KENNEDY: What was the situation at the embassy when you went to Senegal?*

ZUMWALT: Two strong U.S. ambassadors proceeded me. Marcia Bernicat, who later became U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh, was in Dakar at a difficult time because she had to speak out against President Abdoulaye Wade's efforts to reduce the democratic space in Senegal to enhance his own re-election chances. The United States had had high hopes when Wade came into office. He had been an opposition leader. He was an attorney — very smart and well-educated. But over his term as president, he became more and more authoritarian and began to groom his corrupt son as the successor president. The United States became more and more critical of Wade's steps to roll back Senegal's democracy and Wade responded with hostility to the United States and to Ambassador Bernicat personally. That was a difficult political time for Marcia, but she stood her ground. My immediate predecessor, Lew Lukens, was an excellent steward of our bilateral relationship and also a skilled manager who smoothed the transition to our new building. Thanks to Lew's management skills, there were very few issues left over from the move to our new chancery building. As a result, when I arrived, our staff was most happy with their new office complex. The building was beautiful and functional; it suited our needs perfectly.

The embassy chancery was simply gorgeous. After walking across the well-maintained grounds, one entered through a bright, airy lobby and after passing through a door controlled by a marine security guard, one ascended an open flight of stairs (or took an elevator) that was decorated with art by an African American artist from Detroit. This led to a huge two-story atrium that ran the length of the second floor of the chancery building. A large skylight above let in natural light. One end of this sunny atrium had a glass wall that looked out over a well-kept garden with the Atlantic Ocean visible in the distance. That atrium, with its movable tables and chairs, was a flexible space that could serve as an auditorium, a cafeteria dining area, or an open workspace. Third-floor embassy offices looked down upon this area from open terraces above. During the workday, the atrium became a collaborative workspace where people brought laptop computers and notepads to work around a table on shared projects over a cup of coffee or tea. Others invited outside contacts here for meetings. People would come and enjoy a coffee or breakfast at the cafeteria, sit down, and meet with people and talk before work; the building had a nice college campus feel. I often enjoyed eating lunch on the large second-floor outdoor terrace which had an idyllic view of the Atlantic Ocean just beyond the embassy garden. Most of the year, it was cool enough to sit outside and watch the cargo ships and fishing vessels sail by. We could see breakers hitting the offshore reef and palm trees swaying in the breeze.

The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) had done a magnificent job with the landscaping. The Art in Embassies Program had hired an African American artist from New York who spent three weeks traveling in Senegal. She took many photographs and returned to her studio in New York to design a very large tile mural to adorn our security perimeter wall. Her work, which stretched for fifty feet along the outside of our wall, displayed scenes of Senegal with a modern American interpretation. So instead of an ugly barrier, our security wall became an art exhibit, displaying fishermen in their colorful pirogues, sunsets over the Atlantic Ocean, colorful fabric markets with busy vendors, and cattle herders in the desert. Between the security bollards and this wall was a garden planted with cacti, yucca, and native flowering plants that flourished in Dakar's dry climate. Our security wall and outside perimeter space was so attractive that Senegalese tourists came in taxis to pose for photos in front of it. Our embassy looked more like a tourist attraction than a fortress even as our building met the State Department's exacting security standards.

The other big advantage of this facility was that every agency except the Peace Corps was housed inside the chancery building, which facilitated interagency collaboration. The building also featured a small gym, a recreational area with a swimming pool and barbecue area, and male and female prayer rooms on the first floor. The old embassy had been near a mosque, but there was none within walking distance of the new embassy. Therefore, many of our local employees appreciated that the State Department architects had included these prayer rooms.

*KENNEDY: Tell me about the country team.*

ZUMWALT: Embassy Dakar was blessed with an outstanding country team. My task was to harness the strengths of different people who came from different bureaucratic cultures to create a cohesive team that would advance our overall mission. I needed to make sure that people understood the context of their work and how it fit into our overall mission goals and priorities. Despite the differences in background and the different missions of the various agencies, they formed a cohesive group. Most of them knew more than I did about Senegal and Africa.

Having spent most of my career in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, I noticed right away that the Bureau of African Affairs had a different character. It was much more diverse — there were more women at all levels, not only in the State Department, but also among the other agencies at the embassy. For example, the heads of USAID and the Peace Corps were women, as were the heads of ICE, the TSA, and the FAA. Our chief courier was a woman. The deputies of USAID and the FBI were women too. The Dakar country team was also more racially diverse with more African Americans than in East Asian embassies where I had served.

The embassy's diversity was a strength.

Embassy Dakar also had a strong array of 02 and 03 level officers. Two of them were Muslim Americans who helped me navigate some of the cultural norms necessary to operate in this majority-Muslim country. However, especially for those filling State Department positions, officers tended to be less experienced than in other embassies where I had worked. Other than the DCM and me, there were no senior State Department officers and, even at the mid-level, we were staffed thinly. We had many FS-03s filling 02 positions, and many 02s filling 01 positions. These were capable officers but didn't have the experience to serve as career mentors for our entry-level officers. I wanted to provide the young State and USAID officers the mentoring they needed to make good career choices and to benefit from their experiences in Dakar.

Since there were so few senior role models for our entry-level officers, I encouraged Sandra Clark to sustain her formal mentoring program. There were a total of about twenty State Department and USAID entry-level officers, specialists, and staff. Sandra did a wonderful job serving as a role model and providing guidance to our entry-level State and USAID officers, specialists, and staff. When we hosted senior visitors from Washington, she would schedule a brown-bag lunch for these State and USAID employees to meet the visitors. I would also meet with the entry-level officers, specialists, and staff along with the USAID director once a month for an informal session where the staff could ask us questions.

This program highlighted the important role of the DCM. I had two excellent DCMs in Dakar. The first, Sandra Clark, was an economic-coned officer like me. She had spent most of her career working on U.S.-Europe relations or international economic issues and she had almost native French-language skills. My second year, I selected Martina Boustani, who had been the administrative counselor in Embassy Ghana, as my DCM. Martina was an experienced West

Africa hand and brought rich program management experience to the job. Martina's entire career, save one assignment in U.S. Embassy Berlin, had been in West Africa or working on West Africa from Washington DC. Her husband, a Lebanese national, lived in Lomé, Togo and wanted to remain close to him. There was a direct flight from Dakar to Togo; he came to Dakar frequently and she visited Lomé when she could. My two excellent DCMs helped me tremendously. I had no qualms about leaving them in charge of the mission when I traveled.

*KENNEDY: Who were some of the people in the embassy?*

ZUMWALT: We employed 180 direct-hire Americans and about forty eligible family members (EFMs). There were almost five hundred locally engaged staff (LES), including six at our liaison office in Bissau. The embassy housed eighteen U.S. government agencies. Outside of the State Department, the biggest agency was USAID. Their staff constituted about a third of the direct-hire staffing and, among the more senior LES positions, over half worked in USAID. USAID also had a regional mission working from Dakar on the Sahel Resilience Project that focused on development work in Niger and Burkina Faso. USAID also worked very closely with the many UN development agency regional offices based in Dakar.

The director of USAID Senegal, Susan Fine, was a strong leader and a positive force on the country team. Susan had rich experience in Africa, having served in Senegal previously. When I arrived, Susan was a bit wary (as she told me later). She valued her policy autonomy and had experienced other ambassadors who tried to impose their priorities on USAID's programming. I made clear to her that my goal was to help USAID be successful. If my presence at a project's ribbon-cutting would enhance the prestige of their project, I would attend. If my signature on a letter to the health minister could unblock a shipment of medicines, I would sign. We did make joint demarches on the finance minister and joint calls on the health and environment ministers to smooth out problems on occasion. My first month at post, I met with every component of USAID, both direct-hire and LES staff, for a briefing on their projects where I would ask questions and show interest. That helped their morale because they could see the new ambassador cared about their work.

After Susan realized that I was not going to micromanage USAID's work, we developed a close working relationship. We talked frequently, not only about development issues but about management challenges at the post. Susan had a good sense of her American and Senegalese staff views and provided me with valuable suggestions on ways to handle certain personnel management issues.

After Susan left, the deputy of USAID Senegal, Lisa Franchett, became the USAID Senegal director. Lisa was also an outstanding partner. Lisa had been married to a Senegalese man for 25 years and possessed a deep understanding of Senegalese culture. Frequently, I sought her advice on issues like behavior at a Senegalese wedding or appropriate cultural references in a congratulatory address. I could go to Lisa and say "I said this thing and the person reacted differently than I thought. Can you help me understand?" Sometimes, she might first talk to her husband and then come back with an answer. Lisa had served a total of eight years in Senegal, so she was a very good cultural advisor.

*KENNEDY: Did we have Peace Corps there?*

ZUMWALT: Yes. The second large development entity in Embassy Dakar was the Peace Corps. Cheryl Faye was the country director of Peace Corps Senegal. Cheryl had been involved in

development in Africa her entire career. Like Lisa, she was married to a Senegalese man and she quickly became my second close consultant on Senegalese culture. I could ask her “This odd thing happened to me — can you explain why?” Usually, she knew what I had done wrong or why a person had responded in an unexpected way. Cheryl was very generous with sharing her experience when I would ask her.

The third major development entity in Senegal was the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). MCC Resident Country Director for Senegal Molly Glenn was an entrepreneurial woman who was always upbeat and resourceful. The USDA had a small six-million-dollar development program focusing on the Casamance region.

The country team also had a robust law-enforcement component. Our State Department regional security officer, Mike Lombardo, was an FS-01 RSO with good judgment. My predecessor, Lew Lukens, had asked him to chair an ad hoc small group focused on anti-terrorism and law-enforcement cooperation that we called the Law Enforcement Cluster. This group included the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), various intelligence agencies, the Department of Homeland Security (both ICE and TSA), the defense attaché, and the Naval Criminal Investigation Service (NCIS). All of these offices had regional responsibilities and they frequently traveled to other U.S. embassies in the region.

Mike was an effective leader and under his chairmanship of the Law Enforcement Cluster, these agencies worked well together. Mike was more experienced with diplomatic work than most of these other law-enforcement agencies’ representatives, so he could help them adapt to the embassy environment. I would see these agency heads at our country team meetings, but they didn’t want to go into too much detail on their programs in that large setting. I counted on Mike to inform me of any sensitive issues in the law-enforcement area.

When I was a junior officer in Kinshasa, I had felt intimidated by our two ambassadors. I did not want that to happen between me and my officers and staff in Dakar. I tried to be accessible, but there was always a certain reserve between me and the State Department mid-career officers. The public affairs officer (PAO), the management counselor, the consul, and the Political-Economic Office (Pol/Econ) chief were 01- and 02-level officers. In contrast to these State Department section heads, other agency section heads were more senior in their agencies and more confident in approaching me, not only for work matters, but also for social engagements. I developed a wonderful personal relationship in particular with the Immigration and Customs Enforcement attaché, Donna Chabot. Donna, a sharp person who had already served in Dakar for two years, was approaching the end of a thirty-year career in law enforcement. She would invite me to barbecue parties at her home, where I could interact in an informal setting with others in the law-enforcement community.

I also became good friends with the TSA attaché, Loretta McNair. She was a remarkable African American woman who loved Senegalese culture, music, art, and fashion. Through Loretta, I met many Senegalese friends in the art world. She also took me once on a tour of Senegal’s colorful fabric market. I urged both Donna and Loretta to call me Jim outside the office.

Of course, we had a military presence on the country team. There was a Defense Attaché Office as well as an office in charge of military assistance that managed programs such as the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program. The senior defense official, an army lieutenant colonel named Charles Collins, was dual-hatted as head of both offices. Charles had grown up in France and was completely bilingual — a real asset in developing relations with

the Senegalese military. The DAO office also included an army major and a navy lieutenant commander, as well as several enlisted personnel. The Defense Attaché Office also hosted a retired air force intelligence officer who had been career U.S. Air Force with good French-language skills. Their function was to liaise with the Senegalese military.

Finally, the country team also included a variety of agencies whose presence in Senegal was often only one American. Treasury had a technical assistance expert named Mike Scarlatos, who was embedded in the Central Bank of West African States, the regional central bank. Mike's job was to help the bank develop a regional bond market whereby member countries could sell their national debt on world financial markets. Mike had much experience, having served in Brussels previously, and also had a good manner in providing economic advice to West African officials without generating resentment. He became a good friend and was one of my jogging partners. The Federal Aviation Administration, State Department Refugee Office, the USDA, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention each had a one-American direct-hire presence. Our country team had eighteen agencies altogether.

*KENNEDY: Did you have a medical unit?*

ZUMWALT: We had a medical unit with a doctor, a lab technician, and a nurse-practitioner. One of their jobs was to evaluate the many local medical services options in order to recommend which providers we should use. Minor health issues like broken legs could be treated locally. If someone became really sick, we would evacuate them to Johannesburg or to Europe. For people whose treatment could wait, we would send them for treatment on commercial flights, but for serious cases such as a life-threatening injury from an auto accident, the State Department would pay for an emergency medical evacuation on an air ambulance. People who had babies were given the option of going home, but a few mothers — particularly mothers who already had children and didn't want to be separated from their families — chose to give birth in Dakar. The medical doctor had a regional position, so he traveled quarterly to the neighboring posts of Nouakchott, Banjul, and Cabo Verde.

Embassy Dakar also had a Marine Security Guard (MSG) contingent of eight marines. They were outstanding young men and women, but they were young and energetic, so I wanted to keep them busy. I must say, the MSG gunny sergeant encouraged them to pursue continuing education. Many of the marines were taking college classes online for credits in their spare time. They had a goal of obtaining a college diploma after leaving the Marine Corps and understood the benefits of completing as many courses as possible while deployed to Dakar. Many sought careers in law enforcement or related security fields. In addition to their shifts standing guard, each marine had an assignment such as maintaining equipment, keeping inventory, ordering supplies, or planning the Marine House meal menu. During their in-call, the MSGs would brief me on the task they had from the gunny; their work and constant training kept them busy. Marines assigned to Dakar were usually on their second tour as an MSG, so they knew the ropes already.

Mike Lombardo and our management counselor, Daniel Brown, who had previously been an MSG himself, would also look out for them. They made sure that all of the marines received invitations for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners at someone's home. There were many military veterans in our embassy community who were willing to host these young marines to their homes for a holiday dinner. Many of the marines became involved in sports, too. They

hosted a pick-up basketball game twice a week and played softball in the embassy league. Some ran marathons. The marine guards were an active part of the embassy community.

Embassy Dakar had a strong group of nearly five hundred locally engaged staff as well. We attracted good people and were especially blessed with many qualified professional Senegalese women. Many USAID jobs required advanced degrees — their staff included people with advanced medical, public health, engineering, or law degrees. Many of these employees spoke excellent English in addition to their perfect French and at least one or two of Senegal's seven national languages.

One of the few challenges when I arrived was merging our two LES employee associations. This situation was a legacy of the physical separation that had existed between the embassy and USAID before the new chancery opened. The main mission of these associations was to dialogue with management on work conditions, so this division made sense when the two LES groups worked in different locations. But once we were co-located, having an AID LES group and a non-AID group could be divisive and no longer made sense. I met with the two associations and encouraged them to merge because we now formed one team working in one location. People from the two employee associations did not know each other well, so there was a certain wariness between them. The president of the embassy LES association had occupied that position for twenty years, but there had not been an election in eight or nine years.

Our management counselor informed them that they were required by State Department regulations to hold an election to select the leaders of the new unified employee association. I was pleased that the LES then took over this process. USAID staff, who provided democracy and leadership training in Senegal, volunteered to consult with the organization on best practices for running an open and transparent election. They organized public hearings for all of the locally engaged staff to explain the new election process and then held a session for employees to meet the candidates and hear their speeches. When it was time to vote, they set up a transparent system with checks. The results were surprising. Some of the more dynamic and younger LES from both USAID and State were elected to replace some of the old guard. Just as important, these results were widely accepted by employees as State, USAID, and other agency LES were all represented on the new Embassy Employee Association Board.

I considered Embassy Dakar to be ideally situated to serve as a hub post in the region. We could provide administrative support to the four posts around us. Embassy Praia was located in Cabo Verde (also known as Cape Verde), a group of small Atlantic Ocean islands that were a ninety-minute plane ride away. That post had maybe twelve Americans; they had more consular work than we did because of the large resident American citizen community and the familial linkages to the Cabo Verdean community in New England. Embassy Banjul in the Republic of The Gambia also had about twelve officers plus marine security guards. We could drive to Banjul in about five and a half hours by road. Then there was Embassy Nouakchott in Mauritania, a larger post about a nine-hour drive north. Finally, there was our own liaison office in Guinea-Bissau. We employed six local staff in Bissau but did not station any Americans there permanently. One political officer in Dakar worked full-time on Bissau issues and he traveled there at least once every month for a week to ten days.

I felt a certain responsibility for these smaller posts who lacked specialists on their staff; their administrative, consular, and public affairs offices tended to be managed by inexperienced entry-level officers. Our administrative and consular sections both took on regional

responsibilities, processing immigrant visas for neighboring countries like Guinea and Mauritania. Dakar had budget and fiscal and human resources specialists — both officers and locally engaged staff. These people were experts who knew what they were doing. I felt we should support these smaller neighboring posts when we could.

In the past, these posts would ask Washington for TDY (temporary duty) support when their consular, administrative, or public diplomacy officer went on home leave. I told the African Affairs Bureau (AF) that, in many cases, we could cover the gap out of Dakar. (I remember when I was a junior officer in Kinshasa and was sent to our consulate in Lubumbashi for a month — it was a good learning experience but, also, it was fun!) I thought it would be a good professional experience for our officers to cover these neighboring posts when our workload permitted. There was no shortage of volunteers to go on TDY to Nouakchott, Banjul, or Praia for three weeks or a month. I sometimes had to push their bosses a little because this arrangement meant more work for those left behind in Dakar, but I think the managers also recognized this arrangement was good for morale, saved the State Department travel money, and the TDY assignments provided professional development opportunities for our officers. For example, Dakar had three PD officers whereas almost every West African post other than Nigeria had one or at most two PD officers. I was happy to send one of our PD officers on TDY to neighboring posts; it made sense for the post with a bigger staff to supplement elsewhere when help was needed. AF quickly got used to the concept of Dakar as a regional support hub and they appreciated the cost savings.

We also served as a hub post for the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM). Before I arrived, PRM had moved one of their stateside positions to Embassy Dakar to create a new position called Regional Refugee Coordinator. The incumbent, Skye Justice, was active in visiting regional refugee camps and training generalist political officers at neighboring posts in refugee issues and reporting. His presence in Dakar served as a force multiplier because the political officers in neighboring posts were able to work with him to increase the quantity and quality of their own reporting on refugee issues. When I returned to DC for consultations, I would meet with the PRM assistant secretary, who was as pleased as I was with Skye's impact on our embassy and on neighboring posts.

Embassy Dakar was also a base for neighboring ambassadors. Don Heflin, our ambassador to Cabo Verde, was self-reliant and never visited Senegal. Both Pat Alsup, the ambassador to The Gambia, and Larry André, Jr., the ambassador to Mauritania, would come to Dakar two or three times per year. They always had business in Dakar, in particular visiting the Dakar-based UN agencies that provided programs and services in their countries. For example, with many Mauritanian refugees living in Senegal, Larry had a reason to visit Dakar to talk to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees office. They also sometimes had medical issues that could be addressed in Dakar. But frankly, their travel to Dakar was also for mental health breaks — these are both tough posts and Dakar was a nice place to visit.

I invited both ambassadors to stay with me when they visited Dakar — I had a spacious home with a guest room on the first floor; I lived on the second floor, so we each had privacy during their visits. When they came, I would usually host a lunch for them to meet third-country ambassadors who were based in Senegal but also accredited to Mauritania and The Gambia. When Pat came, for example, I would host a Gambia lunch and invite the ambassadors from countries who did not have a presence in Banjul to talk to Pat about the political situation there. The Japanese, Korean, Canadian, Swiss, German, Austrian, and Dutch ambassadors appreciated the opportunity to talk about The Gambia with Pat. I thought these events were important as we

wanted like-minded countries to share our understanding of the tense political situation and horrible human rights abuses in The Gambia. Over these meals, Pat would update these ambassadors on the efforts of the political opposition to counter the longtime strongman in The Gambia. (See Chapter 17 for more details on the situation in The Gambia.) Likewise, for Larry, I would host a lunch for him to meet ambassadors accredited to Mauritania so he could brief them on the situation in Nouakchott. His conversations with like-minded ambassadors tended to focus more on terrorism and refugee issues.

*KENNEDY: In the diplomatic pecking order, where would you put the American embassy?*

ZUMWALT: The French had the biggest embassy in Dakar other than the United Nations regional mission called the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS). The French embassy worked closely with their military, housed in a small French military base in Dakar. The mission of these three hundred French troops was to provide training for the Senegalese military and also logistical support for French counter-terrorism operations in West Africa. Many more French soldiers were deployed to hot zones in Mali and Niger. The French embassy employed perhaps 250 direct hires from Paris. The extremely large French ambassador's residence, located on a cliff overlooking Dakar's harbor, was located on the best real estate in Dakar (with the possible exception of the Presidential Palace). I always enjoyed visiting his home because of its commanding view of the entrance to Dakar's busy seaport and because the sea breezes in his large garden kept the mosquitoes at bay. The French ambassador was at the end of his career and dissatisfied with his assignment to Dakar. He told me frankly that his embassy was overstaffed. I never felt that way about our smaller embassy. We were always busy with many tasks to advance our multifaceted mission.

*KENNEDY: Back in the early '60s, the French were very protective, the "garde-chasse" (gamekeeper). They treated West Africa as their private concern. But I imagine that time had moved on. How stood relations with the French there?*

ZUMWALT: My relationship with the French ambassador was excellent and relations between USAID and the French assistance authority were also strong. Our station chief also enjoyed good relations with his French counterpart because their shared focus was on anti-terrorism. Our defense attaché, Charles Collins, got along very well with his French Ground Army counterparts.

I think the conflict in Mali helped change French attitudes toward the American presence in West Africa. Unfortunately, Mali was rocked by a bloody conflict; the French military and the UN peacekeepers had suffered many casualties. The French regarded the United States as a partner in combating this terrorism threat. They appreciated our satellite and signals intelligence about terrorist groups. We also had provided emergency logistical support during that critical period when France needed to transport troops and equipment to the northern part of Mali quickly. I would frequently see the French one-star general who ran the French military mission in Dakar. When we met, he would ask me "When are you sending your embed?" He wanted an American army officer to come to live and work with his force in Dakar to enhance liaison with U.S. Africa Command. I thought it was a great idea. AFRICOM does train French-speaking army officers to become area experts. My point to AFRICOM was "If you want someone to learn good French and to understand the region, embedding him or her with the French military mission is a great way to accomplish that goal!" AFRICOM agreed and was in the process of creating a billet, but this process took time and I left before this U.S. Army embed arrived.

The largest diplomatic mission in Senegal was the United Nations mission. Many UN agencies based in Senegal covered all of West Africa or provided logistical support to smaller offices in the region. Dakar was more comfortable and safer than Bamako, Banjul, Ouagadougou, or Niamey. Previously, many of these UN agencies had been based in Côte d'Ivoire but, due to its civil war, these missions had moved their operations to Dakar. The UN employed perhaps as many as four hundred expatriates in the various bodies, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the World Health Organization, the Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Organization of Migration, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the UN Development Program, the World Food Program, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the Food and Agriculture Organization, and the International Labor Organization, among others. When I talked to the director of the international English-language school in Dakar, he said the largest group of his students were children of UN staff from all over the world. Many of his students were anglophone Africans whose parents worked as UN civil servants. As I recall, the American embassy children represented about 15% of the student body and the UN staff children made up as much as a third of its student body.

The UN mission and the French embassy occupied a special place on the diplomatic circuit, but the United States was also a major player because we had a robust assistance program and our support for the diplomatic process mattered to Senegalese elites.

*KENNEDY: How did the fact that we had a president with African roots affect U.S.-Senegal relations?*

ZUMWALT: President Obama was extremely well-liked. His visit to Dakar one year earlier had only enhanced his popularity. One of my favorite hangouts was a seaside restaurant that was walking distance from my residence in Les Almadies. There, we could enjoy delicious grilled fresh fish — served with rice, a salad, and fried potatoes, or fried plantains — and a salad while watching the sun set over the Atlantic Ocean. In the distance were two extinct volcanos known as Les Mamelles. I ate at this restaurant probably once a week to enjoy a cold draft beer and grilled seafood. The waiters at this restaurant all knew I was the U.S. ambassador and would affectionately refer to me as "Obama." As I traveled around Senegal and visited small villages or schools, often people would greet me with the cheer "Obama! Obama!"

*KENNEDY: Did you see pictures of Obama?*

ZUMWALT: This seafood restaurant I mentioned had two life-sized images painted on the wall — Nelson Mandela and Barack Obama. I was proud that our president was painted alongside Nelson Mandela in their pantheon of heroes. In general, the United States was very popular and President Obama reinforced that goodwill. The major complaint I heard was that people thought our visa policy was too strict — they wanted to see us allow even more Senegalese to emigrate to the United States. We benefited from not having colonized any countries in Africa. Although our Africa policy may have been seen by educated Senegalese as sometimes bumbling, we were seen as well-intentioned. Even more important, the Senegalese public supported our democratic vision and ideals.

*KENNEDY: How stood American-Senegalese relations?*

ZUMWALT: Our bilateral relations were very positive. When I arrived in Dakar, President Macky Sall was in the first half of his first term. Sall appreciated the role the United States had

played in supporting a fair and open democratic election and transition to a newly elected leader. He acknowledged tacitly that we had played a role in protecting the democratic process that facilitated his coming to power. President Sall understood the United States; previously, he had lived in Texas for five years working in the oil and gas industry. He had a U.S. citizen son who had been born in the United States. Sall had fond memories of the United States and he understood how to relate to Americans. Visiting American congressmen and senior U.S. officials were always impressed upon meeting him.

There was no presidential election during the time I lived in Senegal and we enjoyed a very positive relationship with Macky Sall. My term as ambassador coincided with the end of the Obama administration. When I arrived, the Obama administration had recently hosted the United States-Africa Leaders Summit in Washington. Almost every head of state from Africa, including Macky Sall, came meet with President Obama.

The White House had announced many new initiatives and asked Senegal to co-chair several of these efforts. However, there was no new money for these initiatives, so the White House often left Embassy Dakar to work with a U.S. entity such as the Commerce Department or the Economics Bureau at the State Department to implement these unfunded new programs. Senegal's capacity to co-host these initiatives was even more limited. There was goodwill with these ideas and pride that the United States had chosen Senegal as a partner, but Senegal is not a wealthy country. Its per capita income was less than \$2,000 a year, ranking it in the bottom 20 or 25 countries of the world.

*KENNEDY: Was there anything in the way of a religious freedom problem in Senegal?*

ZUMWALT: Senegal is a very tolerant society. The country is 95 percent Muslim, but there is a Catholic minority. Followers of both faiths also retain many animist customs and beliefs. I mentioned that Dakar was festooned with Christmas lights when I arrived during the holiday season of 2015. The four major Islamic brotherhoods play a role in forging such a tolerant society; religious freedom is not so much an issue.

*KENNEDY: Were there any issues with press freedom?*

ZUMWALT: Senegal also has a vibrant free press. Over twenty newspapers were able to criticize the president. Most Senegalese get their news from the radio and there are hundreds of small FM stations with many political points of view.

*KENNEDY: What is the role of the Senegalese military?*

ZUMWALT: The Senegalese military is proud of its role as a professional force that stays out of politics. Senegal is the only country on the continent of Africa that has never experienced a violent change of government or a military coup. Senegal has been led by four presidents since independence in 1960 which means that there has been a peaceful transition from one president to another three times. The first transition was from Léopold Senghor to his handpicked successor, but the second transition occurred when the opposition won an election and the incumbent president acknowledged his defeat. The third transition itself was peaceful, but the election campaign had been marred with sporadic violence and a few people were killed.

*KENNEDY: Were there ethnic or religious divisions?*

ZUMWALT: Senegal is a diverse society. There are seven major national languages and many more ethnic groups. Most Muslims in Senegal are Sufis, meaning that they regard themselves as disciples of a spiritual guide with whom they have a personal relationship. Sufism expanded in Senegal during the French colonial period as people turned away from the colonial government and sought authority in their religious leaders. Most Senegalese Muslims are affiliated with one of four major Muslim brotherhoods.

The biggest brotherhood was called the Tijaniyah; that was a brotherhood founded in Fez, Morocco by the Sufi mystic Abdul Qādir al-Jilāni in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. His teachings spread to Senegal in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, prior to the French colonial period. Because of this religious connection, Senegal maintains a close relationship with Morocco. Many Senegalese go on pilgrimages to Fez in Morocco.

The second-largest religious brotherhood in Senegal was the Mourides. They were founded by a charismatic Senegalese imam named Amadou Bamba in 1883 and their headquarters is a city in central Senegal called Touba. About 25 percent of the Senegalese population was affiliated with this brotherhood. Many Mourides become involved in commerce or are self-employed because Amadou Bamba preached the value of self-help and hard work. Because the Mourides tend to be well-organized, they play an important role in Senegalese politics.

There were two other smaller brotherhoods. One, the Layene, was important to us because they were based in neighborhoods around our embassy. This Sufi brotherhood was founded in 1884 and most of its followers are from an ethnic group called the Lebou, who were the inhabitants of fishing villages on the Cap-Vert peninsula that have now been absorbed into the city of Dakar. The main Layene mosque was in the suburb of Dakar called Yoff, about five miles away from the embassy. The Layene practice the five pillars of Islam, but also celebrate Christmas and sometimes quote biblical passages as well as the Koran. Once a year, many Layene participated in a pilgrimage to my neighborhood beach, where the founder of this brotherhood had seen a vision. The day of this celebration, our street would be completely overrun with Layene pilgrims all dressed in flowing white robes walking towards this beach. Our embassy and many staff apartments were on land that had been traditionally owned by these Lebou villages.

The fourth Senegalese Sufi brotherhood were called the Qadiriyya, a Sufi order founded in 12<sup>th</sup>-century Iraq. This brotherhood came to Senegal via Morocco also.

As the new U.S. ambassador, I called on the leaders of these four brotherhoods and on the Catholic cardinal in Dakar early in my tour. These religious leaders gave me warm and welcoming receptions. Each Muslim brotherhood had its unique style, but each regarded my courtesy call as a mark of respect and of prestige. With most of these religious leaders, we discussed social issues such as education and hygiene. Many of these religious orders ran Islamic schools because government schools lacked the resources to provide a quality education to their communities. The Catholic Church also ran schools and some Muslim families chose to send their children to these schools because the government-run schools in their neighborhoods were of poor quality.

My most memorable visit to a religious leader was my call on the Mouride caliph Serigne Sidi Moukhtar Mbacké in Touba. The city of Touba is the site of a grand mosque where Mouride Brotherhood founder Amadou Bamba lies buried. I believe the present caliph is his grandson. The holy city of Touba was about a three-hour drive from Dakar in the middle of a dry plateau. Touba had been a small village in 1920, but now is home to almost a million people and at the

center lies a huge mosque. I was accompanied by Robert Post, our public affairs officer, by his assistant (himself an imam), and by our political assistant. We coordinated arrangements for this visit through an erudite English-speaking Mouride senior official who was responsible for Mouride foreign affairs. My driver, Mamadou, who was a Mouride, was most excited to take me to Touba. When we arrived, he prostrated himself in front of this official, who reached down to touch his head and give Mamadou a blessing.

From the moment I exited the car until the moment I departed the final stop at an Islamic school, a television crew filmed my visit. Later, the Mouride-owned television station broadcast a two-hour show called *The U.S. Ambassador Visits our Holy City*. The show began with a shot of me getting out of my Cadillac and shaking hands with officials in a receiving line, then entering the office to meet the caliph. They filmed us eating lunch together and much of our conversation. To be honest, I found this broadcast incredibly slow and boring, but it was clear that the Mourides wanted their followers to know that the brotherhood welcomed the U.S. Ambassador's visit and that it sought to work with the United States. Our shared concern was Islamic extremism.

I talked with the Mouride caliph for over an hour. I used my political assistant as a French-Wolof interpreter since the caliph was not comfortable speaking in French and I did not speak Arabic or Wolof. The caliph told me that they were becoming more concerned about the Islamic education of their young scholars. He said that, every year, they sent promising young students to Egypt and Morocco to further their Islamic religious education since there were no Muslim universities in Senegal. However, he continued, some of these young students were becoming radicalized during their time in Egypt.

The caliph said he was still comfortable with the religious education in Morocco and would continue sending promising young scholars there, but he explained: "We would rather educate our scholars here than send them to Cairo or Saudi Arabia, because we are concerned that they are not teaching true Islam. True Islam is a peace-loving religion." He said that the Mourides had begun to build a university and invited me to see the campus, which was under construction. He added that "We want our Islamic leaders to speak English. Can you help us with the English-language education in our university?" He said that the Mourides wanted to send Islamic leaders to study in the United States because "I want future Mouride leaders to be worldly and understanding." Our public affairs section began working with them to provide English-language teaching materials.

Much later, I called on the Layene religious leader in the town of Yoff, only twenty minutes away from our embassy. The caliph was Cherif Abdoulaye Thiaw Laye, the grandson of the founder. This call was much harder to arrange and we had heard rumors that the caliph had died or was incapacitated. When we arrived at the elaborate mosque in Yoff, we were ushered into a large, almost empty room. The caliph was seated in a chair along the far wall of a large room, surrounded by men and women all dressed in flowing white robes. When I approached across the marble floor to address him, the caliph did not move and he made no sign of acknowledgment of my presence. As he remained completely still and silent, I wondered if the caliph were perhaps both blind and deaf. One of his assistants took his hand and placed it in mine. The caliph then moved a bit in his chair with that tactile greeting. I spoke to him briefly but his assistant always answered. There was no attempt to translate my French into Wolof so I did not know if the caliph could even understand me, but the note-taker to his left wrote down everything I said for their records. I talked about our desire to be good neighbors (our embassy was built on what had been

Lebou land) and to maintain good relations with the Layene community. As we walked out of the mosque, his assistant warned us that there might be others claiming to be Layene leaders, but if they approached us, we should ignore them and always work through him. This entreaty gave me the impression that there must have been a succession struggle around the obviously failing Layene caliph.

*KENNEDY: You mentioned democracy promotion as a goal. Can you explain more?*

ZUMWALT: Senegal is important to the United States as one of the few examples of successful democracies in Africa. We had a very positive relationship with Senegal and saw their democracy as a role model for other countries in Africa. Senegal was also one of the few majority-Muslim nations that was openly friendly to the United States.

However, we did express concerns about three human rights issues — treatment of the LGBT community, prisoner conditions, and child begging. Senegal had a very small and mostly closeted gay and lesbian community. There would be periodic incidents of violence against gay men. Occasionally, the police would proactively raid a private party and arrest men for “indecent acts.” (Ironically, Senegal inherited this statute from the French colonial period.) For a society that is tolerant of religious and ethnic differences, most Senegalese are quite intolerant of gays and lesbians. We worked on this issue and mentioned these problems in our annual human rights report. However, Senegal’s LGBT community did not encourage active U.S. involvement, which they feared would be counterproductive. Once, I met LGBT NGO leaders at my house to talk about the challenges they faced. They were reluctant to come at first and did not want it to be known they had visited the U.S. ambassador’s house. They asked us not to take any photos and to refrain from any social media posts. They simply did not feel safe meeting with us. USAID sponsored capacity-building training for some of these organizations. But many declined our offer of assistance as they thought it might be counterproductive if they were seen as accepting foreign aid.

We did work behind the scenes where we could. Senegal’s minister of justice, Sidiki Kaba, was a good partner. He had been a respected human rights lawyer, active in promoting women’s rights and political freedoms prior to coming into government. I brought to his attention the plight of a group of thirteen Senegalese men who had been arrested by the police in a home where they were having a private party. He asked me to refrain from public statements about this case, which he thought might backfire, while he looked into the issue. He did later succeed in convincing the prosecutors to drop the charges and quietly release these men from pre-trial detention.

We organized training sessions for our own staff on LGBT issues and required all of our employees to attend. I attended the first LGBT training session. The trainer, who came from the United States, was excellent and created a safe space where our employees could express their views honestly. I think that most of our employees understood that regardless of their personal beliefs, while working at the embassy, they needed to abide by U.S. regulations protecting the rights of LGBT employees. Our PAO once told me that his staff knew he was gay, but the subject was never discussed between them.

Our work on child begging was difficult due to the religious aspects of this issue. Throughout Dakar and in many other Senegalese cities, religious *marabouts* (Sufi religious teachers) ran Qur’anic schools called *daaras*. Traditional teaching methods for young boys known as *talibés* include physical punishment and forced begging. While in traditional Qur’anic education, these

methods were meant to instill humility in young children, many of the teachers took these methods to the extreme, resulting in child exploitation. There were many credible reports of beatings and deaths of young boys, as well as some boys who engaged in self-harm in order to escape their plight. One of the five pillars of Islam is to give alms to the poor and many Senegalese gave cash or food to the hundreds of dirty, poorly clothed talibés who roamed Dakar's streets begging for food and money. USAID worked with one neighborhood of Dakar that was trying to regulate the daaras and we reported on this issue extensively in our human rights report.

We made more progress in our work on prison conditions and overcrowding. We talked to the government and offered help in judicial case management training to reduce the time suspects were confined in prison awaiting trial. Minister of Justice Kaba was quite interested in working with us to improve prison conditions, so we enjoyed a constructive relationship. There also was a successful NGO called Tostan whose founder and creative director was an American named Molly Melching. Tostan worked with imprisoned women to teach them sewing skills so that, after release from prison, they could support themselves with a new skill.

*KENNEDY: How about female genital mutilation?*

ZUMWALT: That is an issue in many parts of Africa. Molly Melching's NGO was making remarkable progress in this area. Molly had come to Senegal in the 1980s as a college student. She established Tostan (a Wolof word for transformation or awakening) to teach about human rights — targeting mostly poor rural women. Tostan made remarkable progress on... the word Molly would always use was "the tradition." Molly avoided using the phrase "female genital mutilation" because she thought this word included a cultural judgment that made it more difficult for villagers to accept change. In English, she would say "the tradition," but in our embassy reporting, we would use the more understood term "cutting."

Tostan has been working in rural Senegal for about twenty years. They would send a trainer into a village to teach basic literacy, life skills, and human rights issues to adult women. This training explains about human rights, including the rights guaranteed to women under the Senegalese constitution and under the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Tostan avoids telling people to stop practices like cutting. Instead, they start a conversation by asking people what future they want for their village or community. Often, these women would say they wanted good health and education for their children and they wanted running water. Then the Tostan trainer would lead a conversation on how to realize these goals. For example, when participants said they wanted good health for their children, the trainer might then move the conversation to a discussion of what the village itself could do to improve health outcomes for the children.

The Tostan approach is to ask people themselves to think about their goals like good health and education, then to think about how to achieve their goals. In this manner, the participants can accept the solutions which they themselves have devised. For example, in a discussion about health, they might talk about how trash and pools of water create health problems by attracting mosquitoes and flies. They might discuss how to set up a dump outside the village for trash and to empty pools of water.

During this long training process, often women themselves would share that the practice of cutting had led to a health problem for a daughter or friend's daughter. This would then lead to a

discussion on whether the practice of cutting helped the village reach its own goals of healthy, happy children.

Molly explained to me that the issue of cutting could not be resolved without a community approach. Molly explained that this issue of cutting in West Africa was similar to the custom of foot binding in China. In both societies, parents loved their daughters and wanted them to be able to marry. Chinese families had believed that they needed to bind their daughter's feet for them to be attractive marriage partners. In rural Senegal, similarly, parents thought they needed to cut their daughters because they loved them. They wanted their daughters to marry and be fulfilled as women. They knew that since men would only marry women who had been cut, their daughter would not be able to get married if she had not gone through this procedure. Therefore, Molly explained to me, abandonment of this tradition cannot be an individual or even a family decision. The whole village had to decide together that cutting was a bad practice that they agreed to abandon. That was why Tostan took a community-based approach rather than preaching about this as an individual moral issue.

Molly explained to me that this approach takes time. Her human rights-based program takes two years in each village. It is a slow and laborious process of people identifying their goals and then discovering for themselves ways to achieve their goals, but it's quite effective. Thousands of villages in Senegal, The Gambia, and other neighboring countries have abandoned this traditional practice after undergoing Tostan training.

*KENNEDY: In the U.S., we have circumcision, but at a very early age. In some parts of the world, it's done when you're ten or twelve or something like that. How is it in Senegal?*

ZUMWALT: For many ethnic groups in Senegal, male circumcision is part of their tradition. One ethnic group, the Peul (called Fulani in Nigeria), would have a coming-of-age rite for boys. During the school vacation, you would sometimes see a group of fifteen to twenty boys wearing long white robes with hoods. The group would be trained by a marabout in the social and religious responsibilities of a Muslim male adult. As part of that coming-of-age process, boys would become circumcised. I would hear from adult men that they maintained a network of age-mates that had shared this training experience together.

Because Molly Melching and Tostan had been working for 25 years in Senegal, her organization was very well-known. Tostan was also working in The Gambia, Guinea, and Guinea-Bissau. The Senegalese health minister, Awa Marie Coll-Seck, was very supportive of Tostan's work. She told me that the Senegalese government discovered that tax revenues increased in villages that had gone through Tostan training. The reason was that, previously, people didn't understand why an outsider was coming to take their resources — they did not understand the concept of taxation in a democratic society. In the Tostan training, people learned they have rights, but also responsibilities. They learned that citizens have the right to demand schools and roads from their government, but that it's tax money that funds these schools or roads.

Much of the Tostan training was conducted through singing, dancing, and skits. Most of the rural villagers were illiterate and unaccustomed to learning through books or sitting through a lecture. Tostan training incorporated the West African tradition of sharing experiences through stories and witnessing in front of others. Molly invited me to attend ceremonies where a village celebrated their decision to end the practice of female cutting. I was interested but replied I did

not want to be intrusive. She replied it was important to host visitors at these ceremonies. She explained that outside witnesses lend importance to the villagers' stories.

Ann and I had attended these end-of-training ceremonies several times in Senegal and later in Guinea-Bissau and would attend more in Senegal. As part of that celebration, the villagers would sing and dance. They would have composed songs or plays about human rights or promoting healthy practices or their rights under the Senegalese constitution. During the ceremony, women who used to be cutters would ceremoniously throw their razor blades into the fire and sing a song. My assistant translated their words as "Some traditions are good, but some traditions are not and we are going to abandon the not-good traditions." According to Molly, making this pledge in front of other villages and outsiders cemented the decision to abandon an old practice. The ceremony is an important part of their process of internalizing change.

*KENNEDY: What was the reaction of the Muslim leaders?*

ZUMWALT: Molly told me that she changed her approach toward Islam over time. She started by teaching only women about human rights. Then she realized it was impossible to implement change unless men in the society and, in particular, the religious leaders supported these changes. She explained that her breakthrough came years ago. There was an elderly imam whose daughter became infected and died after being cut. This imam was heartbroken and did a lot of reflection and study. He realized that this tradition is not required or even recommended by the Qur'an. He became an evangelist and would travel to neighboring villages to explain to other imams that cutting was not a practice condoned or recommended by Islamic teachings. Molly realized that obtaining the support of religious leaders was a critical part of societal transformation.

Molly taught me that, in Senegal, we could not lecture people; they needed to learn for themselves. This process of transformation took time. Her innovation was starting the conversation with the question "What is it you want?" and then guiding the conversation toward how people could take steps to accomplish their dreams. As an example, one exercise led by the trainers was to ask the villagers to draw a map of the village — what does the village look like? Then the trainer asks them to draw a second map — what they would like the village to look like. This second map often included a schoolhouse, a road, or a health hut, or other things they would like to have.

This exercise led to a conversation about their vision for their community. The next step would be a conversation about how to realize that vision and an individual's rights and responsibilities. This whole process of working with people who are not literate to bring them to understand they have rights and responsibilities was transformational.

We as an embassy did not spend a lot of time on the issue of cutting because it did not seem that our speaking out would help. The State Department's approach toward this issue tended to be to treat it as a human rights violation and to "name and shame" or "hector and lecture." Molly advised me that such an approach would not work in Senegal. The government (in particular, the health ministry) was already supportive of Tostan's approach, which was making progress. In our human rights report, we did write about this tradition, but we noted the progress of the strong indigenous movement to eradicate this practice.

*KENNEDY: Were the two big powers in Islam, the Saudis and Iranians, fishing in these waters?*

ZUMWALT: Not the Iranians. The Shi'ite population in Senegal was very small. Most Senegalese with means wanted to go to Mecca on a pilgrimage. I met a lot of people, including a lot of our staff, whose name began with El-Hajj, meaning they had undertaken a pilgrimage to Mecca. Fewer Senegalese women traveled to Mecca but some did. I understand that Saudi religious organizations were funding religious education in Senegal but, in general, Senegalese Muslims were not attracted to extreme and intolerant teachings of Islam.

But the Saudi government had influence. President Sall visited Saudi Arabia three times during the two years I lived in Dakar. His religious visits played well in Senegal; Macky Sall was a good politician and understood how to build support from key influencers like important imams.

At one point, the Saudi government asked the Senegalese to join their war in Yemen. Macky Sall agreed he would send ground troops to support the Saudis. Diplomats in Dakar wondered why he agreed to join in this endless conflict; Senegal had no stake in Saudi Arabia's war on the Houthis. At the U.S. embassy, we made efforts to understand Sall's decision. I think the real answer was that Macky Sall could not say no to the Saudis. Senegal never sent any troops; they continued to train and prepare for the mission but were never ready. Sall was actually adroit in handling this request — he did not say "no," but he never sent the troops.

Morocco also had influence. Morocco and Senegal have religious ties, with many Senegalese making pilgrimages to the holy city of Fez. Many Senegalese respected the king of Morocco. Royal Air Maroc flew three times a day from Dakar to Casablanca. There was a vibrant relationship. The king of Morocco visited Senegal once a year on vacation. I think the king liked to escape the royal court in Rabat. I heard from an embassy staff member who lived near the Moroccan ambassador that "The king went out jogging with his twenty bodyguards today." When the king visited Dakar, the Senegalese police would stop traffic along the Corniche, the major road from downtown to the U.S. Embassy. No one knew the length of the king's stay. He would come to Dakar for a week, then we would hear that he had decided to stay longer. The king clearly liked Dakar and Macky Sall liked hosting the king, due to his ties to Senegal's largest Islamic brotherhood.

*KENNEDY: Tell me more about your economic goals.*

ZUMWALT: Much of our mission efforts were devoted to promoting human security and economic prosperity in Senegal because, without economic growth, all of our other policy priorities in Senegal would also be imperiled. The biggest threat to the country's peace and security and to its sustained democratic process was the slow pace of the country's economic development.

Although the embassy did not perform much commercial work, we made a large effort on economic development. There were four agencies involved in development work in Senegal. The largest was the U.S. Agency for International Development. USAID's main focal points in Senegal were in the areas of agriculture, health, education, and democracy. The majority of the Senegalese population worked in the agricultural sector and USAID's agriculture programs tried to work to improve the quality of infrastructure, including by supporting efforts for farmers to access inputs like quality seeds and fertilizer and by supporting an agricultural extension service so that farmers would adopt environmentally sustainable practices.

In the area of health, USAID worked to reduce the incidence of malaria; their projects were quite successful in reducing childhood mortality from this disease. USAID also worked with the

Ministry of Health and Social Action to improve its health distribution system so that rural citizens could access needed medicines and medical supplies. On my regional travels around Senegal, I frequently visited health huts and regional hospitals that benefited from USAID's partnership with the health ministry to strengthen the supply chain of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment. Finally, USAID worked with the ministry to make contraceptives available to those who wanted them. The concept of birth control was controversial with the Catholic Church and many imams opposed, so we worked with the ministry to promote the concept of birth spacing in order to promote health of all children. Their slogan was "Every child a healthy child." Women in Senegal tended to be much more accepting than men of contraceptives.

The USAID education program focused on helping the government strengthen its educational infrastructure, an important focus in a country with 50% illiteracy. USAID was also supporting teacher-training programs as Senegal's education ministry shifted the focus of elementary education from teaching in French to teaching in local languages where children could understand their lessons.

I remember visiting a rural school in Kaffrine. While it had a building with three classrooms, the fourth class was held on pounded dirt under a large tree in the schoolyard. Students practiced writing with sticks, drawing on the ground. The school did not have enough resources. Despite these constraints, this school had a vibrant English language club. I asked them why they were interested in English and many expressed the desire to understand rap music lyrics, but one girl replied that she aspired to be a Senegalese Bill Gates and one boy said he wanted to become an astronaut. It was encouraging to see these children had positive dreams.

Although its funding was meager, the USAID democracy program made an impact in Senegal. USAID sponsored leadership training programs to strengthen non-government organizations that participated actively in Senegal's democratic process. USAID also funded a project to create a manual in seven national languages on the roles and responsibilities of a National Assembly member. This was important because Senegal had just implemented a new parity law requiring every political party to list as many female as male candidates on their candidate lists. The result was a large number of new female National Assembly members who needed training on how to fulfill their new responsibilities. This "manual" was actually an oral book where illiterate assembly members could listen to recorded lessons on skills needed to work effectively in this new environment. They could point to pictures on the manual to select a language and key the sound system to begin lessons on the role of the assembly, how to draft legislation, and other topics.

The Millennium Challenge Corporation had concluded a \$540 million compact with Senegal to boost agricultural productivity through rehabilitation of roads and irrigation networks in the Senegal River valley in the north and the Casamance region in the south. The irrigation project had been largely completed when I arrived in Senegal and it resulted in a large increase in domestic rice production and a strengthening of land tenure rights for local farmers, including women. USAID followed up on this project to assist businesses to market this domestic rice to urban consumers in Dakar who had become accustomed to imported rice.

MCC also financed rehabilitation of the National Route #2 from Richard Toll to Ndioum, a distance of about 120 kilometers. This project involved widening and improving the existing road, installing drainage, constructing a bridge, and strengthening local capacity to maintain this road. When I visited this project, I could see one result — a large increase in the number of

trucks hauling rice, vegetables, and other farm products from the Senegal River valley to Dakar. One truck driver told me that these road improvements allowed him to double his number of trips to Dakar each month.

President Macky Sall very much valued the MCC programs. He told me that he appreciated we were providing grant assistance, not loans, and accepted that MCC required economic reforms as a condition for this grant money. The MCC worked closely with the government to improve their road and irrigation system maintenance programs.

The Peace Corps had a large and important presence in Senegal. At any given time, about 230 to 280 American Peace Corps volunteers were working and living in Senegal. The main reason this program was so large was its record of success. Peace Corps volunteers found their work in Senegal to be meaningful and they integrated well into their rural work sites. These volunteers often identified promising new worksites for future volunteers. Peace Corps Senegal volunteers worked in four types of programs: agriculture, agricultural forestry, health, and economic development. The Peace Corps staff worked closely with local communities. The volunteers were amazing young Americans, but it was the Senegalese Peace Corps staff that set them up for success by finding appropriate host villages, negotiating the conditions for their placement, and identifying promising development projects.

When new Peace Corps volunteers arrive in Senegal, they receive about four months of instruction at the Peace Corps regional training center in Thiès. There, they learned a local language and skills such as horticulture or fruit tree grafting. (Most of the health volunteers came into Peace Corps with a health background.) A few trainees returned home at this stage for health reasons or because they realized that they were not a good fit for this challenging program. But most finished their training session and became Peace Corps volunteers (PCVs).

I met every incoming Peace Corps class during their training in Thiès. My main goal was to encourage them and point out that their work strengthened our ties. I also concluded my remarks with a short advertisement for careers at the State Department and USAID. I told them that returned PCVs made wonderful American diplomats because they have proven to be resourceful, skilled at overcoming adversity, and have mastered cross-cultural communications, foreign languages, and problem-solving skills. If I convinced even two or three of these impressive young Americans to consider government service at the end of their Peace Corps service, I would consider my frequent travel to Thiès along a bumpy narrow road to have been time well spent.

At the conclusion of this training program, I hosted each class' swearing-in ceremony at my residence in Dakar. This ceremony was an important milestone marking the beginning of their careers as PCVs. The new volunteers treated the ceremony as a special occasion. Most spent some of their small Peace Corps salary at tailors' shops in Thiès where they were fitted for custom-made Senegalese clothing made from colorful West African wax cloth. I always enjoyed seeing the young American women wearing full-length Senegalese dresses with matching headpieces and the young American men in their flowing Senegalese boubous at the graduation ceremonies. One highlight of these ceremonies were the new volunteers' speeches delivered fluently in French, Wolof, Pulaar, Serer, and Mandinka. The Senegalese officials who attended were impressed by these young Americans' newly acquired language skills.

Every Thanksgiving, I invited all of the PCVs who could travel into Dakar to a potluck meal in my garden. I provided turkeys, soft drinks, potatoes, yams, and stuffing; others brought salads

and desserts. DCM Sandra Clark and Peace Corps Director Cheryl Faye would also come and contribute many dishes for our feast. Each Thanksgiving, about eighty PCVs would come to my residence, along with forty or fifty embassy staff for a full house.

On most of my trips in Senegal, I would spend at least a day in the regional capital. The Peace Corps was present in all but two provinces of the country and most regional capitals hosted a center where the Peace Corps volunteers could overnight if they were traveling to Dakar or where they could pick up mail or medicines. On these regional visits, I would invite all of the region's volunteers to join me at a local restaurant for dinner. This meal did not cost me too much because food in Senegal was quite inexpensive. I might spend \$200 to host twenty volunteers to a fabulous dinner. We might have something like chicken with caramelized onions and rice or grilled fish and fried potatoes. This dinner would allow me to spend three hours talking to young Americans about their lives in Senegal's regions. They taught me so much about Senegalese culture and about rural life on a traditional compound with a large extended family. I would like to think that the volunteers also enjoyed this dinner as it gave them a reason to come to the regional capital and relax with each other. I always thanked them for their service in my opening toast.

On these regional trips, I would usually also visit one or two volunteers at their worksites. I met some entrepreneurial volunteers working on amazing projects. Peace Corps would arrange for me to drive two or three hours from the regional capital to a remote village where a volunteer would be waiting. She would take me to visit her host family (the volunteers lived with Senegalese families) and often a local partner such as a Senegalese health worker or a master farmer. Often, the village would stage a welcome ceremony usually involving singing, drumming, and dancing. Then we would sit down together for a meal with the volunteer's host family. I would thank them for hosting the volunteer but I often felt guilty over the money the family had spent on my food. I asked the Peace Corps to let the host village know that I did not expect an elaborate welcome, but Senegal has such a strong culture of hospitality that they always treated me as an honored guest. Then the volunteer would guide me to his or her project, which might be vegetable gardens that generate cash income, a new center to recycle plastics, plant-based "live fencing" around a field, a fruit orchard, early childhood nutrition education classes at a health hut, or classes in running a small business. Over the course of my two years in Senegal, I visited every region of the country and these sessions with American PCVs and their Senegalese partners form some of my most positive memories.

Perhaps the most remarkable PCVs I met were two American health volunteers who worked in a mining boomtown in Kédougou province. Gold deposits had been discovered in the area and the small village of a few hundred people had grown quickly to a town of twenty thousand people due to a boom in artisanal gold mining. The town's new residents all believed that they would get rich soon, so nobody planned to remain long. Consequently, there were no improvements in infrastructure such as paved roads, medical facilities, schools, or an electrical grid. Most of the miners lived in makeshift tents or lean-tos. The only concrete buildings in town were three bars that also served as brothels. (The boomtown's population was over 90% male.) The outskirts of town were pockmarked with holes where people dug underground following the gold-rich veins of ore. As these makeshift mines became deeper, the miners would employ young boys to descend and continue digging narrow tunnels and then shovel the ore into baskets that were lifted by rope up to the miner on the surface. These mines lacked safety measures, so sometimes a winding shaft would collapse, killing the boys below. Others suffocated when the oxygen ran out

in their deep hand-dug mine shafts. The town was dotted with small outdoor chemist shops that used mercury and cyanide to separate the gold from the ore, leaving tall piles of poisonous slag on the side of many of the dirt streets. I am sure that the groundwater they drank was heavily polluted.

My first impression was that this town was truly a hell on earth. Then I was met by two American Peace Corps volunteers who guided me to their HIV/AIDS clinic. They were like two angels in the darkness. These intrepid American women worked with a Senegalese nurse to provide health care services to the town's sex workers. They had established a program where the sex workers could register for free medical care. Each sex worker carried a blue paper carnet that recorded the dates of their examinations and visits. The sex workers enrolled in the program were required to visit the clinic once every two weeks — this was housed in a blue tent for STD and HIV/AIDS tests and education in safe sex practices. Those who tested negative would be given a two-week supply of condoms to use with their customers, while those who tested positive for HIV or another STD would begin their treatment to manage the disease and reduce the chances of transmission to others.

Most of these sex workers came all the way from Nigeria; they understood English but not French, so their educational materials were written in English. The Peace Corps volunteers told me that the medicines and condoms were financed by the PEPFAR (President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief) that had been established by President Bush and continued by President Obama. (I later met with the United States Global AIDS Coordinator, Dr. Deborah Birx, in Washington to ask her to continue this program when I heard it might be cut from the budget. I am not sure if my pleading made the difference, but she decided to continue with the PEPFAR work in Senegal.) The PCVs' role was to train the Senegalese who monitored the sex workers and account for the medicines and other materials that were being distributed through the clinic. I could not imagine living in such a horrible place and greatly admired their resiliency. Despite the hardships, they appeared highly motivated because they understood that their jobs had meaning, as they were helping desperate women to cope with their situation.

The Peace Corps program in Senegal had a development goal, but it also strengthened people-to-people ties. For many Senegalese, a Peace Corps volunteer will be the only American they would ever meet. I cannot recall how many times somebody told me about her fond feelings towards the United States because of a personal experience with a volunteer. The person-to-person ties work both ways. Every year, 130 volunteers completed their service in Senegal and reintegrated back into American society. Most returned with positive experiences with Senegalese culture. Many PCVs told me that they had come to Senegal to teach, but that their Senegalese friends had taught them about tolerance, generosity, patience, and hospitality. I am sure that their friends and family in the United States will also learn much when these returned PCVs share their experiences.

The fourth U.S. agency involved in development in Senegal was the USDA. They funded a small development program that was financed with sales of surplus agricultural commodities. Their projects focused on the Casamance region.

*KENNEDY: Could you tell me, when you arrived, what was the economic-commercial situation?*

ZUMWALT: Big multinational U.S. firms were rather uninterested in Senegal. U.S. firms did not regard Senegal as an important market and they surmised that it was already dominated by

French competitors. We tried to convince more U.S. firms to invest in Senegal. A few had a presence — Google, Microsoft — but they were not expanding their operations in Senegal. The membership of the American Chamber of Commerce in Senegal included more Lebanese than American citizen businessmen. The Ford dealer, the Caterpillar dealer, the Hertz rental car franchise owner, the Coca-Cola bottler, the local manager of Delta Air Lines, and many upscale hotel managers were mostly American-educated ethnic Lebanese or American-educated Senegalese nationals.

The exceptions to this general statement about American business were in the oil and gas sector. In Africa, Senegal was a very minor participant in extractive industries. Unlike Angola or South Africa, Senegal did not possess rich mineral deposits. There were some small commercial goldmines in the east of the country, one Canadian and one Australian. In the year or two before I arrived, however, ConocoPhillips discovered natural gas offshore. Another Houston-based firm called Kosmos Energy made a petroleum discovery offshore. So, these two firms were in the process of further test-drilling to ascertain the size of the oil and gas reserves; initial promising results contributed to a growing sense that these Senegalese offshore oil and gas fields would be profitable to exploit. We were working to help the government manage public expectations about anticipated oil revenues. The U.S. embassy funded some educational programs about using natural resource revenues wisely. We also sponsored some trainers from Norway who explained how the Norwegian government managed its oil revenues for the long-term benefit. We supported the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, which publicized contract terms; the company would announce what it was paying and the government would announce what it was receiving so the public could compare these two sources of information in the hope that transparency would deter corruption. We were trying to lay the groundwork so that these projects did not lead to corruption and public dissatisfaction.

*KENNEDY: How bad was corruption?*

ZUMWALT: Corruption was an issue in Senegal, but it was not as apparent as other African countries such as Guinea-Bissau. Because Senegal was a poor country, there were not as many opportunities for corruption. Also, the democratic process in Senegal constrained corruption. One reason the former president had lost the previous election was the perception that he and his son had been corrupt. For example, the former president's son had sold off land in the airport's security perimeter to developers and he appeared to have pocketed some of the money.

USAID was working on clean-government and citizen involvement initiatives. For example, USAID funded a project to publicize the government budget online. As a result, for example, anyone could go online to learn the size of the education budget for a certain province. The goal was to increase citizen oversight of government spending to reduce opportunities for corruption.

The one exception to close U.S.-French cooperation in Senegal was commercial relations. Had U.S. companies really moved into Senegal in a big way, I'm sure there would have been French pushback. On the small-scale level, it was Lebanese merchants dominating, but the big multinational players were French firms. The largest telecommunications company was the French firm Orange, the company that ran the port of Dakar was the French business Bolloré Logistics, and the biggest insurance firm was AXA. These French companies were among Senegal's biggest taxpayers. The major commercial banks were also French.

*KENNEDY: I'd imagine cellphones were real game-changers, because you didn't have landlines.*

ZUMWALT: Most Senegalese leapfrogged the landline system entirely and their first telephone was mobile. These mobile phones provided access to information. One USAID project aimed to reduce fishing accidents with a cellphone weather app so fishermen in small canoes could receive early storm warnings. Another USAID project provided information about rainfall to farmers on their cellphones so they could plan their planting and harvesting activities.

*KENNEDY: How was our diplomatic relationship with Senegal?*

ZUMWALT: Senegal was a good diplomatic partner in international organizations. The one exception was UN votes on Israel; we made a lot of demarches but we could not convince Senegal to vote against the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) consensus. The foreign minister would listen to me politely, then instruct his UN mission to vote for the resolution criticizing Israel. (Senegal did, however, formally recognize Israel and Israel maintained a small embassy in Dakar.) But other than these differences, Senegal was a strong diplomatic partner. On issues like Russian incursions in Crimea, they would support us.

We also appreciated Senegal's moderate voice in the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Senegal also began playing a larger role in ECOWAS, the Economic Community of West African States. ECOWAS consists of fifteen West African countries roughly half anglophone and half francophone, with Guinea-Bissau as the lone lusophone country in this organization. ECOWAS was becoming more and more cohesive; they concluded a regional free trade agreement and became more active in supporting democracy. Macky Sall spoke good English, enabling him to participate more actively in an organization that had been dominated by anglophone countries like Nigeria and Ghana. After he became the president of ECOWAS, we could appeal to Macky Sall to uphold its aspirations for free and fair elections in member states.

*KENNEDY: How was your relationship with the Senegalese military?*

ZUMWALT: The United States and Senegal enjoyed a strong security relationship. Our bilateral military ties were strengthened by three major events during my tenure in Senegal. The first was the African Land Forces Summit that occurred in February 2015, just three weeks after I arrived. This annual event is always co-hosted between the U.S. Army and an African partner. In 2015, Senegal served as our partner. The commanding general of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, General David G. Perkins, came to Senegal to co-host the summit with Senegalese Army Chief of Staff Cheikh Gueye.

The chiefs of staff of thirty-six African armies came to Senegal for this summit, held at the King Fahd Palace Hotel in Dakar, just a five-minute walk from the U.S. Embassy. This summit gave the U.S. Army a chance to engage many African army leaders on security challenges, peace support operations, and adapting military institutions to new challenges. The U.S. Army paid for most of the expenses, but the Senegalese provided the facilities. This event was logistically challenging for the U.S. Embassy; the Defense Attaché Office geared up to support this event.

The second major security event was a U.S. Army Special Forces-sponsored anti-terrorism exercise called Flintlock held in Senegal in February 2016. This exercise brought together nineteen European and North American armies to train together with fourteen African armies on combating terrorism. The goal was to increase information-sharing, enhance interoperability, and improve anti-terrorism capabilities. Special Operations Command Africa Commander Brigadier General Donald C. Bolduc (based in Stuttgart, Germany) and Senegal Army Chief of Staff

General Amadou Kane co-hosted this exercise. I attended the opening ceremonies in Thiès and the closing ceremonies in St. Louis.

This was a logistically challenging three-week exercise because the combined training occurred at five different locations in Senegal and across the Senegal River in Mauritania. About 250 U.S. army personnel, mostly troops stationed in Germany, participated. Other partner countries included France, Germany, Canada, the United Kingdom, Poland, the Czech Republic, and fourteen African militaries including Chad, Nigeria, Morocco, Mauritania, and others. They participated in combined exercises around the country. For example, the United Kingdom organized an exercise to practice Senegalese-Mauritanian coordination to respond to a terrorist incident along their shared river border. At the end of the exercise, the two militaries conducted a coordinated simultaneous raid on mock terrorist camps on each side of the river. The Canadians brought helicopters to this exercise and they flew me and the Canadian ambassador from Dakar to the opening ceremony in Thiès.

This exercise achieved its goals of: 1) socializing African militaries to the idea of foreign militaries helping with terrorist threats and 2) engaging and involving partner militaries in Europe and Canada in anti-terrorism activities in Africa. Many U.S. military planners began arriving in Senegal six months prior to the exercise to organize this three-week-long series of events.

Another U.S. military exercise in Senegal came out of the tragic events in Benghazi in 2012, where two U.S. diplomatic facilities were attacked, resulting in the death of Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other American diplomats. As a result, the U.S. government began reviewing contingency plans to rescue diplomats across the huge continent of Africa. The only U.S. military base in Africa is in Djibouti which lies farther from West Africa than our military bases in Europe. Planners began to explore the concept of negotiating the rights to stage a rescue operation from a few safe places on the continent such as Senegal, Ghana, and Botswana. To test this concept, the Marine Corps conducted an exercise in Dakar. They flew four Osprey helicopters, one C-130, and one refueling tanker aircraft from Europe to the airport in Dakar. The marines then practiced using this temporary base to stage a rescue operation. Needless to say, the huge Ospreys were noticed by the Senegalese public, so our public affairs section needed to work closely with the Marines on our public messaging.

The Senegalese were most accommodating prior to and during this exercise. The marines took some of the Senegalese generals on the Ospreys for familiarization flights and explained about their capabilities. The local media covered the event positively by writing stories on U.S.-Senegal military cooperation. After the marines established their defensive perimeter in Dakar, the Ospreys flew to our embassy in Bamako, landed on the U.S. embassy roof, and worked out issues relating to a rescue of civilians.

*KENNEDY: Senegal was a friendly stop for them... if there was a problem, they would help take care of the problem.*

ZUMWALT: That's the idea for using Senegal as a staging ground for a rescue operation. The U.S. Marine Corps planned to come to Senegal every six months and train for an evacuation. For this exercise, two hundred marines came to Senegal. With the flight crews, back-ups, the mechanics, and logisticians, their numbers added up.

Senegal was a partner of choice for many U.S. military exercises because it had a professional military and a stable political situation. Sometimes I thought that the U.S. embassy needed to serve as gatekeepers with the U.S. military. Our military relations were positive and the Senegalese military welcomed the attention, but sometimes I needed to remind AFRICOM that they should prioritize our requests due to limits on Senegalese capacity.

*KENNEDY: When I hear Senegal, I immediately think from World War I on, the Senegalese soldiers were renowned.*

ZUMWALT: The Senegalese military is proud of its traditions, which began in the French Army. In World War I, the French recruited West African soldiers into their army. These Senegalese were enlisted soldiers, trained in French military traditions. The French again recruited Senegalese soldiers for their army in World War II and for their wars in Algeria and Vietnam. In fact, the first president of Senegal, Léopold Senghor, had been a French Colonial Army private from 1939–1942. He lived for a time in a German POW (prisoner of war) camp. On November 11, when the French hosted Armistice Day celebrations at their military camp, about thirty aging Senegalese French Army veterans came in their long boubous decorated with French military campaign medals.

*KENNEDY: Charles de Gaulle, one of his first places was going to that part of Africa and setting up.*

ZUMWALT: If you remember the final scene in the movie *Casablanca*, the Humphrey Bogart character Rick and his French friend Captain Louis Renault agreed to flee to Brazzaville, which was much farther away from Morocco than Dakar. They chose Brazzaville because the French colonial authorities in Dakar in 1940 had sided with the Vichy government, whereas the colonial government in Brazzaville had sided with the Free French. Rick and Louis, who had decided to join the Free French, could not flee to Dakar at that time.

*KENNEDY: But de Gaulle went off Dakar, didn't he?*

ZUMWALT: Yes, there was a battle in Dakar in 1940 pitting the British and Free French navies against the Vichy-loyalist garrison in Dakar. The Free French lost, so the Vichy-affiliated government in Dakar continued. It was not Charles de Gaulle's finest moment.

When Senegal became independent in 1960, a large number of Senegalese non-commissioned officers became the officers of the new Senegalese military. These Senegalese officers had absorbed the French military culture of civilian control. Over the past sixty years, the Senegalese military has proven to be a well-disciplined and apolitical force. They are proud of their professional military tradition and their contributions to UN peacekeeping missions.

It was in our interest to see African soldiers and policemen participate in African peacekeeping missions. The United States provided support to build the capacity of the Senegalese army and police to contribute personnel to these UN missions. Often, a U.S. Army training team would come to Senegal to prepare the Senegalese military units for their deployment on a peacekeeping mission. At any moment, Senegal might be hosting a contingent of U.S. Army soldiers or U.S. National Guardsmen preparing a Senegalese military unit for a dangerous mission in the northern part of Mali or the Central African Republic.

Our FBI mission in Embassy Dakar also organized police training for anti-terrorism and UN missions. Five or six times a year, the FBI hosted classes to train Senegalese police in counter-terrorism techniques. Their training might cover how to secure a crime scene after an explosion, how to target and surveil suspects, or how to control national borders.

The Senegalese military and police appreciated this U.S. training. Several Senegalese military officers told me that the U.S. military and FBI trainers treated them better than did the French. Many educated Senegalese admired the French, but at the same time there were elements of resentment from their shared colonial history.

Senegalese military leaders were very open to the United States. My predecessor as ambassador, Lew Lukens, told me that the best cadre of English speakers in Senegal was the Senegalese military. His observation proved to be true; every general officer I dealt with, including the head of the national police and the Army and Air Force chiefs of staff, spoke decent English. These military leaders had participated in U.S. military training when they were younger officers. In order to qualify for American military training, Senegalese military officers must pass the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language). Since they very much wanted to go to the United States, these military officers worked to improve their English skills. Several Senegalese military officers told me that they had enjoyed living in Fort Leavenworth where they studied at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. The goodwill we enjoyed with the Senegalese military stemmed from decades of our investments in these military training programs.

Participating in these UN peacekeeping missions helped Senegal sustain a military beyond its financial means. The United Nations paid the salaries, underwrote the training, and provided equipment for these Senegalese military and police units. The UN peacekeeping assignments attracted the best soldiers because Senegal used a competitive process to select them. The Senegalese soldiers were attracted by the UN pay bonuses and superior equipment and weapons. Many in the Senegalese military studied hard to pass the tests to participate in UN peacekeeping missions. One example was my Senegalese bodyguard, Mbaye, a policeman. He studied English in his spare time by reading Ian Fleming novels to improve his vocabulary. He insisted on speaking with me in English even though it was easier at the beginning in French; toward the end of my time, he passed the test to serve as a policeman on a UN peacekeeping mission.

The Senegalese army and police had a presence as part of the UN force in Mali, in the Central African Republic, in Darfur, and in South Sudan and they also participated in a peacekeeping force in Guinea-Bissau called ECOMIB (ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau). Close to ten percent of the Senegalese military was either deployed or preparing for a UN mission deployment at any moment. Several times while I was ambassador, a Senegalese soldier was killed in Mali; this news was always sad to hear.

Our military presence at the embassy was reasonably small. We had a Defense Attaché Office that was responsible for the traditional attaché work — overt intelligence gathering, developing relations with the Senegalese military, and advising me on military matters. There was also a small military aid office. In addition to army lieutenant colonel Charles Collins, the office included an army major (who was responsible for Cabo Verde and Guinea-Bissau as well) and a navy commander who was both the naval attaché and the manager of our military assistance programs like IMET. There was also an enlisted sailor from the Naval Criminal Investigative Service and a few enlisted soldiers providing support. The DAO visited Senegalese military

bases, observed military training programs, and reported on Senegalese military capabilities and readiness, but they also had regional responsibilities and would visit other countries who did not have a resident U.S. military attaché like Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, and The Gambia.

There were also a group of perhaps 15 U.S. Navy Seabees — elements of the U.S. Naval Construction Battalion — repairing a naval installation in Dakar. When the Seabees finished their work, I attended a ribbon-cutting ceremony and the Senegalese Navy brass appreciated their newly refurbished offices on the base.

*KENNEDY: You might mention, AFRICOM was a specific American military organization looking at Africa. It was quite new at the time you were there.*

ZUMWALT: Yes, the regional combatant command called AFRICOM was fairly new. This regional command had an area of responsibility that covered sub-Saharan Africa, but it had to borrow assets from other U.S. military commands to fulfill its mission. AFRICOM was important to me because its leaders cared about our security partnership with Senegal and could contribute resources to advance our anti-terrorism mission and to train Senegalese forces for UN peacekeeping missions. I visited the commanding general and other military leaders at their headquarters in Stuttgart twice and the head of AFRICOM's special forces visited Dakar twice while I was there.

One other important aspect of the U.S. military role in Senegal in late 2014 and 2015 was Operation United Assistance, a regional United States military mission to help combat the Ebola virus pandemic in West Africa. Ebola is a frightening illness transmitted through contact with bodily fluids of infected people. The death rate is forty or fifty percent. The initial outbreak in Guinea had already spread to Sierra Leone and Liberia before the United States spearheaded the international response. Senegal itself only experienced three Ebola cases. While there was concern about spread, Senegal did the right things by testing, isolating suspected carriers, and contact testing in order to avoid further spread. Thanks to these measures, Senegal experienced no further cases.

We asked Senegal to serve as Operation United Assistance's regional logistics hub. The Senegalese government recognized that our operation was in their interest because we were leading an effort to confront Ebola at its source rather than to allow it to spread to Senegal.

About 250 U.S. Army reservists from Kentucky established a temporary logistics base at Dakar Airport. They set up warehouses in big air-conditioned tents filled with medicines and supplies. Ships unloaded their cargos at the Dakar port and these reservists would transport the goods in large army trucks from the seaport to this airport and then load cargo airplanes that would transport supplies and medical personnel to Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. The UN had also set up a temporary airline for health care workers, with two or three flights a day leaving Dakar to make stops in Ebola-affected countries and then returning.

Before I arrived, Sandra Clark had negotiated our bilateral agreement for this logistics hub. Embassy Dakar continued to provide logistical support to this army team because there were many reservists coming and going, shipments needing customs clearance, and local procurements needed for essential items like food and gasoline. Senegal made an important contribution to the Ebola effort by hosting this rear logistics base. In the United States, our media

reported on the U.S. Army work in Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone, but this effort would not have been possible without the support of this logistics hub in Dakar.

This operation was beginning to wind down when I arrived in Dakar in January 2015, as the international medical response began to gain the upper hand against this disease. I toured this temporary U.S. Army facility and was impressed by their professional operation. On the hot airport tarmac, the army had set up a serviceable camp.

The Senegalese business community also saw an opportunity from this temporary influx of Americans. When I visited the army mess tent, I saw a huge pile of empty pizza boxes from a local delivery service; the American soldiers had tired of the MREs and a Senegalese-Lebanese businessman had begun delivering pizzas to the troops. A few market women had moved their stalls to just outside the gate of this temporary American base, selling fresh fruit, snacks, and cold drinks to the soldiers. They began selling souvenirs and trinkets as well. An informal taxi stand also appeared just outside the main gate where drivers waited in line to take soldiers to the beach or markets in Dakar. The commander told me that it took some time for him to adjust to Dakar's safe, permissive environment and loosen off-base movement restrictions. He came to recognize that this outside tourism was good for soldier morale and built support among the local community, who regarded the visiting U.S. soldiers as good customers.

We had one other line of effort to engage the Senegalese military. The State Partnership Program links local U.S. National Guard units with foreign militaries. Senegal's partner was the Vermont National Guard. About twice a year, the Vermont National Guard would send a unit of soldiers to work and train with the Senegalese army. The Vermont National Guard embedded a full-time person in our DAO office. His job was to support the guardsmen on temporary duty in Senegal, to prepare for the arrival of the next group, and to complete the paperwork and bookkeeping from the previous group. This embedded guardsman kept me informed about the program's activities.

A Vermont Air National Guard major general named Steven Cray was a wonderful partner. Two or three times a year before his team arrived from Vermont, we would talk on the telephone and he would brief me on their plans. Often, I would join their arrival or departure ceremonies. Once, I visited a Vermont National Guard-led training exercise for the Senegalese army on safe and effective demining techniques at a Senegalese army base in Thiès.

General Cray told me that the State Partnership Program enabled his guardsmen to gain experience that was not possible at training facilities in Vermont. In his view, the process of mobilizing a twenty-person team, organizing the logistics for their travel to a remote foreign location, and engaging with a foreign military provided realistic training opportunities for potential National Guard missions. Senegal also benefited from this program. It can be difficult for the Senegalese army to relate to the big and advanced U.S. Army, whereas the mission of the U.S. National Guard was closer to that of the Senegalese army.

Other positive aspects of the State Partnership Program were continuity and relationship building. Unlike the U.S. Army with its frequent personnel transfers, General Cray had been engaging the Senegalese armed forces for years. He had developed relationships with his Senegalese army and air force counterparts and they valued his friendship. The State Partnership Program was a worthwhile way to enhance U.S.-Senegal military-to-military ties.

One example of this program's positive impact occurred when President Obama invited President Macky Sall to the United States-African Leaders Summit in Washington in August 2014. With so many African heads of state in Washington simultaneously, it was difficult to organize separate bilateral programs for each African leader. The Vermont National Guard offered to host Sall to a "state visit" to Vermont. After President Sall's participation in the Washington events, the Vermont Air National Guard flew the president and Mrs. Sall to Burlington, Vermont, where the governor hosted the Senegalese first couple for a state dinner on his yacht on Lake Champlain. Macky Sall appreciated this hospitality greatly. In my first meeting with the president, he told me about his visit to Vermont. Whenever General Cray came to Dakar, the president wanted to meet him because General Cray had become his old friend. The State Partnership Program was as much about building partnerships as military preparations.

Because of these important military activities, on any given day I had no idea of the number of U.S. military servicemembers who were in-country. I was concerned that we lacked a status-of-forces agreement with Senegal to establish a legal framework for these U.S. military activities in the country. We had no agreement on tax provisions for military spending, on entry and exit immigration procedures for visiting soldiers, on necessary documentation for drivers, or on legal matters should a soldier commit a crime or become involved in a fatal car accident.

With such an active military relationship, we needed a bilateral SOFA. On my first visit back to Washington DC as ambassador, I visited Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for African Affairs Amanda J. Dory to talk about this vulnerability. She was quite interested in negotiating a SOFA with Senegal, recognizing the benefits of establishing clear agreements on rules and procedures for visiting U.S. troops. She told me that DOD had already asked the State Department office that conducts SOFA negotiations to prioritize negotiating new SOFAs with African partners since we were becoming more engaged due to our anti-terrorism focus. I volunteered Senegal to be first in line for these SOFA negotiations.

It took almost a year working both with the Pentagon and the State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, who negotiate these agreements. They finally provided us with a model agreement text in English and French. Based on my experience with the Japanese and Korean SOFAs, I thought our proposed language looked quite one-sided in our favor. Our text provided for extraterritoriality from Senegal's judicial system, it gave us complete authority to bring in forces when we wanted, it allowed U.S. military forces to use American driver's licenses to drive in the country, it absolved the United States from responsibility for any environmental damage caused by the U.S. military, it provided for duty-free privileges for all imports, and it permitted U.S. troops to use their military identification as travel documents for entry and exit from the country.

We presented this document to the Senegalese and I began making the rounds of relevant ministries to explain our model agreement text. I visited the ministers of foreign affairs, justice, finance, and environment and the head of Senegal's Immigration Office. In these meetings, it became clear that President Sall had decided Senegal should conclude this bilateral agreement quickly. None of the ministers raised any objections to our model text. Several told me that President Sall had discussed this U.S. offer in a cabinet meeting and had told his ministers to avoid delay in reaching agreement.

This positive response to our model text was partly because of our timing. Several terrorism incidents had recently occurred in neighboring countries and President Sall had decided to

enhance Senegal's relationship with the U.S. military to deter terrorist attacks in Senegal. When I finally spoke with President Sall, he raised no questions about the details of the agreement, but wanted to know with whom we were negotiating. I told him that we had passed this model agreement text to Ghana, Botswana, Cabo Verde, and Kenya at the same time. Sall replied that he wanted Senegal to be the first nation from this group to conclude a new SOFA. In subsequent meetings, he always asked me about our SOFA talks with others and seemed satisfied that Senegal remained at the front of the pack.

By the time our team of negotiators led by the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs arrived in Dakar, Senegal was ready to conclude an agreement quickly. The team did not consult our State and Defense department lawyers much because Senegal did not object to any of the provisions we proposed. The only concerns Senegal raised were to some of the phrases in the French-language translation which they thought were poorly written or badly translated.

Prior to arriving in Dakar, our team thought that this initial visit would be only a first round of talks. They planned to meet at the Senegalese Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Monday and Tuesday and to leave on Wednesday to go to Cabo Verde and start SOFA talks there. But by Tuesday night, Embassy Dakar Political Unit Chief James Garry called me (I was on a regional trip) to say that we had completed 95 percent of the negotiations. James said that the team now planned to return to Senegal after their scheduled trip to Cabo Verde to try to complete the talks.

James urged me to return early to Dakar so I could be present Friday afternoon for the final session of the talks, as the foreign minister planned to join them too. I was not surprised by this rapid progress given what I had heard from President Sall. Our negotiating team did return at about eleven p.m. On Friday night, the Senegalese foreign minister reported to the president that both sides were ready to initial the status-of-forces agreement text. The foreign minister and I each initialed a provisional text that night — he was ready to sign a formal agreement, but the State Department's Office of Language Services needed time to certify that the French and English texts were the same.

On May 2, 2016, after State and Defense department lawyers and language experts completed their review of the two texts, we held the formal signing ceremony of our bilateral agreement, which we called an Agreement on Defense Cooperation at the Senegalese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Senegalese played up this agreement in their media. Foreign Minister Mankeur Ndiaye stated that "This agreement will facilitate the continued presence of the U.S. military in Senegal." My remarks focused on the enhanced possibilities for our militaries to work together to combat infectious diseases like Ebola, to respond to natural disasters, and to fight terrorism. I was relieved that should there be an accident or incident, we now had an agreement on procedures to resolve the issue. After signing the agreement, I visited President Sall to thank him for his support. He asked, "When are we going to get a base?" I explained our strategy was not to build permanent bases but to be able to deploy to friendly countries in Africa when needed. I assured him that Senegal was one of our most important military partners in Africa. He was willing to welcome a more permanent U.S. military presence in Senegal.

*KENNEDY: Were the French eager to work with us to counter extremist ideology and terrorism?*

ZUMWALT: The French welcomed our growing military relationship with Senegal. They had been Senegal's traditional military partners, but they recognized the benefits of working in concert with us. The United States and France shared the desire to counter extremist ideology

and mitigate terrorist threats. Often, the victims of terrorist attacks in West Africa were French nationals, so they too wanted to work with us to mitigate the risks. In 2015, the four serious terrorist attacks in the region (one in Burkina Faso, one in Mali, and two in Côte d'Ivoire) brought home the urgency of this shared objective. We both became concerned that Senegal could be targeted by extremists infiltrating from Mali.

My first year living in Dakar, I would walk alone in the Les Almadies neighborhood, but by the next year, our regional security officer (RSO), Michael Lombardo, convinced me it was too risky to walk outside without my bodyguard. Dakar had several beautiful, nice tourist hotels with swimming pools and restaurants, but I stopped going because they were potential terrorist targets. I did not stay at the French tourist resorts like Club Med for the same reason.

*KENNEDY: Was Dakar considered a safe haven for the area?*

ZUMWALT: Although Senegal was a stable place, the countries around Senegal were less secure. There were concerns about terrorist incidents, perhaps targeting a hotel, that could then involve American citizens. We became especially alarmed after a group that had infiltrated from Mali attacked some tourist hotels and restaurants along the beach in Côte d'Ivoire. They were targeting foreign visitors to undermine the tourism industry. Three Embassy Dakar USAID staff just happened to be in Côte d'Ivoire for a conference at the time of this attack. Dakar hosts many Malians, so it would have been relatively easy for a terrorist group from Northern Mali to blend in to stage a similar attack in Dakar.

These growing concerns about international terrorism caused us to reconsider the mission of our small U.S. military training team in-country. A unit of twenty-five U.S. Marine Corps Special Operations Forces (SOF) on rotating six-month deployments had been training the Senegalese army at an army base in Thiès. We agreed to shift their mission to training the Dakar police anti-terrorist special force instead. The SOF team moved into the city of Dakar, where they trained and equipped this Senegalese police SWAT (special weapons and tactics) team. If we had experienced a terrorist incident in Senegal, it would be these Senegalese police that would have tried to dislodge terrorists and rescue hostages.

There was some discussion in the country team about whether we should allow this SOF team to come into Dakar to live, but I think we all believed having that asset available in the capital was important. We negotiated a memorandum of understanding between the embassy and the Marine Corps that specified that their mission was limited to an advice-and-assist function. Their role was to train and equip the Senegalese police's paramilitary outfit to respond effectively to a terrorist incident. The SOF team was supposed to remain in the rear, advising the Senegalese police in case of an incident. If there was a need to engage in a counter-assault — for example, to take back a hotel where there were American hostages (as happened in Mali) — the SOF team would first need the ambassador's or DCM's permission. The RSO welcomed having this capability in Dakar in case we needed to rescue an American hostage. I agreed.

For these battle-tested marines, Dakar was a comfortable post. One told me, "Compared to my last quarters in a cave in Afghanistan, these facilities are luxurious." They lived in a nondescript house in a middle-class Dakar neighborhood. They built a safe haven on the upper floor of their house where they reinforced the doors and windows to store securely their weapons and communications equipment. They always kept at least two marines present in this command center to guard their equipment.

When I visited their new quarters, I was impressed by the SOF team's cultural sensitivity. They recognized that their urban outpost was vulnerable without a physical security perimeter. The sergeant in charge told me that they relied on their surrounding community as their first line of defense. They chatted with local market women as they purchased their food in the community. They trained outdoors, inviting neighborhood boys to join them in their morning runs. The marines would join neighborhood street soccer games and provided some equipment to local soccer clubs. They worked to integrate themselves into the community and to be seen as a positive presence. These marines understood that strong community relations meant that their neighbors would inform them of suspicious outsiders surveilling their home. One marine told me about his visit to a Senegalese Catholic church. At the service, the priest welcomed this American to his congregation. When the priest said that "He is here to help us deal with terrorists," the congregation stood and gave him a round of applause. The marines' mission was well-known and the local community was supportive.

*KENNEDY: Senegal has a reputation of having very good troops. I imagine this would have trickled down to the police, too.*

ZUMWALT: Yes, the Senegalese police were also professional. The sergeant leading the SOF team praised the Senegalese police anti-terrorism team, saying they were fit, disciplined, and prepared to take a bullet for their country. But he also assessed that they did not have the skills gained by training or the equipment of a police SWAT team in the United States. Remedyng this problem was the main reason the SOF team came to Dakar.

*KENNEDY: Were we supplying that?*

ZUMWALT: Our supplies were one reason the Senegalese were interested in working with the marines. We were providing equipment such as night vision goggles and flashbang grenades.

As I said, Dakar was a safe place, but we did train and prepare for a terrorist attack. Our RSO, Mike Lombardo, would say about a terrorist incident that "It's not a matter of 'if' but 'when'." We began to conduct anti-terrorism training for all of the embassy staff — both Americans and Senegalese. We brought in instructors to explain how to handle various situations, including an active shooter situation. Mike and I agreed that we should provide our Senegalese employees the same training that we provided to our American staff. It was scary for people to think about terrorism, but we needed to train our employees.

One of our State employees, the regional refugee coordinator, Skye Justice, spoke at this staff training session. He had been in Bamako when his hotel was overrun by terrorists. Two or three Americans were killed in the lobby when the terrorists burst into the hotel and began shooting. Skye was still in his room when he heard shooting. He locked his door, set up a barricade with some furniture, and sheltered under his bed. The terrorists began roaming the hallways, knocking on doors and killing those who answered. In his case, the embassy RSO texted Skye and told him, "Until someone using this password knocks on your door, don't answer." Eight hours after the attack began, the Embassy Bamako RSO was finally able to escort Skye down the fire escape to safety. After Skye relayed this story to our employees at the beginning of our training program, we had gained their full attention.

We also conducted some emergency telephone drills. We would test our phone tree to see how long it would take to pass a message to every embassy employee and to all official visitors. This exercise revealed that we concentrated our visitors in too small a number of hotels. Our

management section developed a procedure to make sure we used a larger number of hotels to reduce our vulnerability at any one location.

Training our staff was important, but I think this training changed the carefree nature of our post. Some staff experienced difficulties living with these threats. Concerns about terrorism were the main reason that we earned our hardship pay in my view.

*KENNEDY: What other law-enforcement work did the embassy do?*

ZUMWALT: Senegal was a regional hub for many U.S. law-enforcement agencies. For example, the Dakar FBI office covered sixteen countries in West Africa, including Nigeria. The DEA had just opened its regional office in Dakar the year before I arrived. Homeland Security was based in Dakar, covering many countries as well. The Department of Justice also had a prosecutor based in Dakar for advice and training purposes.

The major focus for these law-enforcement agencies was anti-terrorism and international crime. As an example, the FBI conducted training for the Senegalese police on effective responses to terrorist incidents. Their training on crime scene investigation techniques explained how to secure evidence, ensure the custody of evidence, interview suspects, and do the other police work needed to build a legal case to prosecute suspects in a court of law. Sometimes this training was part of a regional program where Senegalese police would learn alongside counterparts from countries like Mali and Mauritania. The State Department funded many of these training programs. We also hosted a state prosecutor from Seattle, Washington who was seconded to the embassy for our anti-terrorism training programs. He came to train the police and the Ministry of Justice on how to be successful at prosecuting cases.

*KENNEDY: Were we the only ones training Africans?*

ZUMWALT: In Senegal, the French also had training programs and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime conducted extensive training for the Senegalese police.

*KENNEDY: I take it that the Senegalese government was amenable to all this.*

ZUMWALT: Many Senegalese were eager to participate in this U.S. training. The police wanted to learn from the FBI. There was also some funding to send a few Senegalese police to the United States for training programs at the FBI's academy. Some of the FBI's best contacts with the Senegalese police were graduates of their training programs.

*KENNEDY: Did you find these connections useful for day-to-day operations?*

ZUMWALT: Certainly, the presence of these law-enforcement experts on the country team was extremely useful. One weekend, Mike Lombardo informed me that he had received a credible report from a worried relative that an American had been kidnapped in Senegal. In addition to our consular officer and RSO, the FBI, ICE, and the CIA station all became involved. Our FBI lead had been a hostage-negotiator (he'd served in Nigeria) and had experience working on kidnapping cases. He engaged the Senegalese police. The other agencies each worked with their Senegalese counterparts to spur an active investigation and appropriate response. Our ICE special agent worked her contacts to find the Senegalese immigration record that provided us a clue as to this American's location. It took about 48 hours to resolve the case and when we finally found the American citizen, we learned that she was not being held against her will, she

was just afraid to leave her hotel room. She had come to Dakar to marry a Senegalese “boyfriend” she had met online. Once her money ran out, this “boyfriend” disappeared and she didn’t know what to do. These law-enforcement agencies, using their resources and contacts with the local police and other government officials, helped resolve the case quickly by finding the hotel where she had registered.

*KENNEDY: Were drugs a problem?*

ZUMWALT: The DEA was interested in expanding its presence further after opening its office in Dakar. They were concerned with the smuggling of drugs, mostly cocaine, from Latin America to Europe. They wanted to establish a vetted police unit program in Senegal like the ones that had been successful in Latin America. Screening for this unit was careful — for example, applicants were administered lie-detector tests. Many applicants had engaged in petty corruption when they were younger police officers, so identifying honest police was challenging. It took about a year to establish this unit of about thirty Senegalese policemen who passed the vetting process. This unit then received training and special equipment from the DEA. The plan was for the DEA to provide actionable intelligence to this vetted unit who in turn would follow up on these leads.

The DEA had regional responsibility and they were eager to expand to Guinea-Bissau, which had a more serious drug problem than Senegal. But I was not comfortable with allowing these DEA agents to have unsupervised freedom of action in Bissau. These DEA agents in Dakar were good policemen but lacked overseas experience. They didn’t speak much French, not to mention Portuguese. I encouraged them to focus on Senegal first where Mike Lombardo and I could keep a close eye on their activities.

The DEA wanted to add a third agent to their office, but I didn’t approve that request either. Their Dakar office was brand-new and I did not want DEA to take on too many new tasks before they settled into their new roles in Senegal. Their two agents in Dakar had been undercover agents in the United States. One day, they asked if I would approve an operation where one wanted to pose as an American businessman seeking to purchase drugs in a sting operation. I said, “No, you are in Senegal with diplomatic immunity — you should not perform undercover work in this job.” To the DEA’s credit, they always briefed me on their plans and there were just a few times I had to slow them down.

*KENNEDY: We had problems with the DEA in Latin America, where they’d gone off and treated the country as though it were Cincinnati or something.*

ZUMWALT: The DEA in Senegal stopped when I said no — and I kept bringing them back to their vetted unit work, which was their main purpose for being in Dakar — they were gainfully employed and fairly busy with this project.

The other important law-enforcement agency in Dakar was the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The Transportation Security Administration employee was busy liaising with the airports and airlines on aviation security issues. She had regional responsibilities and was out of country frequently. As a frequent flyer, I appreciated her work with airlines and airports on security matters.

The Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) attaché, Donna Chabot, was a real leader. She had worked in U.S. embassies before and was an active and positive contributor to the country

team. Donna also had regional responsibilities and traveled frequently. I worked closely with her on one important issue, the repatriation of Senegalese nationals who were being deported from the United States because they had violated terms of their non-immigrant visas. This repatriation was controversial in Senegal. At Donna's behest, I raised the issue with the foreign minister several times, pointing out that Senegal was obligated to accept the return of its own citizens under international law. Most of these deportees had been convicted in U.S. courts of petty crimes. They refused to cooperate with a repatriation on scheduled commercial flights, so DHS needed to arrange for a charter aircraft to return several dozen unwilling deportees at once. We had a lot of back and forth with the Senegalese government, who were reluctant to accept a plane load of petty criminals, but we finally succeeded in arranging a flight to repatriate the first group of Senegalese deportees.

The embassy law-enforcement community focused on our anti-terrorism mission, but they were good members of our country team and had a good sense of the embassy's multiple missions.

*KENNEDY: You mentioned the conflict in the Casamance region of Senegal. Can you tell me about the U.S. role there?*

ZUMWALT: Embassy Dakar devoted much effort to supporting the Senegalese government's efforts to resolve political tensions in the restive Casamance region in the southern part of Senegal between The Gambia and Guinea-Bissau. The causes of this conflict stemmed from the arbitrary nature of the maps drawn by the former colonial powers, France and Great Britain. Senegal is only about the size of South Dakota, but The Gambia, a narrow finger-shaped country that straddles both sides of the Gambia River, cuts into this territory, separating the Casamance region of Senegal from the country's heartland and capital city. This geographic isolation only exacerbated the Casamançais' sense of estrangement from the central government. The contrast with Dakar is striking. The 1.1 million people who live in the Casamance region come from different ethnic groups who do not speak Wolof. The influence of Islam is also much less pronounced than in the north.

These regional tensions emerged with the formation in 1982 of the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC in French). The MFDC launched some popular protests in the 1980s but began staging violent attacks on Senegalese government institutions in the 1990s. The Senegalese Army responded with force and many civilians were caught in the middle. The death toll of this conflict over nearly thirty years is probably somewhere over a thousand people killed and an estimated 65,000 people having fled their villages due to the violence, including ten thousand refugees that fled across the borders to Guinea-Bissau and The Gambia. Denied access to their land, the livelihoods of these internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been adversely affected. The climate of insecurity, in particular the fear of armed robbery or of landmines, together with the crumbling infrastructure stifled agricultural productivity and tourism.

The United States had four objectives in the Casamance: 1) support the stability and development of Senegal as a democratic country and regional leader; 2) free up Senegal's army, among the best on the continent, to sustain its high level of participation in international peacekeeping missions; 3) reduce the threat that Islamist extremists and narco-traffickers could install themselves in the region; and 4) support economic development and regional integration that would improve the population's well-being and also promote our first three goals.

In 2012, the State Department had appointed a Special Envoy for Casamance Peace. Three experienced retired ambassadors filled this role sequentially, most recently Mark Boulware. Mark had spent most of his career in West Africa and had previously been U.S. Ambassador to Mauritania and to Chad. Mark spent time talking to both the guerrillas and the government, trying to arrange for talks on reconciliation. While Mark made some progress, the peace process was slow and the State Department discontinued this position just before I arrived. Therefore, as U.S. Ambassador to Senegal, I absorbed the mandate to support the government of Senegal, civil society, and other actors' work on ending the conflict in the Casamance. Advancing our policy objectives meant close coordination within the embassy among USAID, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and the USDA (each of which had important development programs in the Casamance) with the defense attaché who worked closely with the Senegalese military, with the political unit chief, and with the station chief who had a close relationship with Admiral Sarr, the Senegalese president's lead negotiator on the Casamance.

I could not have done this work without the extremely capable assistance of two Embassy Dakar political unit chiefs, James Garry and J.T. Ice. Both cared deeply about this issue and spent much time traveling in the region to meet with affected parties. Both officers wrote excellent political reports. James and J.T. each met at times with Casamance separatist leaders in Guinea-Bissau and in Rome in an effort to support reconciliation talks with the Senegalese government. They also worked closely with NGOs and international relief organizations to support humanitarian demining efforts and assist internally displaced persons and refugees returning to their villages. Finally, James and J.T. worked closely with our defense attaché to sustain close communications with the Senegalese army to encourage them to continue their human-rights-based strategy in dealing with the MFDC rebels.

By 2015, the Casamance region was in the early stage of a post-conflict phase. Although the fundamental disputes had not been resolved, violent incidents had declined dramatically. The MFDC was divided and exhausted. The three main MFDC factions were no longer able to recruit young fighters, so their population was aging. Life in the forest was not easy for them. Each of the separatist groups appreciated the United States' efforts to promote regional economic development and appeared eager to engage with U.S. officials, even as they continued to distrust the intentions of the Senegalese government. The Senegalese army also understood that the conflict could not be resolved through force; they remained in their camps or patrolled close to the population centers and along the main roads. In turn, the separatists rarely ventured far from their forest camps. This forced separation resulted in a de facto truce.

The desire for peace from all sides was palpable. Although most of the local population did not believe that the government in Dakar provided the services they desired, they recognized that independence could not be achieved through violence and that the conflict had only brought the region misery and despair. Influential civic groups wanted peace. Many community leaders told me it was time to reintegrate the combatants into society. A sizeable small business community recognized that their economic prospects would improve if the region could once again attract foreign tourists and investment. Many internally displaced persons and refugees wanted to return to their villages.

USAID and the Millennium Challenge Corporation both played a large role in financing projects that supported the Macky Sall government's policy of reintegrating the region into the Senegalese economy by expanding transportation links and restoring government services. Since returning to the Casamance in 2000, USAID had financed roughly \$18 million of assistance in

the sectors of health, education, agriculture, water and sanitation, promotion of good governance, and peacebuilding activities.

The \$540 million Millennium Challenge Corporation compact with Senegal included about \$150 million dollars to rehabilitate 256 kilometers of the national highway from the port city of Ziguinchor across the Casamance to Kounkane. This highway had been built during the French colonial period, but it had deteriorated to a rutted, pothole-ridden, mostly dirt track that was impassable during the rainy season. After completion of this project, the national highway was restored to a beautiful two-lane road with guardrails and crosswalks in villages, culverts to drain the road in the rainy season, and rest stops so that trucks could pull off the highway to reduce nighttime accidents. Every fifty miles or so, the Senegalese road maintenance department had a station with graders and trucks to maintain the road. This road rehabilitation project linked large productive areas of the Casamance interior to the port of Ziguinchor.

These assistance programs were welcomed even by the separatists. The MFDC rebels left the USAID-supported government health huts and schools alone because they recognized that this government service was aiding their community. In my visits to the region, I asked many people at these remote government facilities about the insurgency and they all replied that the MFDC separatists would not bother those bringing development to the region. The contractors for the MCC-financed highway project told me that they did not experience equipment sabotage or harassment because the road project was popular in the community.

Dovetailing with this highway rehabilitation project was a small USDA project financed with \$13 million in PL 480 counterpart funds. Under this program, popularly known as Food for Peace, the USDA provides surplus food commodities like wheat, rice, and vegetable oil to food-deficit countries. These commodities are sold on local markets, generating local currency that in turn can finance development projects. In the case of Senegal, part of the local currency generated under this program was used to renovate and widen 130 km of thirteen secondary (packed laterite or hard clay) roads. These roads were designed to link isolated villages to this renovated national highway allowing trucks to penetrate into even more remote agricultural areas.

The NGO managing this project, Shelter for Life (SFL), was a Christian charitable organization based in Minnesota that had experience in post-conflict zones such as Afghanistan and Iraq. They began planning to rehabilitate secondary roads in areas that had previously been considered off-limits because of rebel activity. The project manager, Jim Dean, explained to me how he was able to work in areas where the separatist groups had previously prevented road-building. He said, “I don’t build roads except in places where people want me to build the road. We start with intensive consultations with local communities and stakeholders. The villagers are in contact with the separatists, who recognize the community support for my work.” Then Jim added, “I hire the relatives and neighbors of the rebels. They’re not going to attack their relatives.” Jim didn’t experience a single sabotage incident as he built secondary roads in regions that, just a few years previous, had been considered too risky for the government to reestablish a presence.

Most of these pounded laterite roads extended from the newly renovated highway down towards the Guinea-Bissau border. Shelter for Life provided some trucks and equipment and transported the laterite to the construction sites, but rather than using grading equipment, this NGO employed local laborers who worked by hand with picks and shovels. SFL paid each worker \$8 a day and provided one hot meal and health care services. In this way, much of the project money

was spent directly in the local economy, generating additional economic activity. James and I visited one of these worksites and enjoyed a hearty meal of chicken stew and rice with the workers while they took their lunch break. As we ate a banana for dessert, one of the workers told me that there were many more applicants for each SFL position than openings. When the road was completed, he planned to restore his cashew orchards and hoped to market these nuts now that a transport route to urban markets would open.

Jim Dean told another interesting story involving his decision to hire women in these road crews. At first, the male laborers objected to working alongside women who were filling what had been considered jobs exclusively for men. These women worked diligently and Jim noticed that the work crews with female members accomplished more than the all-male crews. He suspected that the men working in these mixed-gender crews increased their own output as a matter of male pride.

On three occasions, I traveled to Casamance to inaugurate a new secondary road financed by this Shelter for Life project. My first ribbon-cutting ceremony was in early 2015. The village, located seven kilometers from the highway near the Guinea-Bissau border, had only been accessible by a forest trail. We drove from Ziguinchor along the new highway, then down this new secondary road to the village. Hundreds of farmers from nearby villages were walking down the road to join the celebration, thereby slowing our small motorcade to a crawl. Ahead of this procession, I could see a Kumpo — the manifestation of a forest spirit in the Jola animist belief system. It was a tall figure covered from head to foot with dried palm fronds, wearing a long stick like a horn on his head. The Kumpo began dancing to the rhythmical drumming. He twisted his head downward until the long stick touched the ground and then began twirling around faster and faster so that the long palm fronds spun around, making the Kumpo look almost like a spinning top. Someone explained to me that the Kumpo is a mythical figure who encourages the Jola community to act as good villagers and to respect the forest. Animist beliefs remain strong, intertwining with Christian beliefs in these ethnic Jola villages.

After we finally arrived, the formal ceremony began in the village church. There was energetic dancing and drumming and many speeches. The Kumpo never made an appearance indoors. I gave a short speech in French, which was translated into Jola and Mandinka by a local schoolteacher. In my remarks, I thanked the village chief, the workers who had constructed the road, and Shelter for Life. Then Jim Dean gave his speech and I noticed he thanked two people whose names I did not recognize. My interpreter told me that he was thanking two local rebel leaders who lived a few kilometers away across the border in the Guinea-Bissau.

I later asked Jim about this and he said, “The local MFDC let me do this project. If the separatist leaders had not agreed, I could not have built this road here.” I asked if he had met the local MFDC leaders. He replied no, but he added, “The rebels want development too.” They saw that these roads facilitated development; often, a government school would follow or an entrepreneur would start a taxi service to transport sick people to the hospital. Jim Dean was a capable project manager, but he also had the political judgment needed to succeed in this war-torn region.

The Casamance region was generating many such positive stories about progress toward peace and development. I met a farmer who was happy that this new laterite road had connected his banana plantation to the new highway fifteen kilometers away. He told me that he could now market his bananas in Dakar because they could be transported by truck to the port of Ziguinchor and then via the daily ferry up to the capital. He planned to expand his plantation operations and

hire more workers. At the end of the ceremony, my armored vehicle joined a small parade up the road that included a large truck loaded to the top with his bananas. (After I returned to Dakar, I began to look for bananas from the Casamance rather than those imported from Côte d'Ivoire.) Our procession was led by the Kumpo, surrounded by a small group of young men. The Kumpo continued his energetic twirling and dancing to the beat of the drums as we proceeded back to the main road. Suddenly, as I was looking away, he disappeared into the forest.

Jim Dean told me another interesting story about the growing desire for peace in this region. He said that after completing one of the first laterite roads, the government built a new school and furnished two teachers. It had been years since children in this region were able to attend school. One of the young teachers became involved with a local woman who was also seeing an MFDC fighter. When this teacher began to receive death threats, he prepared to leave his remote assignment and return to Dakar. Some women from the village marched into the forest and complained to the rebel leader that his soldiers were harassing their schoolteacher. The MFDC leader agreed that the school was important and he ordered his fighters to leave the teachers alone. I heard many similar stories of people tired of the conflict demanding peace from both sides. More often than not, it was the women of Casamance who were playing these peace activist roles.

Our economic development effort in the Casamance was meant to facilitate peace and political reconciliation. The Senegalese army had learned that this conflict could not be resolved by military means. Earlier attempts to seek out and engage separatist fighters had resulted in atrocities and civilian casualties that only turned villagers against the central government. These violent engagements also caused a flow of internally displaced persons into Ziguinchor and other towns that strained their scarce resources.

Our defense attaché, Charles Collins, who enjoyed excellent relations with the Senegalese army leadership in Dakar, stayed in close touch with the commander of the Senegalese army force in the Casamance. On my first visit there, Charles accompanied me to the army headquarters for a military briefing on the conflict. The Senegalese army briefer explained army efforts to strengthen relations with the local communities. His PowerPoint presentation showed photos of soldiers dispensing schoolbags and supplies to smiling children. The army briefer also shared data which showed a dramatic decline in the number of violent incidents and the number of casualties in the region over the past decade. Clearly, the army seemed to be respecting the rebel declaration of a unilateral ceasefire by staying away from forested zones with MFDC camps. I called on the army commander in Ziguinchor several times to emphasize our support for his efforts to rebuild community relations. During my time in Senegal, there were only a few violent incidents in the Casamance, either caused by accidental encounters, such as when an army patrol encountered a group of fighters traveling to a village wedding, or due to enforcement of laws against illegal logging in protected forests.

On my first visit to the Casamance, a group of 25 soldiers in three transport vehicles accompanied my armored car whenever I left the city limits of Ziguinchor. We had communicated my schedule to the army and they would station this force at the traffic circle on the city outskirts to accompany me as I traveled in the countryside. They placed one army vehicle in front of mine and one behind, while one vehicle drove ahead to scout out the route. When my car stopped to let me out, the soldiers would fan out to create a perimeter around me and my party. The armed soldiers appeared fairly relaxed, but I did not like the image of such a large military escort. While atrocities had largely ceased since the conflict period in the 1990s,

the Senegalese army was still not a popular institution in the Casamance. Most of the soldiers were from the north; they regarded service in the Casamance as a hardship tour and were eager to return home. They spoke different languages, complicating communications with the local civilians.

After returning to Dakar, I met with our regional security officer, defense attaché, and station chief to reassess my level of protection in the Casamance. I understood that previous ambassadors had all received this level of military protection when they traveled, but I asked them to reevaluate the conflict situation to ascertain whether this level of protection remained necessary. The next time I met the Senegalese army commanding officer, I asked him to consider reducing that level of protection. I told him that “I appreciate the concern for my safety, but I do not think this is necessary any longer.” Gradually over time, the size of my armed escort diminished. On my final visit to the Casamance, we informed the military of my itinerary but there was no escort at all! I could now travel in an armored U.S. embassy car accompanied only by an assistant regional security officer, a political officer, and my Senegalese bodyguard. I much preferred arriving at a village where the inhabitants had turned out to sing and dance in welcome without a large contingent of armed soldiers.

Embassy Dakar Political Unit Chief James Garry explained that the U.S. ambassador’s main role in the Casamance was to cheer on people working to advance the peace process. Our attention could encourage these peace activists and also enhance their profile. He organized activities for me to play this “cheerleading” role by meeting members of civil society who work to advance the peace process, talking to journalists, and visiting development projects.

USAID had funded a modest democracy program to develop the capacity of Casamance civil society leaders supporting the peace process. USAID had funded training programs in leadership and organizational management. This training might include important skills like fundraising, bookkeeping, personnel management, and public speaking.

On my first visit to the Casamance region, I met an umbrella group of women’s peace organizations. Many of these organizations had received some training financed by USAID. They were bringing these skills to bear in their health, religious, civic, and educational organizations. These women community leaders were largely optimistic about the direction of the peace process but frustrated by the slow pace. I hoped my visit could boost their morale and generate positive momentum for their efforts. I gave a radio interview to a reporter about our support for these peaceful efforts. I thought that the small amount of money we spent on democracy assistance was money well spent. These women had utilized the skills they had learned in these training programs to lead civic organizations working for peace.

My six visits to the Casamance region led me to understand that often it was women leading civil society’s peace efforts. One reason is the prominent role played by women in the Jola ethnic group that lives in this region. The Jola only constitute about four percent of the overall population of Senegal but are concentrated in the area around Ziguinchor and between this regional capital and the coast. Their culture very much values the role of women in society.

*KENNEDY: I never served in Africa, but I understand in West Africa, market women are a very strong culture, run most of the businesses, and are very much involved in getting things done, while the men sit around.*

ZUMWALT: In Jola society, there were many prominent female leaders.

James also arranged for me to visit an agricultural school in Bignona that had been supported by USAID. We met professors who were developing crops suited to the local climate and teaching skills for farmers to increase their agricultural productivity. This school also had an entrepreneurship program where students opened small businesses mostly related to the marketing and branding of agricultural products. One student had developed a cellphone application that served as an online wholesale market where market women could use their cellphones to reorder produce from their suppliers. There was no sign of the violent clashes that had occurred in this area a decade previously.

We traveled on to Fogny, a small village north of the Casamance River near the border of The Gambia. This village was located in the Sindian region that had experienced high levels of violence during the conflict. This village of a few thousand people hosts Fogny FM, also known as Peace Radio, a small FM broadcaster with perhaps a fifty-kilometer radius. This citizen-run station had been established with a grant from the State Department, but for about ten years, it had been operating on its own.

Most inhabitants of the Casamance are illiterate and cannot afford television, so their most important source of information is FM radio. The Fogny Peace Radio broadcasts popular music programs, but also programs about farming techniques and a call-in advice program hosted by an imam. People with problems like cattle rustling could call the imam for advice and he would encourage listeners to resolve their problems using nonviolent solutions. It was a popular call-in show. The radio also broadcast interviews with refugees who had returned home from The Gambia. Many refugees still in The Gambia listened to these broadcasts and the positive testimonials from returnees encouraged more to return to Sindian. In my radio interview, I spoke about American support for the peace process and for economic development in the region.

The radio station staged a large welcome celebration for me which was broadcast live. I was seated under a large tree in a cleared area outside the station building to watch the singing, drumming, and dancing performances. There were traditional drummers and dancers, but also young people demonstrating hip-hop and breakdancing. (American cultural influence had even reached this remote forested area!) A group of girls in school uniforms held up a sign in English that said “We Want Education.” Surprised to see young girls who spoke English, I asked them about their sign. They told me that Sindian had no high school, so they had to live with relatives across the border in English-speaking The Gambia in order to attend school. They hoped that the Senegalese government would establish a school closer to home so that they could continue their education while living in their own village.

As part of our civil society outreach, James also took me to meet Jola kings. Some of these religious, spiritual, and traditional leaders played an important role in facilitating the peace process. According to traditional Jola beliefs, these kings serve as an intermediary between their god and man. In case of conflict, the king is consulted and his role is to try to reconcile the parties.

James took me to meet the king of Oussouye, a town of about four thousand inhabitants between Ziguinchor and the coast that had suffered greatly during the height of the conflict. Sibilumbaï Diedhiou had been installed as king in 2000 and was widely respected in the region for his efforts to promote peace and social cohesion.

The king lived in the sacred forest of Oussouye just outside the main settlement. The king’s nephew Francis, who ran a small shop along the side of the road, served as our intermediary.

Before we arrived in Oussouye, James had called Francis, who spoke excellent French, on his cellphone to arrange our meeting. James and I arrived by car at his store to pick up Francis and we then drove together to the edge of the sacred forest where the road ended. Francis walked us along a path deep into the forest. As we walked together through the tall old-growth trees, Francis told us that it had been difficult to find a king from among the leading Jola families in Oussouye because everyone knew that the new king would be very poor. Francis was the son of the previous king so when his father died, Francis could have become the king. But Francis told me that he did not want to be king, he preferred to be a shopkeeper with a better income. Finally, his uncle agreed to become the next king.

After about ten minutes of walking, Francis indicated that we should sit down on two folding wooden chairs that had been set up in a small shaded clearing. After we had been sitting for about five minutes, the king emerged. He wore a red robe and a tall red hat that was the symbol of his royal station. James had briefed me that I should stand up, but not shake the king's hand. James told me to address him with the Jola word *man*. I spoke to the king in French and Francis translated into Jola.

We spoke with the king about our desire to promote the peace process and our development efforts in the region. He welcomed our assistance. I presented him with a certificate of appreciation for his help with a USAID conflict-resolution project in the area. He seemed very happy to meet me and eager to have our photo taken together. Before leaving Senegal, I paid another call on this Jola king to say goodbye. He presented me with a small wooden throne carved out of a trunk of a tree. While this low throne looks unimpressive, more like a small child's stool, with everyone else sitting cross-legged on the floor, the king on this small stool would sit higher than everyone else in the circle. When we saw him, we were honored guests who could sit on wooden chairs and he sat on his throne, but everyone else sat on the ground.

According to Jola tradition, farmers would give their surplus production to the king. Poor people in turn beseech the king for help. Thus, wealth in traditional Jola society would be redistributed. These days, the system was breaking down as wealthy people did not give many gifts to the king, but the poor still came asking for help. Thinking about what Francis told me, I recalled that the king's red robe and hat, the traditional Jola symbols of royalty, were ragged and dirty. The king was a respected community leader, but he was not living a luxurious life. Francis, in contrast, seemed to be doing fine with his store selling batteries, cigarettes, snacks, and gasoline on the main highway. I could understand the economic reasons why he did not want to become the king.

We also visited three other Jola kings in a small coastal town of 1,500 people called Kabrousse. This town was located just between the beach resorts of Cap Skirring and the Guinea-Bissau border on the Atlantic coast. James and I visited this village to see the results of a USAID project in the village and to pay our respects to the gravesite of Aline Sitoé Diatta, a woman from Kabrousse who was perhaps the most famous Jola in Senegal. Born in 1920, Diatta was a strong young female symbol of resistance to French colonial rule (the largest ferry that travels back and forth between Dakar and Ziguinchor was named after her). Diatta was born in the village of Kabrousse and had left her village for Dakar where she engaged in market trading. She became frustrated with the French colonial administration's heavy taxes and began organizing a boycott of French goods that attracted much support among the women in the market. Diatta then returned to her village of Kabrousse and, with her inspiring speeches and charisma, she garnered increasing support for independence from France. She was arrested by the French colonial administrators and exiled to Timbuktu, Mali in 1943, where she soon died in jail.

The Kabrousse villagers were quite welcoming and many joined me as we walked to her gravesite. James Garry and I laid a wreath at her tomb to pay our respects. After this solemn event, my visit turned more festive. A group of women guided me to the freshwater pond where Diatta had washed her family's clothes and showed me the rice fields where she had harvested food for her family.

A few years earlier, the USAID project on peaceful conflict resolution had worked in the village of Kabrousse to resolve tension among three families who were contending for the kingship. Each family wanted their patriarch to be king. As a result of the mediation, each family agreed to take turns as king. On my visit, all three kings received me in their red robes and tall red hats. They seemed much more prosperous than the Oussouye king. We took photos of the four of us sitting in the shade under a palm tree. The kings were delighted to host the U.S. ambassador. One of the young women in the village asked me to hold her baby for a photo. She had named him "Mark" after Ambassador Mark Boulware, our previous Special Envoy for Casamance Peace.

They laid out a feast for me, with prodigious amounts of rice, tropical fruits, grilled fish, and various stews. They presented me with gifts of calabashes filled with rice, as well as tropical fruits that had been harvested that morning. We sat around tables on a platform shaded by a roof of palm fronds. A major part of this feast involved conspicuous consumption of palm wine. Many palm trees had taps with buckets to catch the drops of liquid that would then ferment into a milky-white liquid. This palm wine had only been fermenting for a few hours, so it was lukewarm, only slightly sour, and less alcoholic than palm wine I had drunk in Kinshasa. I am not a big alcohol drinker, particularly on a hot tropical afternoon, but did my best to politely consume some of the beverage they had carefully prepared.

We then moved to the central square of the village where we watched singing and dancing. I am a terrible dancer, but they appreciated that I joined in. The villagers were grateful for the assistance they had received from USAID. Compared to other villages I had visited in the Casamance, the population of Kabrousse was relatively prosperous because they were on the coast with access to fishing and they had land for rice cultivation. There was a school for children up to sixth grade.

One consequence of the decline in violence in the Casamance was an increase in the number of internally displaced persons desiring to return to their villages. One NGO working to facilitate this population movement was the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). American support for the ICRC refugee resettlement program gave impetus to their important work. I visited the ICRC office in Ziguinchor frequently to learn about and express support for their work.

The head of the ICRC office was an enthusiastic young Frenchman, a real humanitarian who chose to live an austere life in Ziguinchor to advance a cause he believed in. He explained to me how the Red Cross helped internally displaced persons and refugees return to their abandoned villages in the Casamance region. The ICRC told me that with the decline in violence in the countryside, many IDPs had begun spontaneously returning to their abandoned villages. The ICRC helped these people by providing them with roofing materials to rebuild their huts and farm implements and seeds to begin farming again.

The ICRC introduced me to a group of IDPs in the city who were planning to all move together to resettle their abandoned village. It was wonderful to see that this group of perhaps two hundred people had retained their village cohesion over a decade after they had fled the violence.

They would need each other's help with the difficult task of restarting their lives and reconstructing their abandoned village. These IDPs were in touch with the separatist rebels to communicate their desire to return. They were confident enough to make these demands and believed it was now safe enough to return home. The State Department provided some modest funding for the ICRC's effort to help these refugees. When I returned to Dakar, I would seek out the head of the ICRC regional office to tell her about the wonderful work of her office in Ziguinchor.

Many of the refugees had an understandable fear of landmines. Thousands of abandoned landmines lie scattered around the Casamance, placed both by the Senegalese army and the MFDC rebels. About a year before I arrived, there was a tragic accident where a truck carrying wedding guests near the Gambian border swerved to avoid a large pothole on a narrow dirt road and ran over an anti-tank mine. Seven passengers were killed and three injured. There were also many anti-personnel mines that were seeded in the forest by the rebel groups to deter army patrols. Unfortunately, this demining work had become politicized. An MFDC band led by César Badate had kidnapped and held for six months a team of deminers from the South African commercial company Mechem because the MFDC had not agreed to demining work in that particular area. The major donors for this demining effort — Norway, the European Union, and France — stopped their assistance programs due to slow progress in obtaining a consensus among the government, the army, the MFDC, and the villagers on areas to demine.

We supported the remaining NGO, Handicap International (HI), that was still working to reduce the risk of landmines. HI had won the Nobel Peace Prize for its humanitarian demining work around the world. The head of the Handicap International office briefed me that over a thousand people had been killed or injured by landmines between 1990 and 2008 with the peak of over 220 mine incidents in 1997. They introduced me to an eight-year-old boy whose arm had been blown off when he played with an anti-personnel mine that he had found in the forest. Over a period of years, the State Department had provided one million dollars to support humanitarian demining and reforestation, as well as disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) efforts in the Casamance.

Handicap International explained to me that they worked in stages. First, they would focus on education. They would train elementary school teachers in mine identification and safety. In turn, the teachers then would teach their students on how to identify a mine and what to do if one was found. Over the past few years, HI told me that they had trained over half the Casamance elementary school teachers to teach children about landmine dangers. A lot of the mines are quite small; a child might pick one up because it looked shiny and interesting. In this lesson, teachers explain to their students what to do if they discover a landmine. The teachers advise them not to touch the object, to put up an identifying marker, and to go find a trusted adult to show them its location. Through this educational program, HI had reduced quite dramatically the numbers of children injured in landmine accidents. In various places around the Casamance, we could see HI's signs about mine awareness. Often, alongside written warnings, would be a graphic cartoon of an exploding mine and a flying human body to educate the many people who were illiterate.

The second step for demining, HI explained, was to conduct a general survey. They would interview villagers, ask them where they were afraid to go, and if they had knowledge of mine incidents in that location. Often, people living in the area knew the areas where the mines lay. These general surveys would be followed by more detailed surveys to assess the at-risk zones, to

identify precisely the areas that needed clearing, and to identify the equipment needed for demining operations. Only then would the painstaking work on demining begin.

On one of my trips to the Casamance, I visited a demining team that was working just thirty minutes outside of Ziguinchor. They were clearing a field on the side of a secondary road about a half-kilometer from the main highway. They had found two small anti-personnel mines already. The team consisted of Senegalese nationals who employed mine-sniffing dogs that had been trained in Zimbabwe. The workers on this demining team had to wear face shields and heavy padded equipment. I tried one suit on and quickly became hot and fatigued in the tropical sun. Demining was not an easy task. This team also had a heavy truck that could be driven over certain mines to blow them up.

There was still much demining work to be done in the Casamance region. On my subsequent trips back to Washington DC, I took my “cheerleading role” to the State Department. I would meet the responsible office in the State Department’s Bureau of Political-Military Affairs to praise the good impact their funding was having on the Casamance peace process. We were not donating a huge amount and we were not the only donor, but our assistance helped sustain Handicap International’s important work in the region.

James Garry told me that our role in engaging the separatist leaders was to “accompany the rebels through the peace process.” After thinking about this statement, I thought this phrase was the right way to describe our efforts to facilitate peace. Due to the progress of U.S. development agencies, the MFDC leaders came to recognize the United States’ constructive role in promoting regional economic growth. They also understood that we had influence with the Senegalese government and therefore came to see the United States as a useful intermediary — the French could not play that role as they had too much leftover colonial-era baggage with both the Senegalese government and the MFDC rebels. We did not want to play the role of mediator, but we did recognize that we could help reassure the rebels who remained quite suspicious of the Senegalese government. James’ formulation of “accompany the rebels” was meant to help them gain confidence that the government would maintain the de facto ceasefire while talks proceeded.

The MFDC had broken into three competing factions led respectively by Salif Sadio, César Badiate, and Mamadou Niantang Diatta, so it was not easy to engage the entire rebel movement. Of these factions, Salif Sadio’s had been considered the most intransigent since it had refused to even talk to the Senegalese government. (The other factions, it was rumored, had accepted payoffs from the previous Wade government.) But in 2014, Salif Sadio declared a unilateral ceasefire and reached out to Sant’Egidio for help. Based in Rome, this lay Catholic organization specializes in conflict mediation. Embassy Dakar worked closely with Sant’Egidio to help them facilitate the reconciliation process between this rebel group and the government.

Twice in 2014, Sant’Egidio facilitated the travel of rebel leaders to Rome, where they would meet with representatives of the Senegalese government. Sant’Egidio arranged for travel of these rebel leaders by obtaining Cabo Verdean passports for the group, then arranging for their travel on a commercial flight from Bissau to Cabo Verde and onward to Rome.

A representative from Sant’Egidio told me that the travel to Rome was important for these leaders who lived austere lives in remote forests. They tended to have an exaggerated sense of their importance to the outside world, but when they arrived in Rome, they began to understand that the world outside did not regard their conflict as a major concern. A Sant’Egidio

representative told me that “When the MFDC representative arrived in Rome, they were totally overwhelmed. They had no concept of life in a modern city. The first time they came, the MFDC representative did not even carry a suitcase; they only had the clothes they were wearing.” Sant’Egidio accompanied them to a store to buy clothes, took them to a dentist for needed dental work, and to a doctor for medical care. These separatist leaders were in poor health after living thirty years in the forest.

Embassy Dakar Political Chief James Garry traveled to Rome for these talks. He met the rebels at the Sant’Egidio office before their meetings with the Senegalese government to show our support for the peace process. He reminded the MFDC negotiators that the United States did not support Casamance independence, but he said that we would work to facilitate a reconciliation process.

*KENNEDY: Why didn’t you want the Americans to be in the talks?*

ZUMWALT: We thought it was more appropriate for a neutral organization like Sant’Egidio to take on the role of intermediary between the government and the rebels. The United States was not neutral; we supported the Senegalese government position that opposed independence. But we could play a role as a trusted supporter of the peace process. We wanted the MFDC to realize they would not be able to obtain foreign support, so it was time for them to engage in direct peace talks with the Senegalese government. One challenge was that small Casamance independence expatriate groups in France and the United States were raising small amounts of money to support the MFDC. We wanted to make it clear that these expatriate groups did not enjoy broad support in the United States.

Throughout the process of engagement with the separatist groups, I stayed in close touch with President Sall’s representative for Casamance peace talks, Admiral Sarr. Sarr was the head of Senegalese intelligence; our station chief and Sarr enjoyed a close and cooperative relationship where they worked together on anti-terrorism issues. The station chief accompanied me on my first few meetings with Sarr at his office in downtown Dakar, but later I would go to these sessions alone. My goal in these meetings with Sarr was to make sure that the Senegalese government knew of our communications with the rebel groups and supported our efforts.

In my first courtesy call with Admiral Sarr, I briefed him about the embassy’s previous meetings with MFDC leaders in Guinea-Bissau. Sarr already knew about these meetings in detail, but I wanted him to think that I would not hide anything from the Senegalese government. I promised that we would never surprise him and asked him to tell us if any of our actions made him uncomfortable. Before each encounter with the rebels, I would inform Admiral Sarr of the messages we planned to convey. He would say fine because he saw that we played a useful role. After each meeting with the rebels, I would meet Sarr again for an out brief. I wanted to talk with him directly in order to counter any misinformation he might hear from the MFDC through his intelligence channels. I worried that the MFDC would misrepresent our conversations to exaggerate claims of U.S. support.

I never thought the time was right for me to meet directly with these MFDC rebel leaders. I wanted to reserve a meeting with the U.S. ambassador for a moment when the rebels were close to a peace settlement. James Garry, and later J.T. Ice, were the embassy officers who met with the rebel leaders; I saw no benefit to usurp this channel at a preliminary stage of talks.

James, and later J.T., usually met representatives of Salif Sadio in a small town called São Domingos across the southern border in Guinea-Bissau. They would agree on a meeting time and both sides would arrive at a small nondescript coffee shop for a discussion. (I visited that coffee shop once as I was driving from Ziguinchor to Bissau. It had an electric fan and decent Brazilian coffee!) Our side would explain that we did not support violence, but we did support reconciliation. We told them that former MFDC rebels, once they had laid down their weapons, deserved a place in society. We promised to work in good faith to support their negotiation with the government, but we made clear that we would not negotiate on their behalf. They wanted us to “guarantee” a peaceful settlement, so we explained that we were not guarantors but that we would accompany them as they worked toward a peace deal with the government of Senegal.

The rebels seemed eager to have contact with us and also interested in a negotiated settlement with an honorable reconciliation process. The Senegalese government recognized the importance of a DDR process (demobilization, disarmament, and reconciliation) — they were prepared to offer the rebels a peaceful way out. The government had established camps that provided former MFDC fighters six months of training, farm tools, and seed to begin to farm.

Talks at this level were important, but we really hoped to see Salif Sadio himself come to Rome. He lived along the Senegal-Gambia border, not in Guinea-Bissau, so there was a logistical challenge with transporting him to Rome. The government in The Gambia would not help by allowing his travel through their territory to the Banjul airport. Sadio appeared interested in going but he doubted that the Senegalese government would allow him safe transit through areas they controlled. Salif Sadio also wanted a U.S. guarantee of his safe passage. To break this logjam, Sant’Egidio requested our help with his travel logistics. Sant’Egidio told us that they could arrange for an Italian military plane to fly him out from Ziguinchor. But they wanted us to transport Salif Sadio from a site near his camp to this regional Senegalese airport.

I replied that we could not provide a safe passage guarantee, as we had no sovereign authority inside Senegal. But I offered to talk to the Senegalese government to explain that we were willing to accompany the rebel leaders to the airport and to ask the Senegalese government to guarantee to us that our diplomats would not experience any difficulties while we traveled with the rebel leader through their country.

To follow up on Sant’Egidio’s request, I visited Admiral Sarr and explained the problem. We had been asked to drive Salif Sadio from a rendezvous point near his hideout to the Ziguinchor airport and this seemed like the best way to facilitate his onward travel to Rome to meet Admiral Sarr directly. I explained that we were willing to provide an embassy car to drive Sadio (with one of our assistant RSOs driving because I did not want any Senegalese LES drivers) along with one of our political officers to the airport to meet the Italian plane. When Sadio returned from Rome, we would do the same in reverse. But I told Sarr that we would only provide this transportation if Sarr agreed with this plan and if he could promise to arrange for safe passage for our embassy staff as they drove to and from the Ziguinchor airport. Sarr was interested in meeting Salif Sadio in Rome and promised to make sure that we could transport Salif Sadio through the countryside safely. This plan was complicated — for example, we could not execute it during the rainy season due to the poor road conditions. Unfortunately, we could not schedule this travel before I left Senegal. But Salif Sadio and the Senegalese government remain in contact and I am confident that as long as these talks continue, they will sustain their de facto ceasefire.

*KENNEDY: What about child soldiers?*

ZUMWALT: Child soldiers were never a big issue in the Casamance like they were in other African conflicts. By 2015, the level of violence was receding and young Casamançais did not seek to join the MFDC any longer. It was more common for young Casamançais to travel to Dakar to look for work or attend school.

Many of these armed MFDC groups resorted to banditry or other illegal activities to survive. An armed rebel group might set up a roadblock to shake down passing cars and trucks. They would claim their actions represented a “people’s tax,” but the Casamançais saw these activities as banditry and these actions were one reason the rebels lost so much community support. Separatist groups also resorted to illegal activities such as growing cannabis or cutting down trees from protected forests and selling the lumber in The Gambia.

In my farewell call on President Sall, we discussed the Casamance. He appreciated our efforts, especially the Millennium Challenge Corporation’s work, but he also recognized this was Senegal’s peace process to manage. In my view, Sall had the right approach. He prioritized economic integration and improving the quality of government services in the region to increase public support for the Senegalese government and to lure separatist rebels out of the forest with offers of reconciliation and modest reintegration efforts. I told Sall that we would be willing to fund some of these DDR efforts when they arrived at that stage. Already, about ten or twenty MFDC rebels a month were leaving the forest and surrendering their weapons; if this number increased, I was confident we could attract additional State Department money to expand Senegal’s DDR processing facilities.

Overall, I felt positive about the trajectory of the Casamance peace process. Most of the major actors were eager for peace and envisioned a future of a safe and secure region.

The Senegalese government understood that the ultimate solution was to provide an improved economic livelihood to the Casamance people. The Sall government was working to restore transportation and infrastructure networks and to improve the education and health infrastructure so that the Casamançais could see improvements to their lives.

When I departed post, I advised the State Department that the peace process would move at a Senegalese pace, not as quickly as we Americans would expect. My parting advice was to continue to play the role of cheerleader, encouraging all of the actors to sustain their work rebuilding a peaceful society. We were doing a solid job of helping the Senegalese government with their own efforts to promote the peace process.

Unlike the situation in Guinea-Bissau, I was optimistic about the Casamance region; the government and the military understood what needed to be done. In particular, the army recognized they needed to work with local people on capacity-building in order to forge a stronger sense of nationhood.

I am pleased to see that the ceasefire in the Casamance had held and more progress is being made. It’s such a beautiful region with agricultural and tourist potential, so I hope this progress continues.

*KENNEDY: What was life in Dakar like?*

ZUMWALT: Dakar has its share of problems, but the city lies in a lovely location and expatriate life is quite comfortable. Dakar sits on the point of the West African mainland that is closest to the United States. The city is on the end of the Cap-Vert peninsula that projects about twenty

miles into the Atlantic Ocean, bending back toward the southeast at its tip. Three sides of Dakar face the Atlantic. This means that onshore breezes come from many directions, so Dakar's climate is much cooler than inland areas. The peninsula protects the coastline to the south from powerful Atlantic Ocean currents, rendering miles of beaches to the south safe for swimming. The coastal area from Dakar to perhaps one hundred miles further south had been developed with numerous beach resorts that attracted over one million (mostly French and Belgian) foreign tourists annually. Dakar's downtown was charming, with old French houses, interesting small shops, and mature trees. The population of the city was growing dramatically, so surrounding neighborhoods were densely populated with many residents lacking electricity or running water. Many also lived in flood-prone areas when it rained. Despite its charms, Dakar was the capital of a developing nation with many challenging social problems.

There was visible poverty in Dakar, but the poverty was much worse outside the capital. Senegal is located in the Sahel region between the Sahara Desert and the slightly rainier savannah to the south. The lack of consistent rain makes life difficult for the majority of Senegal's population, who are engaged in farming or animal husbandry. The year before I arrived, the region had suffered a drought. The United States had declared a food emergency and was providing emergency assistance because twenty percent of the population was at risk of malnutrition.

About twenty thousand ethnic Lebanese reside in Dakar, mostly descendants of Lebanese who began arriving in the 1920s and '30s to fill positions in the French colonial government. Many are now shopkeepers, professionals, or factory and business owners. Ethnic Lebanese dominated the small and medium enterprise sector in Dakar. Providers of development assistance were likely to contract with Lebanese-owned Senegalese companies providing cement, construction materials, road construction equipment, or office supplies. Many of the retail shops in downtown Dakar were Lebanese-owned. There were some excellent Lebanese ice cream parlors and bakeries that made French-style baguettes and pastries. Ann and I would frequently dine out at Lebanese restaurants — there were many from which to choose.

*KENNEDY: Merchants.*

ZUMWALT: When I say "Lebanese," I should explain that these people were born in Senegal and sometimes their parents had been born in Senegal too. Many were Senegalese citizens. They spoke French with each other and Wolof with their employees. Some of the older Lebanese even complained to me that their children did not speak good Arabic because that language was not relevant for their lives in Dakar. Many had never been to Lebanon. Most of these Lebanese children attended one of two French schools in Dakar, but some attended the English-language International School.

The U.S. embassy relied heavily on ethnic Lebanese health care providers. The orthodontist and doctors and dentists we used, as well as the ambulance service, were Lebanese businesses. My dentist was a nice fellow who obtained his degree in dentistry from UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles). He spoke fluent English; his grandfather had emigrated to Senegal and, after completing his U.S. college education, he took over his father's dentistry practice in Dakar. People advised me to "Get your dental work done in Dakar while you're there; it's cheaper than in the United States." The embassy also referred some of our employees to Lebanese-run clinics for medical care.

The embassy of Lebanon in Dakar was not large, but it provided consular services to a huge community. On November 22, when the ambassador celebrated Lebanese Independence Day, he served dishes from nearly thirty Lebanese restaurants who had donated the delicious food. I remember looking around the over one thousand guests who attended when another ambassador mentioned that thirty percent of Senegal's GDP was present that night.

Dakar had an active social life for American embassy families. We had 180 American direct-hire employees, with perhaps 150 families with spouses and children. Because the weather was nice almost year-round, outdoor sports were popular. Many embassy children took surfing lessons at the two surfing schools that were walking distance from the embassy. The waves were ideal for beginning surfers. A Senegalese coach gave swimming lessons to small children at the embassy pool — he was most gentle and popular with the kids. People enjoyed outdoor tennis at several tennis clubs and there were twice-weekly pick-up basketball games at Marine House and occasional ultimate Frisbee tournaments. Sometimes kids would play hockey on the basketball court with their inline skates.

We called our park and sports facility Ebbets Field. It was a fenced-off park with controlled access. Ebbets had a softball diamond, a basketball court, a nice playground with equipment for children, and a picnic area with trees, grass, and tables. This facility had been purchased as the site for an ambassador's residence. It would have been an outstanding location — between the embassy and the government offices downtown — but the State Department's Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations had decided the land was too unstable as it was perched on an eroded bluff overlooking the ocean about a hundred feet below.

Ebbets Field was important because public park space in Dakar was unsuited for foreign families. I sometimes jogged through these parks, but if a foreign family stopped for a picnic, they would soon be besieged by beggars and vendors — the environment was just not comfortable. So Ebbets Field became the safe place for birthday parties and church picnics. I could go there on any given weekend; something was always happening at Ebbets, so I could interact with embassy families in a casual setting. The CLO would organize vendor fairs at Ebbets and the Cub Scouts held their campouts there. During January and February, it might even become cool enough to build a fire in the firepit.

The largest and most popular embassy sporting activity was a vibrant softball league with a season that stretched from September, just after many new personnel arrived in Dakar, for five months of the year, culminating in a large tournament on President's Day weekend in mid-February. The embassy fielded four softball teams competing against teams from the two English-language international high schools, two Senegalese teams, a Japanese team, and a Canadian team. There were two softball leagues. One was what they called a competitive league; they were serious softball players. The other league was co-ed and more social. That was a polite way of saying you did not need any softball skills to play. Every Saturday, Ebbets would host four or five games, one after the other. Between games, I could turn around and admire a beautiful seascape as the Atlantic Ocean curled around the bluffs with a scenic lighthouse on top. Our softball season culminated with the WAIST — the West African Invitational Softball Tournament. In addition to the teams in the two leagues, we would attract teams from neighboring embassies such as Nouakchott, Conakry, and The Gambia. The Peace Corps also formed teams to compete in this tournament.

*KENNEDY: Did any Senegalese have any teams — ?*

ZUMWALT: There was a Senegalese competitive team and a Senegalese social team. The Senegalese teams had the best athletes but their players had the worst softball skills. The Senegalese athletes were fast and athletic — mostly club soccer players. The embassy contributed bats, balls, gloves, and some coaching to these teams. One of the Senegalese teams was coached by a Japanese semi-pro baseball player (he was volunteer with the Japan International Cooperation Agency — Japan's equivalent of a Peace Corps volunteer). He helped them hone their softball skills.

Ebbets Field was also a popular place for evening events; this was the location for our embassy Hallowe'en, July 4, and Easter celebrations. Once a month, we opened up the facility to the diplomatic corps and to the International School teachers — we could mingle with music on the loudspeakers and drinks served from the bar. We might attract three hundred guests for some of these casual parties. One night a week, the embassy Community Liaison Office sponsored an evening for dogs and dog owners. About twenty dog owners would come together and enjoy wine and cheese while their dogs ran around the grounds.

Ebbets Field contributed greatly to our quality of life and morale. One reason we were able to justify the cost of upkeep was that we also used this facility as our alternate command center. We had a small building set up with five computers hooked into our computer system and satellite phones. We stored emergency food, water, and medical supplies there in case we needed to operate this command center during an emergency when the embassy was unavailable. Once or twice a year, we would stage a drill where we would log in to our computers and set up our satellite phone and call the State Department's Operations Center to make sure all the equipment was working.

Like any post, Dakar's single employees had different interests. There was a vibrant nightclub scene with excellent music. Youssou N'Dour, who had won a Grammy award for his album *Egypt*, lived down the street from me. He owned a nightclub that featured outstanding local musicians almost every night.

There was also a nice restaurant scene in Dakar with scores of restaurants from pizza or fried chicken to more fancy places serving seafood, French, Italian, or Lebanese cuisine. There were a few good Korean restaurants also. Senegalese food was also quite popular — in particular, thiéboudiène (steamed stuffed grouper with rice and vegetables steamed in a conch and tomato broth) and poulet yassa (chicken marinated in an onion-lemon-vinegar sauce with caramelized onions) were also popular dishes.

On weekends, many people would rent a beach villa in nearby Saly through Airbnb. A group of two or three families could get together to stay right on the beach, an hour and a half away from the city. Sometimes these villas included a cook who would prepare dinner and breakfast. Another option was to visit the Bandia Reserve, a 3,500-acre game park whose Senegalese-Lebanese owners had reintroduced native fauna and animals from South Africa that roamed free over the large fenced-in savannah and forests. Amongst the giant baobab, flamboyant, and acacia trees, one could drive around to see giraffes, gazelles, zebras, cape buffalos, elephants, and ostriches, among other wild animals. Some people just went for a lunch at the restaurant and bar that overlooked a lagoon with crocodiles and shore birds while green monkeys chattered in the canopy of leaves overhead.

Group walking was also a popular activity for Senegalese aged over 40. Each neighborhood in Dakar had its own walking club. Kristine Marsh, one of Embassy Dakar's public affairs officers,

introduced me to her walking club in the neighborhood of Mermoz. This group called the Club Mermoz de Randonée Pédestre met every Saturday morning at nine a.m. for a two-and-a-half-hour walk together. A sense of solidarity was heightened in that our group of about forty to sixty middle-aged men and women all wore matching white uniforms with green and yellow trim — long slacks, a long-sleeved t-shirt, and a light jacket. We met at nine a.m. every Saturday at the parking lot of a pizza restaurant in Mermoz and then walked along one of three walking routes of about six to eight miles. Our group was led by a retired Senegalese army general who led us through warm-up calisthenics before we began our walk together. Two embassy local employees — one accountant from USAID and one clerk from the embassy's human resources office had introduced Kristine to this group. Most of the walking club members were upper middle-class Senegalese attorneys, lawyers, judges, government officials, teachers, and business owners. About a third of the participants were women. I enjoyed walking with them each Saturday morning.

My neighborhood had many casual restaurants. Ann and I liked to walk to several along the beach to eat dinner and admire the sunset over the ocean. We also enjoyed an indoor casual restaurant called American Grill that was about a ten-minute walk from our home. They served hamburgers, steaks, and American-style Mexican food. This restaurant was a good place to interact informally with the American schoolteachers having a beer and nachos as they watched the NFL football game on a large-screen television on Sunday nights. After a few beers, these teachers were a good source of information on how the American community regarded the U.S. embassy!

In general, the social life in Dakar provided opportunities for many people with different interests and community morale was high. People who had served elsewhere in Africa appreciated the many recreational options in Dakar. And the Senegalese were so welcoming.

*KENNEDY: What about with the Americans there? Housing, that can at times be a bone of contention.*

ZUMWALT: Before I left Washington for this post, the executive director of the Bureau of African Affairs told me that Senegal was a well-run post that did not make unreasonable requests. He said, "Don't ask for the moon, but I will take your requests seriously." He also told me that now that we had completed the move to the new embassy, the biggest pending management issue was staff housing. He thought that the move from two old rundown office buildings into our new chancery had freed up our maintenance capacity to work to upgrade our housing stock.

We were in the process of releasing many of the apartments we had leased downtown since the embassy had moved to a suburb about a forty-minute drive away. To be honest, if I had been a junior or mid-career officer, I would rather have lived downtown. A few of our single staff did live downtown and they appreciated their vibrant neighborhood with restaurants, beaches, bakeries, ice cream parlors, clubs, and cafés. I would have liked that lifestyle when I was single too. But once the embassy moved to the suburbs, these apartments were forty minutes further away, so it did make sense for most families to live closer to the embassy and the International School. Many family apartments were located near the school, halfway between downtown and the chancery building. As leases expired, we began unloading some of our more maintenance-intensive downtown rentals in favor of newer, more attractive apartments closer to our new chancery.

In this process, we were renting fewer and fewer houses and more and more apartments. The old Africa hands sometimes complained, as they were used to other posts with large houses with swimming pools in the backyard. We made sure in our post report to inform prospective bidders that many would be living in apartments. There were some housing issues, but we tried to set reasonable expectations for our incoming staff. I remember deleting the words “the Paris of Africa” from our post report. Dakar was a nice place to live, but I did not want new staff to arrive thinking they would live as they might in Paris.

*KENNEDY: Were you able to travel much in-country?*

ZUMWALT: I traveled about one week a month. This meant about five trips each year to Bissau and seven or so within Senegal. I took advantage of the Senegal travel to become better acquainted with our entry-level officers. About three-fourths of the ELOs at post worked for USAID and I thought it was important to spend some time mentoring them also. During my first tour in Kinshasa, I learned some of the best lessons while traveling together with Ambassador Robert Oakley where I could learn how he operated (see Chapter 3). I spoke with AID Director Susan Fine, saying I wanted to take an ELO with me on my in-country travel so we could interact on the road. Susan agreed that it would be a good experience for her ELOs to be able to plan and execute my in-country trips.

These would usually be five-day tours, visiting several towns and villages in a region. Senegal was small enough and the roads were good enough that we could travel to most regions by car. The junior officer responsible for planning my trip had to coordinate with many embassy sections. My trip planner would work with the RSO on security, with the public affairs section on media engagement, with the political section on calls on the governor, with the defense attaché on calls on the regional military commanders, with the Peace Corps on a visit with volunteers, and with USAID on a visit to one of their projects. I became better acquainted with many of these ELOs through our travel together and they told me that planning my trip helped them better understand the work of other parts of the mission.

The Peace Corps provided me the opportunity to visit volunteers around the country. I wanted to escape Dakar in order to better understand Senegal’s economic challenges and its political situation. While Dakar was a large city of well over one million people, over 14 million Senegalese live very different lives outside Dakar. To understand them, I needed a reason to visit people in the many regions of the country. Peace Corps Director Cheryl Faye always responded positively when I asked her for ideas to visit volunteers and their worksites when I traveled to a province outside Dakar.

Ann and I also took many vacations in Senegal. We enjoyed a long weekend in the old French colonial capital of St. Louis with its charming old houses and cobblestone streets. There, we enjoyed a horse-and-buggy ride through the old part of town. We also visited a small museum that honors the French pilots who carried airmail in biplanes from Europe to South America via Senegal early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They lived a romantic life, but many died young as airplane technology was still in its infancy in that era. We stayed at a delightful restored home of a Moroccan merchant that had been converted into a bed and breakfast called Jamm.

We also traveled for a week to a Cap Skirring beach resort. This is one of the most beautiful beaches I have ever seen — miles and miles of white sand extend from the mouth of the Casamance River all the way to the Guinea-Bissau border ten miles south. The beach slopes very

gently into the ocean, so one can walk out quite far into the ocean. I enjoyed jogging with my bodyguard along the sandy shore, past an abandoned lighthouse that had been built by the Portuguese, down to the Guinea-Bissau border about four miles distant. On one visit, we jogged for over an hour and only saw one other couple on this expansive beach. Several times, we drove from Dakar to visit one of the beach resorts near Saly, which were just the right distance for a weekend trip.

Most of my travel in Senegal's regions was very pleasant. I have fond memories of visiting the Djoudj National Bird Sanctuary north of St. Louis, of a chimpanzee research center in Kédougou, of the huge mosque in Touba, of seeing hippos as we ferried across the Gambia River in Tambacounda, of walking with the lions in the Fathala Reserve near the Gambian border, and of an evening boat ride in a mangrove forest in Kaolack.

When I departed Dakar in January 2017, I thought that Senegal was a real success story, but continuing assistance will help cement this progress. The democratic system had grown deep roots and U.S.-Senegal ties were quite strong. Since I have gone, Macky Sall was reelected to a second term as president in elections that were largely peaceful, free, and fair. Senegal continues to make outsized contributions to regional peacekeeping efforts and its leadership in international organizations supports our own policy goals. The country so far has withstood the threats of extremist ideology that has weakened some of its neighbors. Senegal needs to sustain rapid economic growth in order to meet the aspirations of its growing population. The government has a good development plan, but execution will be a challenge. I certainly hope the United States will continue to support their efforts and that Senegal will succeed.

## Chapter XVI

### U.S. Ambassador to Guinea-Bissau, 2015–2017

AUGUST 15, 2018

*KENNEDY: Jim, could you explain about Guinea-Bissau?*

ZUMWALT: I was the U.S. ambassador accredited to Guinea-Bissau but lived in Dakar, Senegal as the United States did not have a permanent American presence in Bissau. We did maintain the small Bissau Liaison Office (BLO) that employed six local staff. I visited Bissau every two or three months for a total of eleven visits, always with the political officer who covered Guinea-Bissau, Gregory Garland. There were very few embassies in Bissau. In contrast, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) had a large presence of about 250 employees. Portugal, the European Union, China, Russia, France, Angola, and Cuba, as well as some West African neighbors like Senegal, Guinea, and Burkina Faso, maintained diplomatic missions in Bissau. Most other European and Asian countries covered Bissau out of Dakar as we did.

While in Dakar, I spent about ten percent of my time working on Guinea-Bissau issues. I could not have engaged with the government and people there as effectively as I did without the extremely capable assistance of Political Officer Gregory Garland, who was also based in Dakar. Greg covered Guinea-Bissau full-time and he coordinated with the embassy administrative, public affairs, political, and economic sections as well as with other agencies like USAID, the Defense Attaché Office, and the Centers for Disease Control. Greg spoke fluent Portuguese and had rich experience in lusophone Africa. He was committed to our mission in Bissau and spent nearly half of his time on temporary duty there, away from his family in Dakar. Greg's job was not easy. He was the person who planned my trips to maximize our impact, he often served as my capable Portuguese interpreter, and he drafted our insightful political and economic reporting on the chaotic situation in that country.

The United States had neglected Guinea-Bissau for many years after we closed our small embassy in 1998 because of the violent civil war. When I arrived in Senegal in 2015, Guinea-Bissau was the only country on the mainland of Africa without a full-time U.S. ambassador. For security reasons, the State Department did not allow direct-hire U.S. government employees to stay in Bissau for longer than thirty consecutive days. For over a decade, the United States had no resident diplomatic presence at all in Bissau, but then we opened a small branch office in the garage of our old embassy compound.

I arrived in Bissau during a brief period of optimism about the country. President José Mário Vaz (popularly known by his nickname, Jomav) had assumed power in June 2014 after free and fair elections. His inauguration ended a period of transitional government that emerged after a military coup in 2012. When I arrived, I had a mandate to expand our programs and presence in the country as a statement of our support for the democratically elected government. We had just lifted restrictions on foreign aid to Guinea-Bissau that were in place since shortly after the 2012 coup. Our top priorities mirrored those of our European and Japanese partners — to support the consolidation of democratic governance, advance democratic values, promote security sector reform, combat trafficking in illicit narcotics, prevent infectious disease pandemics, and promote sustainable economic development by supporting multi-sector reforms that would spur foreign

investment while preserving the country's rich biodiversity. Guinea-Bissau was one of the world's ten poorest countries, so economic growth was essential to creating an environment where we could achieve each of these goals.

Just after I arrived at post, in March 2015, the European Union hosted an international donors conference where Guinea-Bissau presented a ten-year development plan called Terra Ranka. This plan (which was developed by the Guinea-Bissau government with input from members of its civil society and academics and with assistance from the World Bank) was meant to lay out a path toward sustainable and eco-friendly development. It established a goal of protecting the country's rich biosphere while developing agriculture and biotourism. The goal of the EU donor conference was to attract foreign assistance to finance this development plan. At this time, many donors were optimistic that implementation of the Terra Ranka plan would represent a clean start after a long period of political instability. While the United States was not a major aid donor to Guinea-Bissau, we played a role because of our influence in the United Nations, the international financial institutions, and multilateral development banks.

On my first workday after arriving in Dakar in early January 2015, I made a telephone call to the BLO staff. I could not physically walk through their office as I had done my first day in Embassy Dakar, so I wanted to speak to the BLO staff on the telephone to demonstrate my interest in their work. My office assistant experienced difficulty in placing an international telephone call to Bissau, but when she finally connected, our connection was terrible. I recall hearing Greg's voice on the other end, but we needed to shout to be understood. Greg put me on the speakerphone and told me that all six employees were present. With all of the buzzing and clicking, I wondered how much of my pep talk the BLO staff understood. When it was time for them to respond, I heard a murmur from a male voice, then a murmur from a female voice but could not make out a word. Later, Greg told me, "We couldn't understand anything you said either, but the BLO staff appreciated that you made the effort to call." This unsatisfactory phone call was my first introduction to Bissau's infrastructure.

Greg planned meticulously for my first visit to Bissau the following month. The ostensible purpose was to present my credentials to President Vaz, but Greg organized a detailed schedule of public events, initial calls on key government officials and resident diplomats, a press conference, and a brief trip outside the capital to help familiarize me with the country. We wanted to use my visit to provide a visible indication of support for the new democratic government.

Guinea-Bissau has suffered from political instability since its independence in 1973. Their constitution is very similar to Portugal's. They elect a president for a five-year term, the president in turn appoints a prime minister from a representative in the parliament, and the prime minister then forms a cabinet to run the government. In Portugal, the president is a political figurehead who travels the world and meets foreign dignitaries, but the prime minister runs the government day to day. In contrast, in Guinea-Bissau there has been a history of power struggles between these two offices. While the constitution allocated the day-to-day management of government affairs to the prime minister and his cabinet, the president over time had usurped this power. Jomav was reluctant to relinquish this power, while Prime Minister Domingos Simões Pereira insisted on his constitutional responsibility to govern.

In February 2015, Greg accompanied me to Bissau to present my credentials. Kristine Marsh from our public affairs section also came since we planned for some media engagements during

the visit. My Senegalese bodyguard Mbaye rounded out our small entourage. We took an Asky Airlines flight on a Boeing 737. We made arrangements with the pilot to take custody of my bodyguard's service weapon in his cockpit during the flight. As we flew overhead, I looked down to see the series of rivers that flow from the Guinea Highlands across the West African savannah to the Atlantic Ocean. We flew over areas of grassland, mixed forest, and mangrove swamps, dotted with small farming villages. As we flew over the Gambia and then the Casamance rivers, the forested areas increased and more farming villages were visible. The atmosphere was brown due to dusty harmattan winds from the northeast. As we approached Bissau, the terrain changed further with more mangrove swamps on a low coastal plain crisscrossed by rivers and streams glinting in the sun. Our plane touched down at the Osvaldo Vieira International Airport with a bumpy landing on a pockmarked runway.

About twenty passengers disembarked from this Asky Airlines jet, but a government protocol assistant quickly found us in the crowd. He greeted Greg and me and escorted us to a waiting vehicle that drove about a hundred yards across the steamy tarmac to the airport building. There, Greg and I were met by the BLO's protocol assistant Dina, security inspector Badji, and the driver, Eduardo. The government protocol assistant escorted us to a VIP waiting room while Dina took our passports to complete immigration formalities. Once that task was accomplished, Greg and I walked through the small arrival lounge to our waiting vehicle at the curb.

Bissau's airport is located not far from the center of town and it only took 25 minutes to drive to our hotel along the Avenida dos Combatentes da Liberdade da Pátria — the avenue of the combatants for the liberty of the country. What a grand-sounding name! I eagerly gazed out the car window for my first look at this steamy tropical city. On our short flight, we had crossed from the dry Sahel across the savannah into a rainy forested region. Bissau had many more tall trees that shaded the hot sun. We passed cashew orchards and many one-story brick homes with mature mango trees in their gardens. Pedestrians walked along the side of the road, many balancing heavy burdens on their heads. We passed a gasoline station, a few small shops, and the Palácio do Governo (Government Palace), an impressive white government office building that had been financed with Chinese economic assistance. "Monday, you will be visiting the prime minister and foreign minister there," Greg explained.

We then passed the diplomatic quarter with the French, Chinese, and Russian embassies, the European Union mission, and the large office of UNIOGBIS. "Our embassy compound is also within this quarter," Greg explained. I had heard a lot about our abandoned embassy compound and planned to visit. If the United States was ever to reopen a diplomatic facility in Bissau, this property would be the logical place as the lot was large enough to maintain a security perimeter and was located in a convenient but quiet part of town near other embassies and the UN mission.

I noticed a closed, nine-story structure that was one of the tallest buildings in Bissau. Greg told me that new foreign investors were planning to refurbish this hotel. One year later, this refurbished structure would reopen as the Ledger Plaza Hotel — the most luxurious lodging in the country. It had working air conditioning and a clean swimming pool.

Eduardo finally made a slow turn past a crowded market where goods seem to have spilled out into the sides of the street — colorful cloth, piles of used clothing, sunglasses, tin buckets, kitchenware, plastic shoes, sacks of rice, fruit, tools, electronics, and batteries were all available. When we stopped for traffic, vendors knocked on our windows to display their goods — small

sacks of roasted cashew nuts and flower bracelets were popular. They didn't realize that I could not roll down the window of my armored vehicle to purchase their wares.

The women of Bissau were less well-dressed than those in Dakar — we could see some colorful West African wax cloth dresses, but more women wore faded t-shirts that had probably been discarded into a used clothing bin in the United States or Europe. As our car stopped at one of Bissau's only streetlights, I spied a woman wearing a faded "Proud Michigan University Parent" t-shirt. Somehow, I doubted that her daughter was studying at Ann Arbor.

We then passed the Palácio Colinas de Boé — the National People's Assembly Building — (also built with Chinese aid money) and entered the traffic circle that surrounded the obelisk called the Monumento aos Heróis da Independência (monument of the heroes of independence) to turn right onto the Avenida Amílcar Cabral, the main street in the old part of Bissau. As we passed an Ecobank building, Greg explained that the bank lobby housed an ATM machine that sometimes worked to dispense CFA cash. We were fortunate that Guinea-Bissau used the same currency (the CFA franc) as Senegal, so we didn't face currency conversion issues. We needed to carefully husband our cash reserves stored in the BLO safe; Greg always traveled to Bissau with a small pouch stuffed with CFA to replenish the cash needed to pay for gasoline and other office supplies since the BLO did not have any in-country banking.

Our vehicle turned left onto a quiet side street to reach our hotel, which had the grand-sounding name of the Coimbra Hotel and Spa. Our driver proceeded slowly since the heavy armored vehicle did not respond well to Bissau's rutted Old Town streets. Eduardo drove our heavy vehicle down these roads like a slalom skier, veering left and right to avoid the deepest potholes. This hotel was located on the second floor of a downtown commercial building. It was a friendly establishment with about twenty-five rooms surrounding a small shady courtyard. As Mbaye checked out my room, I waited in the courtyard where the owner kept some African Gray parrots in small cages in the shade of a large mango tree.

After a brief rest and cold shower — despite the "and Spa" in the hotel name, there was no hot water that day — Greg, Kristine, and I, shadowed by Mbaye, walked across the street to a small restaurant called Oporto that had a pleasant outdoor patio with lanterns hanging overhead. This restaurant became one of my favorite eating spots in Bissau owing to its fresh seafood, its delightful evening ambiance, and the Portuguese soccer games blaring from the television. We came to call this outdoor eatery "Antonio's place" after the gregarious Portuguese owner. Antonio was a sport fishing aficionado and, thanks to his connections to Bissau's small fishing community, he served freshly caught seafood daily on this outdoor patio. We learned to ignore the menu and just ask Antonio what was fresh. That night, we enjoyed delicious grilled fresh prawns and barracuda with fried potatoes along with cold Portuguese beer. On our second visit to Antonio's a few days later, he greeted us like old friends.

*KENNEDY: It's right on the equator, isn't it?*

ZUMWALT: Bissau lies about halfway between the equator and the Tropic of Cancer. The city is rather humid all year with a rainy season and a less-rainy season. The city of perhaps 500,000 inhabitants is located on a shallow estuary with brackish water. Strong tidal currents make navigating small boats from the Atlantic Ocean up the estuary to Bissau quite tricky. The Portuguese located the main street of Bissau perpendicular to the water so that gentle evening breezes could flow up the street to relieve somewhat the oppressive tropical heat. Bissau was

small enough that I got to know the city fairly well after a few visits. There is a ten-square-block Old Town area of rundown colonial-era buildings constructed in the 1940s, but with a centerpiece 18<sup>th</sup>-century stone fort that now serves as the Guinea-Bissau's army headquarters. A few major roads led out of town, one four-lane road went to the airport, one traversed an old cashew plantation area to the west, and one road crossed a bridge and continued north, connecting to the Senegalese border. Along these main paved arteries were various commercial businesses, government offices, military camps, and the diplomatic quarter.

Bissau had about twelve to fifteen excellent casual restaurants on par with those in Dakar. I think these establishments survived on patronage from Bissau's small diplomatic community and the large UN staff. The seafood was even better than Dakar's, with delicious fresh prawns, lobster, clams, oysters, and fresh fish, including barracuda, tuna, and grouper. Portuguese bacalao was also a popular dish, but I never saw the point of eating imported salted cod when such wonderful local fresh seafood was available. In addition to seafood and Portuguese restaurants, there was a decent pizza and pasta place and one restaurant that specialized in passable beef dishes.

Our first full day in Bissau fell on International Women's Day when Bissau staged a large parade. I needed to keep a low profile that day, as I had not yet formally presented my credentials. Therefore, Greg, Kristine, and I avoided the other diplomats on the VIP viewing stand and found a shady spot along the side of the main traffic circle. We were joined by Dina, who provided an enthusiastic commentary on the marchers and VIPs walking by. The parade commenced with various women's groups marching down the street, singing and dancing. It started with the nurses' association in their white caps, followed by women in uniform from the customs union, then female schoolteachers. An Ebola response unit in hazmat suits jogged by, carrying a stretcher with a man pretending to be an Ebola victim. There were even female farmers waving carrots, onions, and other produce in their arms. I was startled to see a contingent of women dressed in police uniforms who were marching smartly down the street, singing in English about the benefits of democracy and peace. Greg explained to me that this was a contingent of Nigerian policewomen who formed part of the ECOMIB peacekeeping mission.

Nearby was another traffic circle with a monument to Ernestina (Titina) Silla, a Bissau-Guinean soldier who had been killed by Portuguese soldiers during the war for independence. She was a charismatic woman who rose to a leadership position in a guerilla army dominated by men. Greg arranged for me to lay a wreath at her monument. A group of female veterans of the war of independence came to watch our little ceremony. I met Silla's daughter, who started crying and gave me a big hug. Unfortunately, through a communications glitch, no local media covered this event, but Kristine took some photos that we used on our social media platforms.

The next day I presented my credentials to the president and met the prime minister, then over the next two days, I met the foreign, defense, health, justice, and finance ministers, the chief of staff of the army, the chief of police, and the president of the National People's Assembly in a whirlwind of calls. In these meetings, I stressed that the United States wanted to see Guinea-Bissau succeed as a multi-ethnic and multi-religious democracy. I congratulated my interlocutors on the restoration of democracy, promised United States support for the UNIOGBIS mission, and said that we wanted to work together with the Guinea-Bissau government to confront transnational problems like controlling global outbreaks of infectious diseases and combating transnational crime. Ebola and cocaine smuggling were two issues on the top of my agenda for these meetings.

As we drove up to the Presidential Palace in downtown Bissau, our car was stopped at a roadblock manned by the ECOMIB force. An armed Nigerian soldier in a camouflage uniform peered through his sunglasses into our window and demanded to know who we were and what we were doing there. Since our car was flying the American flag, it should have been obvious, but this soldier was only doing his job to protect the president. Several previous Guinea-Bissau presidents had been assassinated, so I certainly understood this soldier's caution. Our driver didn't speak English and the Nigerian soldier didn't speak Portuguese, so Greg leaned over to explain in English that our car was taking the U.S. ambassador to an appointment with the president. The soldier made a radio call and, after a few minutes, let us through the palace gate.

President José Mário Vaz, known as Jomav, had been the mayor of Bissau and the minister of finance in the previous government, which had been tossed out by a military coup. He had won the presidential election in 2014 with 60% of the vote, defeating a military-backed candidate. At the time of my visit, we had high hopes that this presidential election would usher in a stable, democratic government in Bissau that would lay the foundation for economic growth. Vaz was the fifth president of Guinea-Bissau and was well-aware that none of his predecessors had managed to serve out a full term of office.

Jomav cut an interesting figure. A trained economist, he spoke fluent French, so that was the language we used since I did not speak Portuguese. He was quite loquacious, speaking rapidly as he veered from one topic to another. However, he would not look me in the eye which I found odd for a politician. He worked from a nice presidential palace built with foreign aid money. Vaz always received me in the palace's ornate marble drawing room with red velvet drapes covering the oversized windows.

Jomav was a proud figure; he never asked me for visas for friends or for a personal favor like the foreign minister did. Foremost on his agenda was to request U.S. agricultural assistance so that he could meet his election promise to promote Guinea-Bissau's agriculture sector. Almost every time we met, Vaz asked me for American tractors. I found him a complex, yet sad figure. Vaz was married; I only met his wife once or twice when they would appear at functions. I'm not sure if they had a close relationship.

After he was elected, I think Vaz feared that everyone else was out to undermine him. He may have been right. Certainly, almost every other Bissau-Guinean politician I met was critical of Vaz. I am sure he was under a great deal of pressure and I did not think that he had many close friends or political allies. Vaz may have had grandiose dreams but he lacked the means to achieve them.

One story Vaz told me highlighted his personal (and perhaps political) isolation. He had received me in a second-story Presidential Palace drawing room that overlooked Bissau's main traffic circle. This room was sparsely furnished with overstuffed velvet chairs that had seen better days. After one conversation, as he escorted me to the stairwell, I noticed a loveseat turned away from the room to face the drapes. When I asked him about this, he opened the drapes, revealing the view out the enormous palace window to the busy traffic circle below. It contained a little park with benches and streetlights. Vaz said he liked to sit on this loveseat in the evening and watch the activity below. The picture of a solitary president sitting in his ornate office, gazing down at the vibrant street life where young people mingled and couples strolled hand in hand, made me quite sad. This image of an isolated president came to my mind every subsequent time we met. I would raise concrete issues in areas where we could help, like humanitarian demining. He would

listen politely but then ask for tractors and other assistance that we could not deliver. Our relationship was polite, but we never did find a way to work together effectively.

Prime Minister Domingos Simões Pereira cut a very different figure. About seven years younger than Vaz, Domingos spoke fluent English since he had studied engineering at California State University, Fresno. Domingos had strong contacts in the global lusophone community since he had served as Executive Secretary of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries. Domingos, who had been educated in Catholic schools, was a religious man who wanted to consolidate a stable and effective government with a focus on economic development. We could talk frankly about problems like the Ebola epidemic in neighboring Guinea and the scourge of cocaine-smuggling from Latin America. He was honest about Guinea-Bissau's shortcomings and wanted to work with us to enhance the capacity of government organs to function effectively. I left my first meeting with Simões Pereira feeling optimistic about our prospects for cooperation. We worked well together and I was sorry that his inability to get along with the president curtailed his tenure as prime minister.

I don't remember much about my first meeting with Foreign Minister Fernando Delfim da Silva. I believe he spoke to me in English, but I do not remember. He was courteous as I passed him my letter of credential. I do recall raising with him one unpleasant issue — the Guinea-Bissau government's arrears to their landlord in New York. Their UN mission in New York was far behind on its rent payments and the State Department had promised the American landlord to help collect this back rent. I reminded da Silva about the ministry's overdue rent bills and he promised to look into it. I think I had a few other demarches about issues in the United Nations and he agreed with most of our positions but asked us to be sure to reach out to their ambassador in New York to convey our views. It was obvious to me that the foreign ministry was not going to send their mission in New York any instructions as a result of my demarche! We also met the minister of finance to talk about the Terra Ranka development plan. He was much more impressive.

Since I did not speak Portuguese, communications were always a challenge on my visits to Bissau. To my knowledge, I was the only American ambassador in the world accredited to two countries that spoke different world languages. A few Bissau-Guinean figures spoke French and even fewer spoke English, so for most meetings, I needed to rely on Greg or Dina as my Portuguese language interpreter. They both performed wonderfully, but as someone who used to interpret into Japanese for Ambassador Armacost, I was fully aware that interpreters cannot convey all of the speaker's nuances.

Greg also accompanied me on my call on the president of the National People's Assembly, Cipriano Cassamá. He was another longtime member of the ruling PAIGC (African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde). When I first met Cassamá, he greeted me in an elegant flowing white boubou with a matching white cap, like the elegant men's dress one sees on Friday prayer days in Dakar. Bissau is a mixed country, about half Muslim and a quarter Christian, but animist beliefs remain quite strong also. Our first visit was polite, but on subsequent visits after Cassamá got to know me, he opened up, particularly in his criticism of President Vaz. Cassamá had an outsized personality and he told me about his political maneuvers to reduce Vaz's role in the PAIGC. Cassamá supported the prime minister, but he also had grand designs for his own future role in Bissau. Once, as we were having a discussion about Bissau politics in his office, he shooed his staff out of the room and pulled out an expensive bottle of imported scotch to serve me a shot. Startled, I blurted out, "Oh, I thought you were Muslim!" He

laughed and, looking down at his boubou, he said, “Oh, I wear this just for show!” One of his parents was Muslim and one Christian, but it was to his political advantage to wear Muslim attire. He obviously wanted a scotch; I accepted reluctantly so that he could drink too.

Greg also scheduled courtesy calls on key counterparts in Bissau’s small diplomatic corps. The ambassador from Portugal, António Leão Rocha, was extremely courteous. His office was in one of the few embassies located downtown. Given the colonial ties, the large Portuguese expatriate community in Guinea-Bissau (about twenty thousand Portuguese citizens), and the large Bissau-Guinean community resident in Portugal, Portugal had the largest and most important bilateral embassy in Bissau. António very much wanted to solicit American support for Portuguese efforts to stabilize the country, so he always was eager to see me. I was very grateful for his welcome and appreciated his insights, but also was glad to keep the United States in a modest support role, with Portugal, the EU, and the United Nations taking the lead in this troubled land.

The EU representative to Guinea-Bissau, Victor Madeira dos Santos, was also very solicitous on each of my visits. I called on him in his office, but he preferred to meet me over dinner and we developed a routine of meeting at a restaurant called the House of Beef that was run by an entrepreneurial Bissau-Guinean who had worked as a public affairs assistant at our embassy prior to its closure in 1998. Victor had been the DCM in the Delegation of the European Union to Senegal prior to coming to Bissau and knew my predecessor, Lew Lukens, quite well. Victor tended to be more pessimistic about Bissau and worn down by its daily hardships. For breaks from Bissau, during the dry season when the roads were passable, he would drive across the bridge and up the bumpy road to Ziguinchor. Victor said the shopping at this provincial Senegalese town was still much better than Bissau. He would always share with me his frank assessment of the situation from his political and economic reports to Brussels.

As I recall, the UN Secretary-General’s special representative, former São Tomé and Príncipe President Miguel Trovoada, was out of town, so I did not meet him until a later visit. Trovoada was a distinguished and respected politician who carried prestige as the UN Secretary-General’s special representative and as a former head of state. Our conversations were always interesting, but Trovoada did not seem as committed to his mission as his two deputies, who were professional UN staff. Trovoada stayed out of the country frequently, so I only saw him on occasion.

On my first visit to Bissau, Trovoada’s political deputy, Marco Carmignani, a Brazilian UN employee, gave me a lengthy and thorough briefing on the UN activities in the country. Marco, a Rutgers Law School graduate, spoke fluent English and had a real affection for the United States. Marco tried to put a brave face on the situation in Bissau. His was committed to helping this country succeed and worked energetically to lead the large UNIOGBIS efforts. He always put on a good face talking about the progress of the UN programs in the country. On my later visits, Marco was always available and most generous in explaining political developments in the country. Marco, of course, wanted the United States to continue support for the UNIOGBIS mission. I heard so much negative commentary about Bissau from others that it was refreshing to talk to someone who thought the country was making progress.

Leading the UN economic and development agencies was Deputy Special Representative in Guinea-Bissau and UN Development Program Resident Representative Maria do Valle Ribeiro. Maria, an Irish-Portuguese dual-national, had a good sense of humor and ready laugh that helped

her deal with some of the frustrations of work in Bissau. Many of the UN staff were sophisticated, multilingual global citizens who moved comfortably from one culture to another. They helped us understand the situation from our distant vantage point in Dakar. Sometimes between my visits, I would call them on the phone to ask about political developments in Bissau so we could transmit a remote political report from Dakar. The UN mission had a tough job in Bissau. They were trying to maintain the peace, jumpstart economic development, and clean up a corrupt government.

Finally, I called on the Chinese, Russian, Senegalese, and French ambassadors. The French ambassador complained about the country. His analysis was correct, but he seemed to lack empathy for the Bissau-Guinean people and did not seem committed to efforts to improve the situation. He was downsizing his mission in Bissau, which gave me an idea. Since the French owned a secure guarded compound and had empty office space, I explored with him the idea of renting an office inside his mission for a permanent American officer presence in Bissau. He was enthusiastic, but since we never got to the stage of opening a post in Bissau, we never pursued this idea.

I also called on the head of ECOMIB, the West African states' peacekeeping force. He was from Burkina Faso and spoke fluent French. The small ECOMIB force of five hundred soldiers and police were there to deter the Guinea-Bissau military from interfering with the elected government and to provide a safe and secure environment for democracy to take hold. Given the history of military coups and assassinations, Guinea-Bissau's security forces were more of a threat than a protector of the government. Most of the ECOMIB peacekeepers were Nigerian, with a smaller contingent from Burkina Faso and an even smaller number of soldiers from Senegal. The Nigerians spoke English and the Burkinabes and Senegalese spoke French, whereas the Guinea-Bissau elites spoke Portuguese, so it was a challenge for them to communicate with each other. But the Nigerian deputy of the peacekeeping force was thrilled to speak to me in English. He told me that the crime rate in Bissau was surprisingly low, but he thought that his force's presence did serve to deter the Guinea-Bissau military from political interference.

He also told me that the Nigerian policewomen I had seen at the parade played a significant role in the operation. Most Bissau-Guineans were afraid of the male ECOWAS military peacekeepers, but the policewomen were more approachable. He said that these policewomen interacted more readily with the local population and provided him with valuable intelligence about criminal activity and other local concerns.

About eight or nine American citizens lived in Bissau. The American community included an Italian American Franciscan priest, three Protestant missionaries and their children, a retired U.S. ambassador, one UN volunteer, and an ethnic Bissau-Guinean who ran a boxing gym and a resort on one of the outer Bijagós Islands. I met every resident American citizen in Guinea-Bissau at one time or another.

The most prominent American living in Bissau was John Blacken, a retired Foreign Service officer who had served many years in Africa and Latin America during his Foreign Service career. From 1986–89, John had been U.S. Ambassador to Guinea-Bissau. John had since divorced his first wife, remarried to a Bissau-Guinean woman, and adopted her younger children. After John retired from the Foreign Service, he returned to Bissau. He lived ten miles outside the capital, where he ran a small mango farm. Because of challenges in running a business in Bissau, including corruption and unreliability, I'm not sure that he ever exported mangoes as he had

hoped. John also ran a small NGO engaged in humanitarian demining. John was a valuable resource because he knew everyone in Bissau and everyone knew him. Unfortunately, by this time, John had health issues and spent a fair amount of time in Virginia for medical treatments but, when he was home in Bissau, I would call on him during my visits. John always warmly welcomed me, filling me in on Guinea-Bissau political developments. He also introduced me to many contacts. Sadly, about a year later, John passed away. One of my trips to Bissau was to attend John's memorial service, where it was gratifying to see so many of his Bissau-Guinean friends, including the prime minister, in attendance.

Greg also introduced me to a Dutch businessman named Jan van Maanen, who also served as British Honorary Consul in Bissau. He had lived in Bissau for 35 years and, at various times, ran a small car dealership, a grocery and dry goods store, and several warehouses. Jan lived in a small walled compound that used to be a fortified Portuguese army officer quarters. Jan owned his own electrical generator, water tower, and wi-fi network, so he didn't need to depend on Bissau's unreliable infrastructure. Jan had converted one of his old warehouses into small apartments that he rented out to UN staff. I think these rent payments had become his major source of income.

Jan was a wheeler-dealer and a fixer — important skills for surviving in Bissau's unpredictable economic environment. He was full of information on Bissau's elites and their complex and sometime contentious interpersonal relationships. Jan's wife, a Dutch nurse, lived in Holland and would visit occasionally. Jan also introduced me to his two daughters and mixed-race grandchildren who lived on the same compound. Each time we visited Jan, I would present him with a bottle of scotch from Dakar and he would serve us cold Heineken as we talked on his veranda. Jan was a longtime card-playing buddy of the prime minister and well-informed on Bissau's complex political situation.

Greg also introduced me to an elderly retired military officer, Manuel Dos Santos, who had fought in Guinea-Bissau's war for independence. He was originally from Cabo Verde but had stayed in Bissau after independence. We always referred to him by his *nom de guerre*, Manecus. During the war, he had been sent to the Soviet Union to learn how to operate ground-to-air missiles, which were successfully employed to ground the Portuguese Air Force helicopters. After the war, Manecus had been involved in several governments where he attempted to implement a Russian-style planned economic system in Bissau. Over time, he'd realized that Bissau's future lay in forging relations with capitalist Europe and the United States. Manecus taught himself English and, each time we met, he insisted on speaking English because he had few other opportunities to practice. He wanted Bissau to turn the corner and supported Prime Minister Simões Pereira's reform efforts.

Manecus was old and mostly retired, but he carried moral authority as a genuine war hero. He was not interested in personal advancement at this late stage of his life, but he loved his country and was genuinely interested in reform. When we visited, he would invite me into the living room of his modest home in the old part of Bissau. He would usually serve me water because that was all he had to offer. Manecus would complain about the president and explain what the prime minister was trying to accomplish. He also had good insights into the military because he retained strong connections in the officer corps. Manecus had never traveled to the United States but he really liked us and was willing to share his insights.

We could not have performed our jobs in Bissau without our valuable locally engaged staff. Four of our LES came from the Guinea-Bissau elites and had been educated in Europe. They spoke Portuguese and English and local languages. They had many relatives and connections in the society.

*KENNEDY: You mentioned LES?*

ZUMWALT: Locally engaged staff. Our protocol assistant, Dina, was dynamic and charismatic. She had starred in the only feature-length motion picture made in Bissau, twenty-five years earlier. For years, Dina had anchored the evening news on Bissau's only television station, so everyone knew her on sight. Not only was she beautiful, but Dina was always fashionably dressed in clothing she had designed herself. Dina opened doors for us. Every visit to Bissau, I was able to meet the president and prime minister because no one in Bissau could refuse her requests. Dina was the niece of the former president, João Bernardo Vieira. She was not political but was well-connected to elite circles. On my visits with President Vaz, he would always turn to Dina and ask about her family. She often served as my interpreter and was skilled at diffusing awkward situations caused by my lack of familiarity with local culture.

The other senior LES, Filomeno, was a Bissau-Guinean with Portuguese citizenship who had worked for our Bissau embassy's management section prior to the civil war, then moved to the United States when we closed the embassy in 1998. He had lived for a time in the Boston area. When the Bissau Liaison Office opened, Filomeno returned to Bissau, leaving his first wife and children in the United States. In Bissau, he cut an important figure and we paid well enough for him to have a nice apartment downtown where he lived with his second wife. Filomeno was the point person for many of the BLO's management projects.

Unfortunately, Filomeno passed away a year into my tour. After he had a sudden heart attack, we arranged to fly him to Dakar for medical care but he died on the airplane. I traveled to Bissau to join Filomeno's family at his wake and funeral. Greg and I visited his widow in a small apartment near the National People's Assembly and sat for a while in her living room with grieving friends and relatives. There must have been over fifty people spilling out into his hallway when Greg and I visited. The family organized a large funeral service at the cathedral downtown. There were at least three hundred mourners at the Catholic service. One of the BLO staff spoke on our behalf about Filomeno's contributions to the office. At the memorial service, I met Filomeno's first wife and children, who had come from the United States. His two teenage children were typical American teenagers, who seemed uncomfortable in what must have seemed like an alien cultural setting in Bissau. His daughter was dressed completely inappropriately, in a revealing blouse and short skirt which must have appeared shocking to the Bissau-Guinean mourners. I spoke to her briefly and she was clearly uncomfortable in this African setting and eager to return to her American friends in Massachusetts.

When I called on President Vaz on that trip, the first words out of his mouth were about Filomeno. He said he was saddened to hear the news. He reminisced that, when he was a little boy, his mother would send him to Filomeno's mother's bakery to buy bread. The president said that he would see Filomeno playing soccer with his friends. Since Filomeno was five years older, the president had looked up to him. As President Vaz was relaying this story, I did not understand who Vaz was talking about because he used Filomeno's childhood nickname that I hadn't known. Finally, Dina whispered to me, "He's talking about Filomeno!" This conversation reminded me just how small and insular was Bissau-Guinean elite society. People knew each other and

connections went back to childhood. That is why our local staff play such an important role in helping us navigate among all these personalities.

*KENNEDY: Connections, we couldn't survive without them.*

ZUMWALT: Filomeno's death was quite a shock to the Bissau Liaison Office. He had been the senior administrative assistant among our six staff. Filomeno spoke Portuguese, French, and English. His French was important as we worked to upgrade the office and clean up our compounds because he needed to converse or exchange emails frequently with Embassy Dakar management employees in French.

Greg spent much time managing this LES transition. He worked with Embassy Dakar's human resources office to regrade and update the outdated job descriptions of our six employees in order to capture the true nature of their responsibilities. He arranged for Dina to assume the senior LES role and asked our capable junior management LES to assume many responsibilities formerly handled by Filomeno. For Greg, this human resources organization process created a lot of work, but I thought this effort was important. He rewrote each employee's job description to match their actual duties and clarify the appropriate chain of supervision. We had reopened our office in Bissau in an ad hoc manner, then the office had expanded gradually. It was now time to bring our human resources practices in line with State Department standards. Greg did an outstanding job in working with the embassy's human resources office to bring the BLO employment practices in line with State Department practices.

I also appreciated Badji, who was responsible for security issues in Bissau. Badji had been a Senegalese policeman. Prior to coming to Bissau, he had worked for the Embassy Dakar Regional Security Office. Once, I asked Badji why he chose to leave Dakar and come to Bissau. He explained that life for his family was better in Bissau. He could afford to send his children to the small French private school in town and, because he hailed from Senegal's Casamance region, he was closer to his extended family now than he had been in Dakar. Badji always seemed to be in the right place at the right time. My heavy vehicle in Bissau got stuck in the mud twice and, each time, he appeared quickly in his Toyota Land Cruiser (a much more appropriate vehicle for Bissau's roads than my armored car) to pick us up. Badji worked closely with Mbaye, who was still a Senegalese policeman, to manage my security arrangements in Bissau unobtrusively.

Eduardo, the BLO driver, did not speak English or French, so without a common language, I didn't develop the same personal relationship as I did with the other LES. But he was skilled at maneuvering my heavy armored vehicle through Bissau's potholed streets and at keeping our vehicles running in the harsh climate.

*KENNEDY: What about the American connection with New England and all?*

ZUMWALT: Cabo Verde maintains a strong connection with New England stemming from the days when American whaling ships would call on ports on these islands. The same is not true for the mainland of Guinea-Bissau. Portugal had administered Cabo Verde and Guinea-Bissau as one colony, but after independence, they separated. I do not think there were too many Bissau-Guineans resident in New England. Those who could afford to travel would usually go to Portugal for education, work, or medical care.

*KENNEDY: Did Guinea-Bissau have representation in Washington and New York?*

ZUMWALT: Guinea-Bissau had closed its embassy in Washington due to a lack of funds. President Vaz had traveled to our capital in 2014 to participate in the African Leaders Summit, where he had met President Obama. Guinea-Bissau did still maintain a mission at the United Nations in New York. We think of ourselves as a great power, but Guinea-Bissau's most important ties were with neighboring African countries, Senegal and Guinea, and with Portugal and the European Union.

We had not done much better than Bissau at sustaining a diplomatic presence in-country. On my first visit to Guinea-Bissau, Greg and I visited our BLO and our diplomatic compounds. The office itself was in shockingly poor shape — I thought that U.S. government employees should not have to work under such abysmal and unsafe conditions. We rented office space on the second floor of a three-story building owned by Guinea-Bissau's internet service provider. One floor below us was the German assistance mission. Our small office did not meet U.S. government fire code standards. There was only one entrance, accessible by a dark, narrow stairwell. There was no fire escape or secondary exit from our offices. During the rainy season, the entry to this stairwell was covered in slippery mud and sometimes with standing water. Down a narrow hallway were some dark restrooms that needed refurbishing.

Our office was divided into three rooms of fourteen feet by sixteen feet. Badji had his desk and performed his security screenings for our guests in the entrance and reception room. It had a walk-through metal detector and a fortified security door leading to the two interior rooms. This entrance room was sparsely decorated with dark and dingy walls and a large framed black-and-white photograph of Ronald Reagan shaking hands with President Vieira when they met in the 1980s. I wondered why we were displaying a thirty-year-old photo of Guinea-Bissau's former strongman who had been assassinated by military officers in 2009. I was certain that the White House must have a good photo of President Vaz meeting President Obama in Washington DC the previous year. To me, this display of an outdated photo was a sign of our neglect of this post. I already knew that the office telephone could not handle calls to Dakar, but I was not expecting the poor physical condition of the office itself.

When we held my first press conference in Bissau, other office shortcomings became even more apparent. As the new U.S. ambassador, I wanted to introduce myself to the media and to reiterate our message of support for the democratic government. The largest room in the BLO was just big enough if we moved the large conference table to the side to make room for a podium and chairs for about fifteen journalists. But this room also housed our computer server. Our astute public affairs officer, Kristine Marsh, pointed out that its loud humming sound would interfere with the radio microphones and TV cameras. Kristine used blankets she had collected from our hotel rooms to cover the server in an attempt to muffle this distracting sound. She advised me to speak loudly above the din to the reporters. When I offered to purchase some soft drinks for our guests, I learned that the BLO did not even have a refrigerator to chill these beverages. Greg remedied that problem before my next visit.

Dina described what it had been like when she had returned from Dakar to reopen our Bissau Liaison Office a few years previously. She had worked in the abandoned garage of our embassy compound with no electricity and no running water. She was only able to work during daylight hours and had to cross the street to use the washroom facilities at the UN compound. From Dina's perspective, the BLO working conditions had improved. Our staff didn't expect much, but I knew we should upgrade our BLO facilities to meet minimum government standards.

Next, Greg and I visited our old embassy compound in the diplomatic quarter where many embassies and the UN mission were located. The United States government had a long-term lease on two lots across a narrow dirt road from each other. One housed the chancery compound and was surrounded by a tall fence with an entrance gate and guardhouse. The wall at the entrance had been painted white and there had been metal letters spelling out "United States Embassy." Long ago, someone had scavenged the metal letters from this sign and all that remained was the holes for them that had been drilled into the wall. Inside, the compound housed a small prefab embassy and a garage that we used for our two off-road vehicles and my armored car. This compound had been overrun during the civil war by soldiers foraging for food and supplies. One of our guards had been shot and killed in this skirmish. In order to reach the abandoned embassy building, we needed to walk across a field filled with weeds sometimes reaching up to my eye level (Greg had an advantage here, as he was quite a bit taller than me). Eduardo warned us to watch out for snakes and walked ahead, using a long stick to sweep the weeds ahead of our path. Greg had brought with him a large keyring with at least twenty keys — nobody could quite remember which key unlocked our embassy front door. As Greg tried several keys in the lock, I examined several bullet marks in the chancery front door.

After trying several keys, Greg finally found one that turned in the lock. This chancery building had been closed for nearly two decades and the tropical climate had taken its toll. The Overseas Building Office had already decided that this building was uninhabitable and needed to be torn down. I did not disagree with their assessment. The first room we entered was the visitor waiting room. On a pillar, a faded poster provided instructions on procedures to request absentee ballots for the 1998 U.S. presidential elections. We stepped through the security door into the office that had been the ambassador's. The walls were almost black, there was so much mildew. This room had no furniture except for a two-drawer safe. Outside the safe, someone had attached a post-it with the combination. We spun the dials and the safe still worked! Almost everything else in this abandoned embassy had already been removed. I joked with Greg that even rats would not want to live here. Next, we visited the ramshackle garage. Two of the three bays were filled with dusty boxes and other junk. Two tall termite mounds poked through the floor. As we left the chancery compound, I learned that our guards had to relieve themselves in the tall grasses because there were still no working toilets on our compound.

Across the street was our residential compound, which used to contain six houses. They too had been overrun by soldiers scavenging for food during the civil war. Three of the small homes had been burnt to the ground, so only the concrete foundation slabs remained. The shells of three other houses looked like they had been built in a California ranch style with driveways and a covered front porch. But these homes had all been looted years ago, so all the windows and doors were broken and the tropical heat and humidity had taken its toll. Nothing of value remained; even the carpets and countertops had been pilfered. This compound did house some magnificent mature cashew trees, but they were threatened by the termites whose mounds dotted our compound among the weeds.

The housing compound contained a picnic area with a roof over a concrete patio, an empty swimming pool, and a weedy tennis court whose net had long ago disappeared. I imagined what life must have been like on weekends in Bissau as the embassy staff played tennis and held barbeque parties by the pool. But by the present day, merchants and vendors had taken over the ten-foot-wide perimeter around the outside of our compound fence. A brickmaker had built a small factory fabricating construction bricks, a washerwoman used our chain link fence as a

drying rack, and a few entrepreneurs had opened roadside stalls, selling food from large metal bowls. If we ever did decide to open a new embassy here, we would need to manage these squatters.

*KENNEDY: Was there any moves to do anything about it?*

ZUMWALT: When I returned to Dakar, we began to address the issues that Greg and I identified. I asked our management counselor, Daniel Brown, to take this project on. Daniel was very good at managing complex projects. Earlier, he had completely refurbished our recreational compound by renovating a very nice softball diamond, constructing a concession stand, and upgrading the landscaping so it looked like a nice city park. This project had been a boon to morale in Dakar where many embassy families lived in apartments and there were no public outdoor spaces that could be used for picnics and birthday parties.

Daniel visited Bissau to assess the situation and set up a schedule for work across the management section. He established goals for every office in the embassy's management section — the offices of general services, communications, budget and fiscal, human resources, and overseas buildings — each had work to do. These projects were monitored on monthly visits by one of the officers in his section. The State Department's Executive Office of the Bureau of African Affairs (AF/EX) agreed to fund our request for a fire escape. The management section began sending down more trucks from Dakar to Bissau so we could transport needed supplies and equipment, including photos of President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and a photo of President and Mrs. Vaz at the White House with President and Mrs. Obama to hang in our office, similar to other U.S. diplomatic facilities around the world.

The management section also held an auction to sell off the unneeded equipment that had filled our garage so we could use the space again. They engaged a landscaping company to maintain our chancery and housing compound grounds. We could afford to pay to cut the grass and plant some bushes around the perimeter. The contractor exterminated the termites to save our gorgeous old cashew trees. HR also worked to establish a retirement pension program for our staff, something they much appreciated.

Greg and the Embassy Dakar management staff performed all the hard work. My role was as a catalyst — to clarify that these projects were a high priority. Once the management section began to address the issue, they worked well with Greg and the renovation and improvement projects proceeded smartly.

I sought to make these improvements to our compound in order to preserve the option of reopening a U.S. embassy on this compound someday. If we did decide to reestablish a permanent presence, these two compounds were the ideal location. I did not want the cash-strapped Guinea-Bissau government to terminate our lease and sell the land. If we looked like we were using the facilities, it would be more difficult for them to evict us. The second reason for these projects was to improve our BLO employee morale. If our staff saw that we cared about their working conditions, they would be motivated to work with us to advance our goals. The third reason was the U.S.'s image. Having a snake-infested compound overrun with squatters did not comport with the sort of image that the United States should convey in Bissau.

I also had concerns about the medical care for the increasing number of Embassy Dakar employees visiting Bissau. Most of our employees on temporary duty (TDY) in Bissau were young and healthy, but car accidents and medical emergencies were a concern. I asked the

embassy doctor to prepare an emergency medical plan. He identified an Italian clinic that he thought was acceptable for emergency first aid. But for anything serious, the plan was to conduct a medical evacuation over a bumpy road to Ziguinchor across the border in Senegal — this plan might not work during the rainy season when roads flooded. Later, the State Department based a regional medical evacuation plane in Dakar. That became our new plan, fly in a medical team, stabilize the person, and fly them out on this evacuation airplane.

*KENNEDY: Did you find a lot of resistance in Washington?*

ZUMWALT: AF/EX was very supportive. We weren't asking for much money.

While Bissau would be a challenging place to live year-round for two years, it was a nice place to stay on TDY for a week or two. Our management counselor had no trouble recruiting staff to travel to Bissau to assist with these management projects. They could choose between three decent hotels and many wonderful restaurants. Some of the younger single people enjoyed the nightlife, where the music started after midnight (when I would be in bed!) and continued until six a.m. The music in Bissau was beautiful, a lilting Portuguese guitar music set to an Afro-Cuban beat.

*KENNEDY: What were we doing in Guinea-Bissau?*

ZUMWALT: When I first arrived in February 2015, I had hopes that Guinea-Bissau might finally turn a corner. They had just held a democratic election that was seen as free and fair.

Guinea-Bissau has an election process where the top two candidates compete in a runoff if no one obtains a majority on the first round. José Mário Vaz defeated Nuno Gomes Nabiam, the candidate who had military support, with just over 60% of the popular vote in the runoff. We wanted to sustain Guinea-Bissau's progress toward effective, democratic governance. We had only a modest assistance program; most of the funding for assistance came from the EU, Portugal, and the United Nations.

Unfortunately, President Vaz and Prime Minister Simões Pereira began their infighting soon after the new government was formed. Before I arrived in Bissau, Greg briefed me that the government had just announced the Terra Ranka development plan; the prime minister was trying to attract development aid and investment to finance this plan while cleaning up the government's budget. President Vaz did not share this vision. The president did not understand why the prime minister was not doing his bidding. Some of their disputes were personality-driven and some were due to the constitution that assigns governing authority to the prime minister, even though it's the president who is elected.

Despite these mediation efforts, the relationship between the president and prime minister continued to deteriorate.

In August 2015, President Vaz fired PM Simões Pereira and asked another PAIGC politician, Baciro Djá, to serve as prime minister. Djá would be much more compliant with Vaz's orders on how to spend assistance monies. However, Simões Pereira maintained strong support in the ruling PAIGC party, so this move created a political crisis that continued for the remainder of my term as U.S. Ambassador to Guinea-Bissau.

The Cuban-educated Djá was the son of a freedom fighter and carried a sense of entitlement with his father's pedigree. He dressed in expensive European suits and wore flashy gold jewelry. He didn't seem to have an agenda for the country. Before my first courtesy call on Djá in the prime

minister's office, Greg warned me that Djá was rumored to be heavily involved in illicit narcotics trafficking and that he might even be a cocaine user himself. At that meeting, his eyes were bloody and dilated, his hands were shaking, and he spoke rapidly and nonstop for almost an hour before I could even get in a word. It was difficult for our interpreter to keep up with his rapid-fire, disjointed delivery. I hated to interrupt the prime minister, but I tried to steer the conversation back to important issues in our relationship. What a contrast with PM Simões Pereira, who always had a clear agenda and a realistic understanding of when the U.S. could help.

After this major setback, the UNIOGBIS leadership urged me to increase our involvement. They said that Bissau was the only place in the world with a UN peacebuilding mission that lacked a resident U.S. embassy. The UNIOGBIS leadership continued to tell me that the U.S. presence provided a deterrent to military intervention.

With limited resources, we did the best we could to demonstrate our presence. We covered issues by sending more Embassy Dakar staff on TDY. In 2014, the year before I arrived, U.S. government employees spent only 96 TDY days in Bissau. This means about eighteen visits of one week or so. My second year in Dakar, that number increased to 1,500 TDY days of U.S. government employees in Bissau. This is the equivalent of over five officers' full-time work! Granted, about half of this figure was CDC personnel working on the Ebola crisis.

Our public affairs officer, Robert Post, came to me with a creative approach toward enhancing our visible presence despite the thirty-day limit on U.S. government direct-hire employee stays in Bissau. He proposed moving one of their three positions for contract English teacher-trainers from Senegal to Bissau. Since this person was a contractor, not a U.S. government employee, the State Department security restrictions did not apply. We recruited an enthusiastic teacher who had a degree in English from Middlebury College and spoke fluent Spanish from his time as a Peace Corps volunteer in Honduras. He adapted readily to Bissau and learned Portuguese quickly. The teacher-training college in Bissau was thrilled to house this new American faculty member. Our public affairs section provided him money to establish an English-language lending library at the college and to repair and repaint the English classrooms. By the end of his first year, over eighty percent of the English teachers in Bissau had attended one of his training programs. His presence in Bissau made a difference. He told me how much his young students and teachers were eager to learn and to modernize their language teaching methods. He also became a good source of information for us on student politics.

This move resolved another problem — the dismal state of our American Corner in Bissau at the Universidade Amílcar Cabral. The university had almost ceased to operate because it had no budget. Students did not attend class and the professors spent their time off campus, trying to make money in side jobs since they had not been paid in years. Robert told me that American Corner there was an embarrassment and he was right. It was located in the university library, but since there was no power to run the air conditioning, windows were left open and books were covered in dust. With no electricity, computers did not work so the students could not use the American Corner computers to access the internet. I agreed with our PAO that we should shut it down and establish a new American Corner at the teacher-training college, where this contract employee could monitor its use.

Another way to showcase our presence was to host a national day celebration in Bissau as if we had a resident embassy. Greg and our public affairs section identified a location and made

arrangements for catering food. We hired a band that could play American tunes. We brought down about twelve members of our country team to host the event.

Of the many Americans assigned to Dakar, only three spoke fluent Portuguese. Dakar's consul had worked in Brazil and spoke good Portuguese, so she came, as did one of the USAID employees who had worked in Mozambique and also spoke good Portuguese. Other members of the Dakar country team came for this party, including our Army attaché, the head of our Centers for Disease Control office, an economic officer, and someone from our Drug Enforcement Administration office. Our guests included virtually the entire diplomatic corps of Bissau and probably nine or ten cabinet members, including the ministers of health, finance, foreign affairs, and energy. I wanted to show Bissau-Guineans that we cared about their country. This event was the first American national day celebration in Bissau in years and we succeeded in demonstrating our support for the new democratic government that day.

*KENNEDY: What about the military there?*

ZUMWALT: During the war for independence, Guinea-Bissau had built a large guerrilla force to fight the Portuguese. After independence, there was no longer a need for such a large military, but demobilization proved difficult. Guinea-Bissau still has a larger military than they require for their security. The UN has a plan for demobilization, but this plan is unpopular with the army.

I came to understand why it was so difficult to demobilize the military during my second year when I traveled to Bissau on its independence day. Greg and I attended a celebration in the National People's Assembly Building where they played a movie about the war for independence with Portugal. So much of their national identity stemmed from these stories of military heroism in this war. Bissau-Guineans were proud that they were the only African colony to defeat their colonial masters. They were not granted independence, they'd won their independence!

That day, the president organized a military parade through the city. The military marched through town in uniforms and a few military jeeps and trucks also drove by. Our military attaché later reported that units would march down the street and then circle back, change uniforms, and march down the parade route again in a new formation. Our attaché pointed out that these soldiers were out of shape and overweight, clearly not fit troops ready for battle. Yet, they symbolized the heroic struggle for independence from Portugal that formed a part of Guinea-Bissau's national identity.

I sat in the reviewing stand, a few rows behind President Vaz, who had arrived in a black limousine. The final dignitary arrived in a jeep after the president; he was Antonio Indjai, the former chief of staff of the army. Indjai had been suspected of involvement in the drug-trafficking and weapons-smuggling scheme that had ensnared Bissau-Guinean navy chief José Américo Bubo Na Tchuto (see below). Indjai looked dapper in his white military dress uniform. Many of the seated military officers got up to greet Indjai as he took his place in the reviewing stand. I had never met Indjai, as it would not have been appropriate, but it was rumored he was still involved in the drug trade and still had tentacles into the military. The government had told us that Indjai was retired on a farm and that he no longer played a role in Bissau politics. But the active duty military paid him a lot of respect that day. I could see why civilian leaders remained reluctant to confront the military with unpopular reform policies.

*KENNEDY: Was there a problem? Say, you had this peacekeeping — ?*

ZUMWALT: The consensus among UN staff and the Portuguese and UN ambassadors was that the ECOWAS peacekeeping mission (ECOMIB) was a helpful deterrent. Nigerian and Burkinabe guards around the Presidential Palace had authority. Anyone staging a coup would need to overpower the guards in their ECOMIB armored personnel carriers parked by the palace. The president felt safer with their presence outside his office and residence.

*KENNEDY: Were there coups? Was there a history of coups there or assassinations?*

ZUMWALT: Yes, and that is why we wanted to restart engagement with the Guinea-Bissau military. They had been treated as international pariahs due to involvement in the 2012 coup, but we thought it was important to begin to engage to encourage them to take their place as a military in service to the civilian government. I made a point each visit to call on the Revolutionary Armed Forces of the People's chief of staff. He always seemed wary but, as a military man, he did want to establish a relationship with the U.S. military. That said, many Bissau-Guinean military leaders remained on our sanctions list because of their role in the 2012 coup d'état that overthrew the previous government. We wanted them to see that we were monitoring the situation.

In my conversations with the Bissau army chief of staff, we talked about military training programs. He recognized that the military was too big for Bissau's needs and had a vision that Bissau could provide soldiers for UN peacekeeping missions as a way to sustain a force this size. I told him that training, such as what we conducted in Senegal, might be possible in the future, but we needed to start with much more basic training.

We restarted our modest International Military Education and Training program. We provided some English language training and organized a civil-military relations training program. This program was taught by three Portuguese-speaking professors from the U.S. military school in Monterey, California. They organized classes and role-playing exercises for their students to learn how to communicate with a civilian government in a democratic system. Our army attaché, Major Gerald Mathis, worked hard to establish these programs and to improve relations with some of the Guinea-Bissau officer corps.

I also talked with the army chief of staff and the minister of defense about their ground-to-air missiles. We proposed funding a comprehensive program whereby Guinea-Bissau would turn over its aging Soviet-made ground-to-air missiles to the United States for destruction in exchange for U.S. funding for improvements to their arms depots. We were concerned that these missiles could fall into the wrong hands and pose a threat to civil aviation. We estimated the Bissau army still held about two hundred leftover missiles — we had no idea whether they were still operable since these missiles were over forty years old. Major Mathis reported that their ammunition was stored in very unsafe depots. We offered to fund an inventory of their ammunition stocks and pay for construction of bunkers and other safe storage facilities in exchange for these surface-to-air missiles. The State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs promised funding for this initiative.

Despite expressions of interest by the defense minister, we could never bring the Guinea-Bissau military on board. They were tempted by our funding offer, but the ground-to-air missiles, which had played an important role in defeating the Portuguese, were of great symbolic importance. I raised this issue many times with President Vaz, but he was reluctant to intervene. He told me he

would support the effort if the military agreed to our proposal. Vaz was wary of the military and did not want to become involved. Our lack of progress was disappointing.

One other area where I thought we could help was humanitarian demining. Although mines left over from the 1998 civil war had been removed from the city of Bissau itself, many mines from the war for independence remained buried in remote areas of the country. The Portuguese had left these mines in place when they suddenly abandoned their isolated forts in 1973. There were not even good maps of where these mines were buried. Every so often, we would hear a tragic story about a farmer or a child injured by an anti-personnel mine. I worked with the State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs to obtain funding for NGOs working to remove forgotten mines in Guinea-Bissau. Our efforts, however, were hindered by the political instability in the country. The NGOs were making slow progress, but the government has not made landmine removal a priority.

*KENNEDY: Mines just stay.*

ZUMWALT: These mines do not go away.

Although Guinea-Bissau is a small country, developments there did affect the United States. As a fragile and poorly governed nation-state, Guinea-Bissau was a “weak link” regarding transnational problems — infectious disease, illicit narcotics trade, global terrorism, and illegal migration. We supported European efforts to stem illegal migration to Europe. Every year, dozens of rickety ships would depart the many islands and estuaries of Guinea-Bissau, transporting migrants to the Canary Islands. Many of these overloaded boats would sink, drowning all on board.

Another of these transnational challenges was the illicit trade in narcotics. Guinea-Bissau had become a major cocaine trans-shipment point. The narco-traffickers took advantage of the many abandoned airstrips on remote islands that had been built by the Portuguese military. These airstrips were still usable by small planes arriving from Brazil. I occasionally ran into well-dressed Colombian businessmen at the airport or in the hotel lobby on my visits to Bissau. We tended to avoid each other. They did not want anything to do with me and I felt the same way about them.

Bestselling British author Frederick Forsyth visited Bissau for research on his book about the cocaine trade called *The Cobra*. Forsyth was writing fiction but drew upon actual events in his portrayal of corrupt leaders who allowed Latin American smugglers to transship cocaine being smuggled into Europe. Several of my contacts in Bissau were models for fictionalized characters in his book. Forsythe made Bissau sound more lawless and brutal than it was. There was cocaine smuggling and corruption, but not the casual murders portrayed in his book.

*KENNEDY: Where was the cocaine coming from?*

ZUMWALT: The cocaine originated from Colombia and was transshipped via Brazil. Bissau is the closest point in Africa to Brazil and they share Portuguese as a common language. In 2013, before I arrived in Bissau, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration had conducted a sting operation that resulted in the arrest of the chief of Guinea-Bissau’s navy, José Américo Bubo Na Tchuto. DEA agents posing as Colombian terrorists offered him cocaine in exchange for Bissau’s ground-to-air missiles. When I arrived in Bissau, Bubo Na Tchuto was being tried on terrorism charges in a New York federal court. Na Tchuto was convicted and served time in a U.S. prison.

As a result of this action, many people in Bissau thought the United States could reach into Bissau to capture people whenever we wanted.

*KENNEDY: It would be a tremendous job, but one conflict after another without a support system...*

ZUMWALT: The DEA had run a sting operation out of their office in Lisbon and coordination with Embassy Dakar had been poor. Russell Hanks, the embassy political officer who covered Bissau before Greg, was actually in Guinea-Bissau when the DEA operation occurred. Therefore, many Bissau-Guineans assumed our political officer was the operation's mastermind. As a result, our embassy security officer determined that it was unsafe for Russ to return to Bissau. That circumstance undermined Russ' ability to do his job for the final year of his tour in Dakar.

When I arrived in Senegal, the DEA had just opened an office in Dakar and I made clear to them that I wanted no surprises. They were transparent and informed me of their various operations in Senegal. The DEA very much wanted to operate in Bissau but I held them back because I was concerned about the lack of in-country oversight. The DEA office in Senegal was still new and there was plenty of work for them to establish their office in Dakar. I advised them to focus on building relationships with the Senegalese police force, who could help their counter-narcotics efforts.

Illicit narcotics trafficking was still a major U.S. policy concern, but by the time I presented my credentials in Bissau, the Ebola outbreak in West Africa had become an even more urgent crisis. The Ebola pandemic in West Africa was the major reason for the dramatic increase in U.S. government TDYs to Bissau in 2015 and 2016. We were concerned that the disease might spread to Guinea-Bissau. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention sent many staff to Bissau for one-month-long TDYs to work with the World Health Organization and others to halt the spread of Ebola to Guinea-Bissau. International NGOs like Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF, or Doctors without Borders) and the Portuguese Red Cross dispatched teams to establish and operate a mobile Ebola testing unit. We tended to stay in the same hotel in Bissau and, over a buffet breakfast at the hotel dining room each morning, we would discuss the challenges facing MSF and the Portuguese Red Cross before we each went off to our work.

*KENNEDY: You might explain what Ebola is.*

ZUMWALT: Ebola is a rare and often fatal illness. The disease has a reservoir in the wild, but occasionally jumps to humans. Then it spreads by human-to-human contact. In West Africa, traditional customs to mourn the death of a loved one often lead to human-to-human Ebola transmission. Most previous Ebola outbreaks had been in Central Africa, often in very remote areas near forests.

When Ebola cases broke out in Guinea, the medical intervention was too late to prevent the spread into densely populated cities. Organizations like Médecins Sans Frontières appealed to the World Health Organization and other bodies for help because there were too many ill people to isolate and conduct effective contact tracing. President Obama and others decided to engage by utilizing the U.S. Public Health Service and the U.S. military to support the mission to stop the spread of this disease.

The three countries affected directly by this outbreak were Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea. We were concerned that Ebola might spread across Guinea-Bissau's porous southern border with Guinea. The CDC had briefed me that there would probably be Ebola cases in Guinea-Bissau. Guinea-Bissau did not monitor its borders and sick people in Guinea traveled around looking for medical care. Guinea-Bissau was ill-prepared; they did not even have a disease surveillance system. USAID also financed a small project on health surveillance, but the United States was a minor donor in Guinea-Bissau.

During one of my early visits to Bissau, I arranged through the CDC to visit the Hospital Nacional Simão Mendes for a ceremony marking the donation of hospital equipment by an American church. I thought it would also be a good time to visit the Ebola treatment unit that the Portuguese Red Cross had established at the hospital. A health worker from CDC thought my visit could boost morale. She warned me in advance, however, not to go into the infectious diseases ward.

When I drove up to the hospital the next day, she was late and the administrator of the hospital began the brief ceremony to receive the container of donated medical equipment, bandages, furniture, and medicines. The hospital administrator then took me by the hand and began to give me a tour of the hospital. First, he showed me the maternity ward. Most of the pregnant women in labor were laying under a tree for some shade from the 95° degree heat. The doctor explained that "We'll bring them in once the baby starts emerging. We don't have enough room inside for all of the women in labor right now." Then they brought me into a delivery room where a woman was giving birth. This room was not very clean and I was appalled by the lack of privacy.

Then the doctor walked me to another wing of the hospital. The waiting room was crowded with sick people and none of the hospital employees were wearing masks or gloves. Then the health worker from the CDC came running in breathless with a horrified expression on her face. She pulled me out and said, "You are in the infectious diseases ward! Did you touch anyone?" I said, "Yes, I shook hands with the doctors and nurses." She began washing my hands with a diluted bleach solution and told me not to touch my face until I could wash my hands properly back at the hotel. Fortunately, I did not get sick, but this experience helped me realize we needed a plan in case an employee became ill in Bissau. The national hospital was not a good option.

We then visited the Ebola treatment unit that had been set up in the hospital morgue. Fortunately, Bissau did not have any Ebola cases, so the facility was empty. The brave health care workers there explained what they would do if an Ebola patient arrived. They had been taught the protocols for use of personal protective equipment but, clearly, this small unit was only capable of handling a few Ebola cases at a time. It would quickly become overwhelmed if there were an outbreak. We were fortunate that Guinea-Bissau escaped the Ebola pandemic but, during my first year in-country, we were very worried about infectious diseases.

One big challenge in staffing our Ebola response team in Bissau was State Department security rules limiting U.S. government employee stays in Bissau to less than thirty days. Due to the extraordinary situation with Ebola, the CDC (with my support) worked around this rule by rotating in new staff every thirty days in order to maintain a continuous presence on the Bissau multinational Ebola task force.

After narcotics and Ebola, our third transnational concern was international terrorism. There were rumors about terrorists using Bissau as a place to hide or to rest and recuperate prior to returning to the conflict zones in the Sahel. I remember receiving a visit from a group of

Bissau-Guinean imams who asked for funding to survey new mosques being built with money from the Middle East. These imams expressed concern that Saudi money was fueling religious intolerance and radicalism. Unfortunately, we lacked the resources to help them. We did not have good information on whether terrorist organizations were in fact using Guinea-Bissau as a base and this lack of information was a cause of concern. Our sporadic presence and lack of funds meant that we did not make progress with our agenda of combating terrorism in Bissau.

Guinea-Bissau is such a small and poor country with an unpredictable business environment that we do not have many commercial interests there. Our economic agenda was focused on promoting good governance to facilitate economic development. One of our economic officers did visit Bissau a few times to talk to development officials and the IMF representative. The country does have world-class phosphate reserves and there was at least one U.S. company interested in exploiting these deposits by investing in building a mine. Their plan was to mine the ore and perform minimal processing in-country, then transport the phosphate by truck to the river, then take it downriver by barge to the port, load it onto a cargo ship, and transport the phosphate to Florida for further processing. Once the mine began operating, it would have been an important employment generator and taxpayer in that region. But the uncertain political situation and risky business environment tempered this company's enthusiasm. There were also a few oil companies who thought that Guinea-Bissau had promise for offshore oil exploration, but no private company would take the risk to make long-term investments in offshore exploration given the country's unstable political situation.

Our assistance program in Bissau was very modest. We did restart support for a school feeding program that was administered by UNICEF. We donated surplus rice, oil, and dried beans to be distributed for school lunches through this program. UNICEF had good data to demonstrate that school attendance increased and learning outcomes improved at schools with these feeding programs. The Japanese government was also contributing rice and canned fish to this program, so we were not the only donors. I visited several schools with these programs and thought it was worthwhile.

*KENNEDY: Did you have Peace Corps there?*

ZUMWALT: Guinea-Bissau had hosted Peace Corps volunteers in the past but the program closed in 1998 due to the civil war. Many Bissau-Guineans would ask if I could bring the Peace Corps back; they remembered American volunteers from thirty years previous. Guinea-Bissau has a reputation as a violent, drug-infested place, but I didn't feel personally unsafe when in the country. I used to jog on Bissau's streets with Greg and my bodyguard early every morning before it became too hot and we were never bothered while out running. As the three of us ran down residential streets or across cashew orchards and along rice paddies, small children would cheer and some would run alongside for a few blocks. Guinea-Bissau's streets were not dangerous like Nigeria's, with their carjacking and other violent crime. I think we could have identified safe sites for Peace Corps volunteers, especially in the capital. The bigger concern for these volunteers would have been medical. I didn't raise the issue of restarting a Peace Corps program in Guinea-Bissau with the Peace Corps leadership, however, because I wanted to concentrate my efforts on convincing the Peace Corps to return to the Casamance region of Senegal.

*KENNEDY: What were some of the highlights of your tour?*

ZUMWALT: We hosted United States Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus in July 2015. We wondered why Mabus wanted to visit Bissau. The United States Navy had no real interests in the country; the former head of Guinea-Bissau's navy was in a U.S. prison serving out a terrorism charge for his involvement in illicit narcotics trade and the small navy had only a coastal law-enforcement mission. Guinea-Bissau's navy was more of a police force than a military. The official position of the U.S. Navy was that Mabus would come to Bissau "to discuss the importance of maritime security and to reinforce existing partnerships with African nations." In fact, the United States Navy's focus in this part of the Atlantic was on the Gulf of Guinea to the south, closer to Nigeria, Ghana, and Togo. We could not think of any important policy reason for the Secretary of the Navy to visit Bissau.

Despite this visit's lack of purpose, Greg and I both welcomed this opportunity. Prior to Mabus' visit, the senior

most American government visitor ever to Bissau had been the State Department's Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Robert P. Jackson, who had headed a U.S. delegation to the presidential inauguration two years previously. But Greg and I both saw an opportunity to promote the concept of civilian control of the military as part of our democracy agenda. I traveled to Bissau before Mabus' visit and impressed upon President Vaz the importance of "the seniormost American visitor ever to Guinea-Bissau." I explained to Vaz that Mabus used to be a governor, was close friends with former President Clinton, and was somebody who knew President Obama. The Bissau-Guinean government tried to roll out the red carpet — they aren't experienced hosting high-level visitors, but they made the effort!

Prior to his arrival, Mabus' advance team was appalled by the hotel we showed them. I explained that this Malian-owned facility was Bissau's best option. The Azalaï Hotel was a repurposed military camp with one-story buildings arranged in a square around a central garden. Were it not for the swarms of mosquitoes, the garden would have been a pleasant place to spend the evenings when temperatures cooled down. The hotel rooms were clean but spare and the food was edible. We provided spray cans of Raid in each room. We also advised the team not to swim in the pool, but we needn't have worried because a bright green algae bloom occurred just prior to Mabus' arrival. One glance at the brackish swimming pool and nobody wanted to swim. The cold showers in our rooms were a welcome respite from the heat.

Despite the complaints of his advance team, Secretary Mabus himself was nonplussed with the accommodations. I think his staff had managed his expectations — Bissau did not yet have a luxury hotel up to international standards.

Secretary Mabus arrived at the height of Bissau's hot and rainy season. A small ceremony at the airport had to be truncated because it was pouring down rain. The secretary quickly marched down the stairs of his navy aircraft, walked across a soggy red carpet, shook hands with the minister of defense, who had come to greet him at the airport, and got into his waiting car for a ride to the Azalaï Hotel, where we had arranged to brief him before his meetings with ministers.

The secretary was extremely professional. We briefed him on our key interests — promotion of democratic values including civilian control of the military, concern about illicit trade in narcotics, and the need for vigilance about infectious diseases. He also raised the landmines and ground-to-air missiles issues for us. Mabus reinforced our message perfectly — in his meeting

with the chief of staff of the Armed Forces, he said that we were interested in engaging with the military but that if there was another extra-constitutional coup, we would again cut off all aid. He made those points skillfully and with credibility.

In rapid succession, Secretary Mabus met with President Vaz, Prime Minister Domingos Simões Pereira, Minister of Defense Cadi Seidi, and with the chief of staff of the Armed Forces. There was one awkward moment in these meetings. President Vaz very proudly presented Secretary Mabus with a gift of a small statue of General Ulysses S. Grant. Mabus looked a bit confused and I hurriedly whispered to him that Grant was a revered figure in Bissau because he had mediated a dispute between Portugal and the United Kingdom about ownership over the Bijagós Islands. I think President Vaz had no idea about the irony of presenting a southern governor with a statue of a Union Army general that had defeated the Confederate Army. Mabus stayed in Bissau for less than 24 hours. That night, we rented the Azalaï Hotel's dining room so he could host a banquet for Bissau's senior civilian and military leaders and the diplomatic corps.

It rained nonstop the entire 24 hours of Secretary Mabus' visit. The streets flooded and mud flowed everywhere. We experienced an unfortunate accident as we arrived at the prime minister's office building. The front door of the building sits at the top of a marble staircase and there's also a vehicle ramp one can enter from the side to take a VIP visitor directly up to the main door, bypassing the stairs. The plan was for my car with Secretary Mabus to proceed up the ramp and every other vehicle to stop down below so their passengers would walk up the stairs. A U.S. Navy sailor responsible for security was stationed at the top of this ramp at the building entrance to open the door of our car after checking that the perimeter was safe. She was standing under the eave out of the rain in front of the entrance at the top of the ramp when one of the motorcycles came roaring up the slick ramp by mistake. It lost control and started skidding up the ramp and slammed into the front door, pinning the security person against the glass door of the building. The force of the blow from this errant motorcycle knocked her out cold. She was bleeding from her head and needed immediate medical attention. This was not the grand entrance to the prime minister's office building for Secretary Mabus that we had planned.

We lacked a good medical emergency plan for Bissau. Our embassy doctor had an oral agreement with the UN doctor that we could visit his clinic in case of a life-threatening emergency. One of our Bissau Liaison Office employees and one member of Mabus' security detail took the sailor to the UN clinic where a Swedish nurse stopped her bleeding and treated her for a concussion, keeping her overnight for observation. She seemed to be okay, but we were concerned about her health. We contacted navy doctors in Washington by radio for advice. After describing the symptoms, they asked for the results of her CAT scan. We told them there was no such medical equipment in Bissau. They were most surprised.

The navy doctors were not sure if it would be safe for her to board an airplane, so we began planning an evacuation to Senegal by car. The prime minister was very embarrassed, but Secretary Mabus handled the awkward situation like the professional politician he was. The next morning, the navy doctors decided it was probably safer for her to board the secretary's plane than it was to drive four hours to Ziguinchor where the medical care was only marginally better. We heard later that this young sailor had recovered completely and was fine. Secretary Mabus' visit did reinforce our message on the importance of stable democratic government, but it was marred by this accident.

The other important American visitor to Bissau was UN Under-Secretary-General Jeffrey Feltman. He's the senior American citizen employed by the United Nations. Jeff's visit was important because the United Nations had to decide if it would extend its UNIOGBIS mission in Bissau. Jeff came to assess the situation, then to report to the UN Security Council. Greg and I both thought that, without the UN mission, the country would again descend into political chaos. Feltman's visit would be an important opportunity for UN staff in New York to understand the situation.

Feltman planned to first arrive in Dakar and meet with senior Senegalese officials, including President Macky Sall. Senegal was a member of the UN Security Council then, so the country played an important role in the United Nations. Sall, along with Guinean President Alpha Condé, had tried to mediate between President Vaz and Prime Minister Simões Pereira to resolve their disputes. Feltman was also planning while in Dakar to meet with ambassadors from UN Security Council member states and other key players who did not have a mission in Bissau — the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, and a few others. I wanted to be in Dakar when he came, but also in Bissau for his visit. Unfortunately, there was no commercial flight from Dakar to Bissau on that day, but the UN graciously offered to provide me a seat on Feltman's jet to Bissau.

This flight down to Bissau gave me a good opportunity to brief Feltman about the fraught political situation in Bissau. I explained to Feltman that President Vaz and Prime Minister Simões Pereira fundamentally disagreed over the authorities of their offices. The disagreement revolved around language in the Guinea-Bissau constitution (modeled after the Constitution of Portugal) which specified a largely ceremonial role for the president, with the prime minister running the government. The president derived legitimacy from having been elected to office, but the prime minister had a stronger power base in the ruling party.

I was not the only one urging Feltman to recommend that the UNIOGBIS mission continue. The Portuguese, the EU, and others all thought that this mission played a vital role in keeping the country from descending into chaos.

Feltman's visit to Bissau went well. I didn't participate in any of his meetings with the government of Guinea-Bissau, but afterwards, the UNIOGBIS mission hosted a lunch for Security Council member ambassadors to receive a debriefing from Under-Secretary Feltman. Ambassadors from France, China, Russia, Senegal, Angola, and the United States participated to hear his visit readout. I was glad to hear Feltman say he would recommend that the UNIOGBIS mission continue.

*KENNEDY: Are either Senegal or Guinea-Bissau contributing to the flow of refugees to France and Italy and all?*

ZUMWALT: The Senegalese who travel to Europe illegally are mostly economic migrants. Senegal is a democracy and it would be difficult for a Senegalese to claim political asylum based on a well-founded fear of persecution at home. The one exception to this assessment might be Senegalese from the LGBT community. I think for Bissau-Guineans as well, despite the political infighting among the elites, the everyday person is not under a threat of persecution. There are, however, internal refugees, particularly Senegalese who fled across the southern border into Guinea-Bissau to flee Casamance violence in the 1990s.

On one visit to Guinea-Bissau, Greg and I visited the governor of Cacheu region where many of these Senegalese refugees lived. When I thanked the governor for accepting them, his answer

was humbling: “How can we not help them? They are our neighbors.” Cacheu was an extremely poor part of the country, yet they opened their communities to these refugees. As much as we complain about corruption in Guinea-Bissau, I appreciated this hospitable and generous aspect of their culture. I wish more American politicians were as empathetic toward incoming refugees.

Our regional refugee coordinator in Dakar, Skye Justice, urged me to ask the Guinea-Bissau Justice Minister to grant these refugees civil rights as Bissau-Guinean citizens. In a UN High Commissioner for Refugees survey of refugees who had lived in Bissau for twenty years, most desired to settle permanently in Guinea-Bissau. We started talking to the Ministry of Justice, which agreed that granting these refugees full civil rights was the ultimate solution. However, the ministry lacked the budget to conduct a census. Skye obtained some State Department funding for a pilot program to fund Ministry of Justice interviews of two hundred of these Senegalese long-term refugees. As a result, the ministry confirmed their identities and their desire to settle permanently in Guinea-Bissau. The government later granted them full rights as Bissau-Guinean citizens so they were no longer refugees but citizens with full civil rights. This program has grown and now many more of these refugees are applying for Bissau-Guinean citizenship. This effort to help refugees obtain their civil rights was one of our policy success stories during my time in Bissau.

In two years, I went to Bissau eleven times, approximately once every two months. Each visit usually lasted about a week. Many other Dakar-based ambassadors accredited to Guinea-Bissau would fly in to present their credentials, spend the day, come home the following day, and then maybe return once just before leaving their posts in Dakar. They minimized their time in Bissau partly because they had no major interests there, partly because many of these ambassadors were busy covering four or five countries in West Africa, and partly because their much smaller embassies were stretched thin. I believed that, as the U.S. representative, I needed to get to know the country and engage its leaders. Greg arranged for me to travel outside Bissau each time I visited to deepen my understanding of the country and its problems.

On my first visit to the country, Greg organized a day trip outside the capital. He thought this excursion would help me better understand the country’s development challenges. Most of the 500,000 residents of Bissau live in stark poverty, but the situation for the 1.3 million inhabitants who live outside the capital was even worse. He arranged for me to visit an Italian American dual-national Franciscan missionary named Father Michael Daniels, who ran a Catholic mission in Quinhámel about an hour-and-a-half drive from the capital on a decent paved road. We drove through acres and acres of cashew orchards, broken up by the occasional small village.

When we arrived at his mission, Father Michael apologized for his attire; he greeted us in gym shorts and a t-shirt. He explained that his only set of Franciscan robes was being washed. With only one robe to wear, it was clear that Father Michael took his vow of poverty seriously. Father Michael had lived in Bissau for eight years and served on its National Human Rights Commission. He’d been a valuable embassy contact as we gathered information for our annual human rights reports on Guinea-Bissau. Father Michael gave us a tour of the Italian Catholic mission where he worked: a small church, a school, and a health clinic run by a Brazilian nun. He also maintained a small vegetable garden and raised goats for some extra food.

Father Michael got in our car and we drove about thirty minutes along a small, bumpy dirt road to the Hotel Mar Azul, a small establishment with a view of the nearby estuary. With this view and the swimming pool, the Mar Azul had once been a popular place for expatriates living in

Bissau to bring their families (it served as the location for one of the episodes in Forsyth's book, *The Cobra*). But the establishment had clearly seen better days. An Italian couple who had sailed down the coast of Africa to Bissau managed this small, rundown resort. It seemed like they no longer had many guests staying at their riverside bungalows, where they had beached their small sailboat — this no longer looked seaworthy, reminding me a bit of *The Minnow* from the television show *Gilligan's Island*.

Our Italian hosts served us an excellent meal of fresh mangrove oysters and seafood pasta on their terrace. As we ate, Father Michael opened up about the political situation in Bissau. He was rather cynical about the Guinea-Bissau elites who rotated through the government, helping themselves to its meager resources while they clung to power. His information provided a helpful counterpoint to my meetings with the president and other elites who wore fancy European suits and seemed so well-spoken with their Portuguese university educations. I visited Father Michael nearly every time I traveled to Bissau because he was so insightful and provided a counterweight to the official government line. Father Michael was more comfortable in Italian but spoke good English because his father was an American.

On this excursion, I could see that people in Bissau were extremely poor. Per capita income is only about \$750 per year. Outside the capital, people lacked running water, electricity, and access to health care. People wore rags and lived in mud and straw huts. They lacked even basic commodities like soap and toothpaste. Only rich villagers could hope to own a battery-operated radio or a bicycle. Most people could not afford to take a taxi to visit the hospital or pay for medicines. But for people living in the countryside, the landscape was lush. People could grow staple foods and vegetables, pick fruits in the forest, and fish in the numerous rivers.

Farmers with enough land had cashew trees — a crop that had been introduced by the Portuguese in the 1930s. The countryside we passed was dotted with cashew orchards. Greg briefed me that Bissau needed to reform its agricultural system because cashew farmers only received a small portion of the value of their cashew crop. The government took a tax from growers on their cashew production and traders in the middle took a cut before the cashews arrived in Bissau for loading onto freighters to India for processing. There were few other ways for farmers to earn cash in Guinea-Bissau.

Despite the poor economy, the country had a rich culture. Bissau-Guineans love dance, music, and theater — people put on plays, there were many local festivals. Bissau-Guinean music has been influenced by Portuguese, Brazilian, and Cuban music. Some Bissau-Guinean singers have become popular in Europe.

The other pastime in Guinea-Bissau was soccer. Many Bissau-Guinean boys dreamed of joining a European professional football club. In fact, the Portuguese national football team has several Bissau-Guinean players who have become Portuguese citizens. During the World Cup, since Guinea-Bissau does not qualify itself, Bissau-Guineans root for the Portuguese team with its local players! Everywhere in Guinea-Bissau, we saw kids kicking around a homemade ball made out of cloth and string on the street.

On a later visit, Greg took me to visit the other American missionaries — a Protestant family near the village of Canchungo on the other side of the country. They lived about a two-hour drive northeast from Bissau across a series of mangrove swamps, mixed forest, and rice fields. The paved road had recently been refurbished with EU assistance money and it was actually in fairly good condition despite the heavy rainfall that flooded the road in a few places. This missionary

family included two parents in their twenties with a three-year-old daughter and a baby boy. I brought them a care package of American comfort foods — pancake mix, maple syrup, breakfast cereals, corn tortillas, taco seasoning, peanut butter, canned tuna, powdered milk, cocoa mix, chocolate bars, and M&Ms. Their little girl was so excited about all of these treats. These young Americans, financed by a small church-supported NGO in Fresno, California, were running a small trade school to provide vocational education to young men and women in fields like auto mechanics, computer skills, and metalworking. They lived in a small brick house on a hill overlooking an estuary surrounded by old trees, with monkeys overhead. They were truly committed to their mission in spite of their daily hardships.

*KENNEDY: Was there electricity out there?*

ZUMWALT: They had generators that were running during my visit. As I recall, they also had running cold water in their bathroom. The couple was incredibly welcoming. They showed me around their home and their school and explained their work. The embassy later gave this school a small grant to purchase ten auto mechanics tool sets to present to their graduating class.

Travel around Guinea-Bissau was always an adventure. It was a beautiful country if you remained flexible and resilient about unexpected developments. Perhaps your car might get stuck in the sand or your boat might run out of gas. But with the right attitude, these challenges could turn into memorable adventures. On one of my visits when Ann accompanied me, we took a few days of vacation to visit a resort on the Bijagós Islands. These islands lie off the Guinea-Bissau coast and contain a rich biosphere. One could develop some eco-tourism on these unspoiled islands if Guinea-Bissau were a stable country. The major tourism attraction was sport fishing; the few European tourists who ventured this far were mostly French, Spanish, and Portuguese serious sport fishermen.

Our resort was being developed by another American citizen in the country — a Bissau-Guinean-American entrepreneur named Adelino Da Costa. He had gone to the U.S. as a professional boxer twenty years previously, but could not quite succeed as a pro. He'd opened a boxing gym in Manhattan where he gave personal fitness training to busy executives. His business had prospered and he expanded to four or five locations around New York.

Da Costa wanted to build a detox retreat for his New York clients. He bought a lovely property on Bruce Beach, on the far side of Bubaque, one of the larger islands in the archipelago. This island has about six thousand inhabitants and is located near the center of the archipelago.

Da Costa was just opening this resort, which he named the Dakosta Island Beach Camp, when Ann and I visited. We boarded a small speedboat at the Port of Bissau and took off across the estuary on a four-hour ride to Bubaque. We stayed in our own bungalow, located about one hundred yards from Bruce Beach. We could open the windows to smell the sea air and enjoy the fresh sea breeze that provided relief from the afternoon heat. Our room was adorned with ceremonial tribal fabrics and artworks and had an electric fan for when the generator was running.

Each morning, my bodyguard and I jogged along the beach; the soft sand stretched for at least a mile and a half. We enjoyed wonderful sunsets overlooking the water while eating delicious fresh oysters, prawns, and ocean fish at the outdoor dining area, which was a large table made from an overturned canoe. We drank fresh coconut milk directly from the shell, just harvested from a tree overhead. At night, musicians from the nearby village would sing and dance for the resort guests.

As I recall, other than Ann and me and Greg and our bodyguard, there were only two or three other visitors at the resort.

One day, we went with Da Costa to the neighboring island of Orango to see saltwater hippos. These hippos lived in freshwater lagoons about a mile inland, but they walk to the beach at night to graze at the grasses, then bathe and disinfect their skin in the ocean. We took a motorboat down the estuary and around Orango, where we enjoyed a good view of the mangrove swamps teeming with birds. We saw flamingos and herons. A tour guide led us from the beach, over the sand dunes, and across some grassy hills along a path taken by the hippos that morning. We could see where they had grazed on the tall grasses and left hippo droppings along our route. After about 45 minutes of walking, we reached the lagoon where about twenty hippos lay immersed, with only their eyes and ears exposed above the water. It was an amazing sight. Our guide instructed us to remain quiet to avoid disturbing them. This island had only twenty or thirty tourists a day — it was still unspoiled.

*KENNEDY: Hippos can be quite dangerous.*

ZUMWALT: Yes. We were led by an experienced guide from the national park. He was very careful to stop us at a distance and urged us to remain quiet. As the hippos rested in their lagoon, he was watching the mother hippo carefully; we did not want her to fear for her calf's safety. We enjoyed this authentic Africa experience with exotic, rare animals in their natural habitat.

My two other trips to the Bijagós Islands were on business. One was focused on law enforcement. The U.S. government had funded police training programs in Bissau through the UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The UNODC invited me to attend the grand opening of a new police station they had funded on Bubaque.

Greg and I flew into Bissau, spent the night, then boarded one of the police's new anti-drug patrol speedboats to ferry us out to this new office. We were joined by two Spanish policemen (who were resident in Bissau as part of Spain's foreign assistance program) and a few other Bissau-based diplomats. The Spanish police were concerned about trafficking in persons because of the flow of illegal migration from that part of Africa to the Canary Islands in Spain. While on our way to Bubaque on a beautiful tropical day with calm seas, we passed near the island of Rubane, the site of an exclusive resort called the Hotel Ponta Anchaca. The two Spanish policemen said, "Oh, that's Solange's place." I said, "I've heard of Solange — she's French, isn't she?" and then asked about child-sex tourism, which I had heard had been a problem in this area. The policeman's response: "She'll do anything to keep her customers happy." As we continued toward our destination, about ten minutes later, our boat passed another beach resort. The policeman said, "That's so-and-so's resort. He's the only person in Bissau history who has been convicted of pedophilia, but he never served time and now he's running a resort for a particular kind of foreign tourists."

I had already heard of Madame Solange and her exclusive, upscale Hotel Ponta Anchaca. Madame Solange owned an airplane and speedboats to ferry guests from Bissau to her resort on Rubane. One could stay at a private luxurious air-conditioned hut on stilts above the beach, overlooking the water. I was suspicious because such a resort did not seem like a viable business on a remote island in an unstable country. I had earlier made inquiries through the French embassy and heard that they would not want the French ambassador photographed with Madame Solange. The implication was clear — people with unexplained incomes, airplanes, and

speedboats in Bissau generally tended to have connections to the illicit narcotics trade. Later, our station chief told me that, several years earlier, the Senegalese narcotics police had tried to inspect her airplane when it landed at a regional airport in Senegal. The pilot refused to allow the police to board the plane and, a few hours later, after Solange made a few phone calls, the plane was cleared for takeoff with no inspection. Needless to say, I never stayed at the Hotel Ponta Anchaca, despite Madame Solange's legendary French hospitality. None of the embassy law-enforcement community would stay there either.

*KENNEDY: Thing is, in these small places, it really allows characters to develop.*

ZUMWALT: The Bijagós Islands would be a good place to write a novel because you would not have to make anything up to develop an interesting story.

Greg, the Spanish policemen, and I finally arrived at our destination on Bubaque. The town of Bubaque is of a typical colonial style in Guinea-Bissau; it had one dirt road with a few concrete buildings on either side, leading from the landing dock up a steep hill. The road was laid out in a direction to take advantage of afternoon offshore breezes. As we were walking up this steep dirt road from the port into town, on the left side was one of the town's few concrete buildings — a tourist restaurant-bar called Ristorante La Crèche (French for the cradle or childcare center — a very odd name for a bar). Across the street was a general store with a big hand-lettered sign in Portuguese reading "Down with child-sex tourism." It was sad that such a beautiful island had this problem. Greg reported on this problem in our annual Trafficking in Persons Report on Guinea-Bissau. But I thought that we could not resolve the problem by sanctioning Guinea-Bissau. Child-sex tourism can only be resolved at the demand side by cutting off the flow of European sex tourists.

We stayed at the worst hotel I experienced in my tour. The rooms were rundown and dirty, with no mosquito nets, no air conditioning or fan, no hot water, and a restaurant with absolutely no food! Greg and I were hungry and began foraging in this town. After walking a few minutes down the main street, we saw a sign painted on a wall: "Neapolitan-style pizza." There, we met the proprietor, a man from Spain who had lived in Italy. His outdoor dining area was located on a hill overlooking the fishing boats on the narrow channel between Bubaque and Rubane. He had a pizza oven!

After preparing our pizzas, he engaged Greg in a conversation in Spanish. He said he had come to Bubaque on a fishing trip and decided to settle down and start a business. He complained about the European tourists. He said, "People who live here think all whites are pedophiles, because those are the Europeans who they meet." He was trying to help — he had adopted an orphan and paid for his schooling. This visit helped me understand the challenges in combating the trade in illicit narcotics and child-sex tourism. Our support to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, who were trying to instill some discipline and order in the Guinea-Bissau police force, helped but they face daunting problems.

On another visit to Bissau, Greg arranged for me to travel to Bolama, the closest of the Bijagós Islands to the mainland. It lies across the Geba River from the present capital city of Bissau. Surrounded by mangrove swamps, Bolama had served as the Portuguese capital until 1948 when they moved it to Bissau due to shortages of fresh water. The small city of Bolama was sustained for the next twenty-five years as a military camp where Portuguese officers trained African troops to fight the insurrection. Sadly, many of those troops were massacred in revenge killings

in 1973 when the Portuguese suddenly abandoned their colony and the rebel armies emerged from the countryside to take over the country.

Today, Bolama has a population of perhaps four to five thousand people, but it appeared to me to be a town that time had forgotten. Ruins of grand buildings in classic Greek style stood as a reminder of Portuguese colonial ambitions. These mostly abandoned buildings — the former governor's palace, government administration buildings, and a Catholic church — were now overrun with vines and housed thousands of fruit bats. Tall weeds grew up along the dirt roads between these buildings. The dirt surface of the main road through town, eroded with decades of neglect, was several feet lower than the concrete sidewalks. Even for me, it was challenging to step up from the road onto the crumbling sidewalk. I thought Bolama would make a good movie set for a post-apocalyptic film.

On the waterfront near the abandoned governor's palace, one can see a huge abstract statue in Italian realist style. Built to commemorate the loss of eleven Italians when two seaplanes crashed in the harbor in 1931, the base of the statue reads "From Mussolini to the fallen of Bolama. Year IX of the Fascist era." These seaplanes represent an earlier time in aviation when such craft stopped to refuel in Bolama as they carried mail and passengers from Italy to Argentina.

Prior to arriving in Bolama, Greg had told me about a statue of Ulysses S. Grant. In 1870, Grant was called on to arbitrate conflicting territorial claims between Portugal and Great Britain. He awarded Bolama and the Bijagós Islands to Portugal. I had been told that the inscription at the base of this statue read "Ulisses Grant, President of the United States of North America" for having "defended the just cause of Bolama." Seeing that statue and the inscription alone would have been worth the visit to this decaying town. When I asked our local government guide to show us the statue, he led us through the mostly deserted town to the remnants of a city park — an overgrown square surrounded by a low wall. We found our way through the weeds to a stone pedestal. Sweeping his arm forward proudly, he said, "Here it is." Looking up at the blue sky, I said, "But there is no statue." Our guide replied, "Oh, we melted the statue down, but it used to be here!" The metal plaque with Grant's misspelled name had disappeared as well.

He then informed us that there was a Ulysses S. Grant (spelled correctly) High School nearby. We hopped into a taxi and, after a twenty-minute drive down a bumpy dirt road, we arrived at the school. They had painted a large mural on the wall with a decent likeness of the bearded Grant. We visited their English class and talked to some students who probably knew more about Ulysses S. Grant than their American high school counterparts. Their English was not bad!

*KENNEDY: Was there much of a Chinese presence there in Guinea-Bissau?*

ZUMWALT: Most of the buildings in Bissau itself were showing their age and suffering from poor maintenance. A few of the grander structures in town, however, had been built in the previous fifteen years with Chinese financing (and labor). For example, the National People's Assembly Building had been built with Chinese aid. It looked nice from the outside, but the government could not afford to run the air conditioning, the elevators did not work, and the carpets and furniture were already threadbare. The Chinese had also built a large soccer stadium in Bissau, but I never went there as it was rarely used.

More recently, Chinese aid had financed construction of a large government building that contained the offices of the prime minister and many other ministries, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (the scene of the motorcycle accident I mentioned earlier). This new building had

an imposing entry atrium, a grand marble staircase, and working air conditioning. While beautiful, I thought that the building's "Chinese character" was too heavy for Bissau. The building design was Chinese and most of the building materials had been imported from China. Immediately upon walking into the building's large atrium, one saw a 25-foot-tall Chinese bas-relief stone landscape on the opposite wall. This karst limestone mountain landscape reminded me of the Li River in Guilin but looked unlike any landscape one would encounter in Guinea-Bissau! Even the small green emergency signs said "Exit" in English and Chinese but not in Portuguese. The Bissau-Guineans accepted the Chinese money and appreciated these buildings, but I detected a fair amount of resentment of the heavy-handed Chinese, despite their financial largesse.

The Chinese maintained an embassy and an ambassador in Bissau. I had called on the Chinese ambassador, Wang Hua, when I arrived. He was a specialist on Latin America who spoke fluent Spanish and Portuguese. During my courtesy call, he had glanced through his window at our overrun U.S. embassy compound across the narrow dirt road. He dryly mentioned that occasionally our snakes would crawl over to his garden.

Later, I saw Ambassador Wang a few times at diplomatic functions in Bissau. For example, he came to our national day reception both years that I hosted one. We also met when UNIOGBIS hosted meetings for UN Security Council ambassadors. I noticed that Wang tended to socialize with the Cuban ambassador because they could speak to each other in Spanish. Wang once complained to me about Guinea-Bissau corruption, which he said was worse than his previous post of Caracas! He implied the Chinese were wasting their time and money in Bissau and he looked forward to retirement where he could rejoin his wife, who ran a lumber importing business. Illegal logging and deforestation was an environmental problem in Bissau and it seemed odd that a family member of the Chinese ambassador would be involved in such a business.

There were also a few Chinese businesses in Bissau. Some Chinese workers stayed behind in Bissau after completing work on their construction projects and they tended to patronize one small, dirty Chinese restaurant. The marketplaces were flooded with Chinese consumer products — plastic bowls, chairs, and tables and metal basins and buckets. The traditional artisans who made bowls out of gourds and wooden tables and chairs were being displaced by these imported Chinese goods. Occasionally, a market merchant would post a protest sign saying "No to Chinese furniture." It did not seem as if the Chinese were successful with their economic engagement efforts.

*KENNEDY: Were we after the Bissau-Guinean vote in the UN?*

ZUMWALT: Guinea-Bissau has a mission in the United Nations and a vote. If I were in town in time to deliver a demarche on a foreign policy topic, I would talk to the foreign minister himself, but he was more interested in obtaining U.S. visas for his friends. We did not have a particularly good relationship. Gregory Garland went to Bissau every month, so he delivered many more demarches. But we always reminded the State Department that "Even if the foreign ministry agreed to vote a certain way, they were unlikely to transmit instructions to their office in New York. We advised the United States mission to the United Nations to inform the Guinea-Bissau mission in New York that their ministry supported our position." I rarely had conversations in Bissau about foreign policy issues because our bilateral agenda was so full.

Another country that enjoyed outsized influence in Bissau was Morocco. The visit of the king of Morocco to Bissau was a huge occasion. In the lead-up to the visit, the Moroccans funded nice fencing around the presidential palace, a cleanup of the park in the traffic circle in front, and installation of streetlights, benches, and a wi-fi network in this park in front of the palace. What had been a weed-infested, rundown traffic circle suddenly became an attractive city park. The king also dispatched a Moroccan military hospital, which was set up in the grounds of Bissau's main mosque. For two or three months, there were long lines of people receiving free medical care courtesy of the Moroccan military.

*KENNEDY: Did Morocco have much influence?*

ZUMWALT: President Vaz loved the king of Morocco. He was impressed by the king's trappings of power and his money — the king of Morocco arrived in Bissau on his own Boeing 747 airplane. I don't think the Moroccans were necessarily trying to promote their form of government, but President Vaz was clearly enamored with the king's absolute power. President Vaz did not have the same authority as a king. He had to deal with a prime minister and line up supporters within the ruling party to agree on policy decisions.

*KENNEDY: The Moroccan system, the king is the descendant of Mohammad.*

ZUMWALT: Exactly.

*KENNEDY: Did you make much progress in Guinea-Bissau?*

ZUMWALT: On my final visit to Bissau in December 2016, I was more discouraged than when I had arrived two years previously. On my first visit, I had hoped that with the return of democracy, with a competent prime minister, with international support from UNIOGBIS, with an IMF program, with the ECOWAS peacekeeping force, and with foreign funding for the Terra Ranka development plan that Bissau might finally turn the corner. Certainly, there was a lot of international goodwill — UN agencies had over two hundred staff working in various fields to restart Bissau's economy. Portugal and the European Union also contributed substantial bilateral assistance efforts. The United States only played a modest role in Bissau, but we could be helpful in support of these assistance efforts. But with the president not tolerating rivals and firing competent people in government in order to strengthen his power, Bissau squandered this international goodwill and the chance to set the stage for sustainable economic growth.

Looking back on Guinea-Bissau during my tour, I can say that we made modest progress in a few areas. Much of the credit goes to Gregory Garland, Embassy Dakar's officer who covered Guinea-Bissau full-time. Greg took on his assignment with gusto. He coordinated with other agencies and with Embassy Dakar's public affairs and management sections to maximize the impact of our efforts. We even set up a Guinea-Bissau country team in Embassy Dakar that met every two weeks to exchange information and to coordinate our interagency efforts. We played a modest role in supporting international efforts to make Guinea-Bissau more resilient to infectious diseases like Ebola. Our work on refugees had jumpstarted a process whereby people choosing to stay in Guinea-Bissau could gain their civil rights. We re-engaged the military and restarted some modest military training programs. There were no coups or political assassinations.

Many Bissau-Guineans and resident foreigners told me that U.S. demonstrations of interest and support could deter corrupt officials from considering extra-constitutional means to amass power. I think we managed to achieve this modest goal. We held two national day receptions and hosted

a gala banquet for the visiting Secretary of the Navy. We reopened our American Corner and restarted a small food assistance program. We selected a few bright, promising young Bissau-Guineans to participate in the Young Africa Leaders Initiative (YALI) program that sent emerging leaders to the United States for a month of leadership training. We increased our engagement with the local news media by inviting them to a press conference on each of my visits.

We made the most progress in areas where we controlled the outcome. We improved our diplomatic footprint in Bissau to provide a safe and professional work environment to our employees, to demonstrate our continuing interest in the democratic process in the country, and to preserve the option to reopen our embassy in the future. Our diplomatic compound began to look presentable. The grounds were kept trimmed and planted with flowering bushes and the magnificent mature trees have been protected from the termites. The exterior wall has been painted and the squatters evicted. Our guard now has a room to change and hang his street clothes, with a flush toilet and running water to wash his hands. Our decrepit embassy building was torn down and the site is ready for construction should we ever decide to reopen a diplomatic facility in Bissau. Our compound was no longer an embarrassment with snakes crawling under the fence to the Chinese embassy.

Likewise, the Bissau Liaison Office walls have fresh paint and framed posters on the wall, President Obama's picture was up (now, President Trump's photo must be there). The office looks more professional, with new modular furniture that uses the small space more efficiently for the staff. The building now has a fire escape and the bathrooms have been upgraded. The telephones work — Embassy Dakar can communicate with the staff in Bissau. The post now enjoys a functioning and reliable internet connection. The cars are on a maintenance schedule so they break down less often. The BLO staff have updated job descriptions and we now have a pension program for the employees to cover them in retirement.

When I first arrived in Bissau, I tried to make my best case for why we should open a permanent post there. Guinea-Bissau is the only country on the continent of Africa without a full-time on-the-ground American diplomatic presence. An alternative would be to designate an Ambassador to Bissau resident in Dakar, as the State Department does for Somalia where the ambassador lives in Nairobi. With the huge budget cuts that the State Department was facing, I realized achieving this outcome in the short term was unrealistic.

I enjoyed my many visits to Guinea-Bissau. The resident ambassadors became bored quickly in this small country that did not make progress toward economic reform. For me, however, Bissau provided different opportunities than Dakar. Since I only visited for one week every two months, Bissau presented interesting new challenges on each visit. There was always plenty of work over the course of a weeklong visit, thanks to Gregory Garland's energetic preparations. Greg arranged for interesting cultural familiarization events such as our attendance at a lively evangelical Protestant church service with nearly two hours of singing, clapping, and dancing. But after these trips to Bissau, I must admit that I always enjoyed my return to Dakar, where I could savor ice in my cold drink and jog outside without dripping in the tropical heat and humidity.

My final cable on Bissau reported that the country had a lot of potential if the government would implement a more rational agricultural policy, but that until the country selected a new president, I doubted we could expect much progress. Since then, Bissau did conduct an election that chose

a new president under a democratic process. President Vaz served out his term — the first Bissau-Guinean president to do so. While the election process was successful and resulted in a peaceful transition of power, I doubt that the new government will improve its performance to a level that its friendly and optimistic population deserves.

## Chapter XVII

### The Gambia — Transition to Democratic Government, 2016–17

AUGUST 29, 2018

*KENNEDY: Shall we talk about Embassy Dakar's role in The Gambia?*

ZUMWALT: Late in 2016, the situation in The Gambia heated up. The country, which straddles the lower reaches of the Gambia River, is fifteen to thirty miles wide and 295 miles long. It is surrounded by Senegal on all sides, save for a narrow strip of coastline along the Atlantic Ocean. The country has attractive beach resorts that draw tourists from Europe, mostly from Great Britain and Scandinavia.

Embassy Dakar sometimes supported our small embassy in the capital of Banjul. Many members of my country team — the defense attaché and representatives from the FBI, Department of Homeland Security, Federal Aviation Association, and USDA, among others — were also accredited to The Gambia. We occasionally sent State officers from our consular, public diplomacy, administrative, and security sections to fill Banjul's staffing gaps. Our courier would travel monthly to Embassy Banjul with equipment, supplies, and diplomatic pouches. Our ambassador, Pat Alsup, an experienced Africa hand, became a good friend.

Senegal-Gambia relations were poor. The Mandinka, Fula, Wolof, and Jola peoples in The Gambia had ethnic ties across the border in Senegal, leading to frequent travel back and forth across the porous international boundary. Senegalese President Macky Sall resented that Great Britain and France had carved out this country because The Gambia divided the southern Casamance region of Senegal from the north and complicated efforts to forge a unified Senegalese identity.

Despite Macky Sall's efforts to forge a good relationship with Gambian President Yahya Jammeh, they did not get along. Jammeh blocked construction of the Senegambia Bridge across the Gambia River — a project that would have halved travel time for motor vehicles from Dakar to the southern Casamance region. Jammeh also provided refuge to some Casamance rebels who were fighting for independence from Senegal.

In December 2016, Jammeh staged a presidential election that he thought he would win easily over a shaky coalition of opposition political parties. However, much to everyone's surprise (except Embassy Banjul, who reported that the opposition was running a strong campaign and that the Gambian people were hopeful for change), opposition candidate Adama Barrow won the election and Jammeh initially conceded defeat. This would have marked the first transfer of power by popular election in The Gambia since independence in 1965.

However, on December 9, Jammeh rejected the results of the election and called for new elections. This action generated unrest in Banjul. Barrow, the winning candidate, announced that he would hold a swearing-in ceremony, but then fled to Dakar after receiving threats. We expressed our concern to the Senegalese government about Barrow's safety in Senegal; we knew that Jammeh had agents in Dakar. I talked with Macky Sall about The Gambia's situation and it was clear that he saw this crisis in Banjul as an opportunity to rid himself of Yahya Jammeh once and for all. He agreed to provide Barrow protection and the Senegalese army sent forces to the Gambia border to heighten the pressure on Jammeh to step down. Sall also mobilized

international organizations such as ECOWAS to heighten the international pressure on Jammeh to depart. ECOWAS deployed regional military forces from Nigeria, Ghana, and other West African states to augment the Senegalese forces along the Gambia's border. The ECOWAS mandate was to remove Yahya Jammeh "by any means necessary." We too wanted to see the end of Jammeh's corrupt rule, but we were also glad that Senegal and other African partners were taking the lead.

Barrow decided that he would hold his swearing-in ceremony in Dakar. The Gambian embassy in Dakar, which had sided with Barrow, hosted the event. I talked to Pat and we agreed she should not leave Banjul because we were afraid she might not be allowed to return. So, we agreed I should attend to show U.S. government recognition of Adama Barrow as the legitimate president of The Gambia.

The Gambian embassy in Senegal was located in a suburban house in Dakar. A tiny living room was packed with television cameras and journalists and about thirty prominent Gambian expatriates living in Dakar, dressed up in their finery. About ten ambassadors joined me to attend this ceremony, including the ambassadors from the United Kingdom, the European Union, Canada, and the Netherlands. The Senegalese foreign minister also attended. I made a point to shake Adama Barrow's hand in front of the television cameras after the ceremony and he was pleased with the message of this gesture. I told him that Ambassador Alsup was waiting for him when he returned to Banjul.

Developments in The Gambia represented the first time in my two years in Senegal where Washington paid attention to day-to-day developments. The NSC tried to micromanage our response to these events. For two years, I had enjoyed autonomy as U.S. Ambassador to Senegal and Guinea-Bissau. The Africa policy officials at the NSC and State were too busy with developments in Nigeria, Mali, Chad, the Central African Republic, or Somalia to spend much time thinking about stable (Senegal) or insignificant (Guinea-Bissau) countries. But suddenly, the NSC system geared up and Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for African Affairs Grant Harris began holding interagency meetings on the Gambia crisis. They asked Pat numerous questions and began directing her actions. I was outraged by this development as Pat knew much more than they did about The Gambia's situation; I thought that they should listen to her advice. Prior to these interagency meetings, I would coordinate with Pat on our secure phone so I could support her position.

The main point of contention between Washington and Embassy Banjul was on whether or not we should evacuate our staff from Banjul due to the civil unrest. This issue mattered to me too, because at this point we had sent almost twenty Embassy Dakar staff (from our security, administrative, consular, and political sections, as well as the defense attaché and FBI offices) to reinforce Embassy Banjul's presence. Our locally engaged staff that we sent down from the embassy's security (RSO) and FBI offices were particularly valuable as they spoke Wolof and could communicate easily with the Gambian police. I remained in contact with the Dakar RSO personnel there, who assured me that they had devised a good plan to maintain security of our people should there be civil unrest. Pat also called in additional Diplomatic Security agents from Washington. Embassy Banjul did evacuate all its dependents from Banjul to Dakar and our management section worked hard to find them housing in Dakar on short notice. Everyone agreed it made more sense for these dependents to remain in the region rather than returning to Washington since Dakar was a nearby and secure place for these families to wait out

developments. We hoped the crisis would be short-lived and these dependents could return to their homes in Banjul soon.

Pat felt strongly that the embassy direct-hire staff should remain in-country. She told the NSC that the United States was not the target of either the demonstrators or the recalcitrant defeated president. Both sides wanted U.S. recognition. The embassy had prohibited its staff from going downtown where any demonstrations might occur. Embassy staff continued to work and, when tensions reached a crescendo as the deadline for Jammeh to leave and relinquish power approached, they sheltered at the embassy for three days. Pat told me, “We feel we’re secure here and we can keep in touch with each other this way.”

This development coincided with the political fallout over the tragic deaths of Ambassador Chris Stevens and two other Americans in Benghazi where Republican members of Congress criticized Secretary of State Hillary Clinton for her failure to order the evacuation of that post. The NSC was clearly concerned about the political fallout should there be another tragedy involving loss of American life in Banjul. In our conference calls, the NSC several times asked for options other than Pat’s chosen plan to remain in place. The NSC held two or three contentious interagency meetings via secure videoconference with embassies Banjul and Dakar, pushing Banjul for a decision to leave the country. Pat did not budge and I supported Pat on the videoconference. As I recall, the Bureau of African Affairs at the State Department was largely silent.

I remember hanging up the secure telephone after our third NSC meeting, when our station chief was discouraged by the NSC insistence that we present alternatives to remaining in Banjul. He told me, “They’re going to pull these people.” I replied, “I don’t think they’ll decide in time.” It was the Friday of Martin Luther King’s birthday weekend. The U.S. government would be closed Monday and I thought that this crisis would be over before the NSC had a chance to regroup to demand that the embassy evacuate its staff.

Jammeh tried everything to avoid relinquishing power, including having the rubber-stamp legislature issue an order extending his time in office. Pat later told me that she thought that after multiple rounds of negotiations with ECOWAS leaders such as Liberian president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Ghanian president John Mahama, the turning point in Jammeh’s mind may have come when Nigerian fighter jets buzzed the State House of The Gambia. Finally, on Saturday, January 21 2017, the Qatars flew in a jumbo jet and Jammeh loaded his limousines and ill-gotten gains onto the plane and flew into exile in Equatorial Guinea where he remains today.

Mass celebration broke out in The Gambia. President Barrow made a triumphant return from Dakar to Banjul. When he arrived at the Banjul International Airport, he was greeted by large crowds celebrating at the airport and on roads leading into the city. Ambassador Alsup joined other diplomats and Barrow supporters on the tarmac to greet the new president. When President Barrow spotted her, he gave Pat a big hug. The next day, the Gambian newspapers carried the photo of the new president hugging the U.S. ambassador. We would not have benefited from this visible demonstration of the U.S. support for the democratic process had Pat not stood her ground against NSC pressure to evacuate the post.

It is, of course, easy in hindsight to take credit for making the right decision. The State Department will continue to face issues involving risk management. It is not easy to decide the point when we must evacuate a post because the risk has begun to outweigh the potential reward.

But I am proud that Pat stood her ground and was happy to support her decision. As a result, the United States gained a lot of goodwill with the newly elected government in The Gambia.

*KENNEDY: Sometimes people in Washington don't think of the consequences, only thinking about politics here as opposed to what it means in the country. Once you take people out, it's not that easy to put them back in.*

ZUMWALT: Exactly right. This incident helped me appreciate my position in Dakar. I was in a country that mattered but did not have Washington DC second-guessing my decisions. It was up to me and my country team to figure out how to advance U.S. goals in Senegal and in Guinea-Bissau during my tour.

*KENNEDY: In many interviews, I run across situations where people in the NSC are trying to prove how decisive they are, but I think they really don't understand.*

ZUMWALT: I think your observation is true. I must say, in my experience, the NSC reacts very differently in the East Asia policy world. There is a strong tradition of close collaboration between the Pentagon, State, the intelligence community, and NSC on East Asian issues. This stems maybe from the era when Paul Wolfowitz was EAP Assistant Secretary, Rich Armitage was DOD Assistant Secretary, and Gaston J. Sigur, Jr. was at the NSC. They all knew and respected each other. This tradition of solid interagency collaboration on East Asia policy continued for most of my career. There may be some elements of interagency tension, but most of the decision-makers enjoy pre-existing relationships with counterparts in other agencies that help them resolve their differences.

The situation seemed to be different in Africa policy. Prior to transferring to Dakar, I made a courtesy call on Grant Harris, the NSC's Senior Director for African Affairs. When I invited the Senegal desk officer to accompany me, she replied, "We don't go to the NSC." I could not recall a similar situation in EAP; when an ambassador-designate visited the NSC, the desk officer would accompany. This approach was part of the interagency communication process. I got along fine with Grant Harris — we both graduated from UC Berkeley, so we shared that college connection. And he needed me because, once in a while when he wanted to ask for a favor from Macky Sall, he would ask me to convey the request. But apparently his relationship with Assistant Secretary Linda Thomas-Greenfield was not as collegial. After each of my meetings with Harris, I would inform Linda about our conversation to make sure she was comfortable with the decision. I do not think there were any policy differences that caused this tension, so the poor communication mystified me.

*KENNEDY: What was the background of our ambassador to Gambia, Pat Alsup?*

ZUMWALT: Much of Pat's career was spent in Africa. She had been the DCM in Banjul, and later in Accra, and had also worked in the State Department's Office of Central African Affairs. I thought she was the perfect person for the job because Pat was experienced, a hard worker, and a strong leader. But she is also a modest person who understood that Banjul was a sleepy post (unless the president is fleeing) that did not garner much attention from policymakers in Washington.

I hosted Pat four or five times at my home because she would come up to Dakar from Banjul occasionally. When she visited, I would organize a policy lunch for her with ambassadors

accredited to Banjul but resident in Dakar. I would invite the Dutch, Japanese, Korean, Canadian, and Belgian ambassadors to lunch for a discussion on Gambian politics with Pat.

These lunches were important because we wanted like-minded countries to understand the human rights problems in Banjul. Pat would brief them on the situation in Banjul and I'm sure that these ambassadors reported back to their capitals about her insights on the situation in The Gambia. During her visits to Dakar, Pat also met with the United Nations agencies such as the UN Population Division, which ran programs in Banjul from their regional headquarters in Dakar. I tried to make Pat's stays in Dakar pleasant, because I knew how difficult life could be in Banjul. On her visits to Dakar, she always stayed at my home, which was convenient to the UN offices and to the administrative support offices and classified communications facilities at the U.S. embassy across the street.

I am pleased to see that despite its many problems, the situation in The Gambia appears to have stabilized. The Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission has begun its work to research what happened under Yahya Jammeh. Under President Adama Barrow, relations with Senegal have improved dramatically and the two countries finished construction of the bridge project across the Gambia River. Relations with the United States are much improved also. The Gambia will continue to need help from its neighbors and the international donor community, but it has made positive strides toward democratic governance.

## Chapter XVIII

### Final Days in Dakar, 2016–2017

SEPTEMBER 17, 2018

*KENNEDY: This is our final go-round. Do you remember where we left off?*

ZUMWALT: I finished my tour as U.S. Ambassador to Senegal and Guinea-Bissau in January 2017.

In the summer of 2016, I had decided to retire from the Foreign Service after my assignment in Dakar. I could not imagine returning to Washington and working in the department again after such a pleasant experience in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau. I did not want another overseas assignment either, as Ann had already retired from the Foreign Service and would be pursuing her second career as a social worker in the United States. Moreover, I received a wonderful job offer to take over from Admiral Dennis Blair as the CEO of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA — a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting mutual understanding between the United States and Japan. I informed the State Department’s Bureau of African Affairs in May 2016 that I would resign the following January in order to provide them seven months to identify, nominate, and confirm a replacement. I did not tell anyone at the embassy (other than the DCM, Martina Boustani) that I was leaving Dakar in order to avoid becoming a “lame duck” in my final six months. I appreciated Martina’s discretion in keeping this information from leaking out until I chose to inform others.

The outcome of the U.S. presidential election of 2016 had nothing to do with my decision to retire from the State Department. My wonderful and meaningful career had been crowned with a memorable assignment as U.S. Ambassador to Senegal and Guinea-Bissau. It was now time to return to Washington, where both Ann and I could pursue our respective second careers. Like many Americans, in the summer of 2016 when I decided to retire, I fully expected that when I actually retired on January 30, 2017, the eighth U.S. president under whom I would serve would be a woman.

During the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign, candidate Donald Trump’s anti-Muslim rhetoric attracted critical attention in Senegal. In particular, many Senegalese were insulted by his promise to ban Muslim travelers from entering the United States. I was not alone in trying to manage the public affairs fallout from this campaign rhetoric. I remember discussing the issues on a phone call among other U.S. ambassadors to West African countries and Assistant Secretary Linda Thomas-Greenfield. One of my colleagues asked for guidance on how to respond to questions about candidate Trump’s anti-Muslim rhetoric. The guidance we received was not usable. Essentially it said that, thus far, Trump had only received one million votes in the primaries and that his views did not represent those of the U.S. government.

I remember thinking, “But what if Trump *is* elected?” Instead, I chose to point out that anyone who takes the oath of office as President of the United States swears to uphold the Constitution of the United States. Our constitution guarantees freedom of religion, including the rights of Muslims to practice their faith freely. I did not feel good about saying that our system of rule of law would limit the scope of possible presidential action, but I could not think of another good way to explain the impact of this anti-Muslim campaign rhetoric.

Ann and I were both shocked by the election outcome. I had expected Hillary Clinton to win and thought that under her leadership, U.S.-Senegal relations would remain strong. She cared about Africa and understood the value of international friends and partners. Senegal had many friends in Congress from both American political parties. When it became clear that Donald Trump had won the election, I hoped that his cabinet choices would mitigate some of his nativist instincts so that the United States could preserve our mutually beneficial U.S.-Senegal partnership.

The day after the election, three embassy employees asked to see me privately; each informed me that they had decided to resign from the U.S. government. They told me that they could not in good conscience work to promote President-Elect Donald Trump's policies. The first was a senior FBI employee who would soon qualify for his pension. During our meeting, I convinced him to delay sending his letter of resignation until we could talk further. That night, Ann and I hosted him for dinner, where he unburdened himself. He told us that as an African American law-enforcement official, he had always been proud of the FBI and its mission to protect the constitution and respect the rule of law. However, the campaign rhetoric and then the election of Donald Trump had "given permission" to many of his FBI colleagues to voice racist rhetoric in their conversations and emails that he could not stomach. He told us that he had lost respect for many of his FBI colleagues in this new political climate. I was saddened to learn that such a diligent and experienced FBI career employee was leaving government service prematurely, but I respected his decision and was comforted to learn that he had thought carefully about the implications of his momentous decision. Later, I wrote him a strong letter of recommendation that helped him to find a high-paying job with a multinational company as its chief of security in Saudi Arabia. He was a good fit for that position, but the retirement of a government employee of his caliber was a real loss to America.

The other two employees were young Muslim-American FSOs. I will not mention their names because we had private conversations, but both had promising careers ahead of them. One was an entry-level officer and the other was a new FS-03. I understood why they wanted to quit. They had entered the Foreign Service to promote U.S. interests and had been comfortable that America was a land of religious tolerance that respected their Muslim faith. Now, they would be working for a president that did not seem to uphold the U.S. ideals of religious freedom. They both told me that they could no longer continue to work for such a government.

I spent over an hour talking with each of them. I told them that I had worked for seven U.S. presidents in my career and that I did not agree with all of these presidents either. However, Foreign Service oaths of office were not oaths of fealty to a president, but rather promises to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. I pointed out that they could each expect a career of an additional 25–30 years, which meant that they would work for four or five presidents after Donald Trump. I told one of them that I had relied on his advice when I visited with Senegal's religious leaders to help me understand the appropriate religious protocol. I told the other that her expertise as we drafted an appropriate public message to mark the Eid al-Fitr holiday had been invaluable. The State Department needed a diverse workforce, I told each of them. If every Muslim employee were now to quit the State Department, that would leave future secretaries of state and future ambassadors without the benefit of important experience and needed advice.

I count as one of my greatest achievements as U.S. Ambassador to Senegal my success in convincing both of them to continue their Foreign Service careers. Both have gone on to

important positions and I'm sure they will contribute much to the State Department during their continued government service.

As I was leaving Dakar, I paid a farewell call on President Macky Sall. We engaged in a pleasant conversation about U.S.-Senegal relations and progress over the past two years in the security and development sectors. Sall much appreciated the results of the Millennium Challenge Corporation compact, our recently signed defense cooperation agreement, and our work to promote the Casamance peace process. Sall gave me the title of Commander in the *Ordre national du lion* (National Order of the Lion) in recognition of my contributions to our bilateral relationship. This meeting with Macky Sall was one of the high notes of my diplomatic career.

When I returned to Washington DC in January, I walked into a department in shock. The State Department employees really did not know what to expect. There was hope that newly appointed Secretary of State Rex Tillerson would become a strong leader — he certainly knew how to run a large organization and he had deep knowledge about the Middle East and Latin America. But there was an atmosphere of unease about the department's future. I decided that it was not the right moment for a retirement celebration, so I declined to have a retirement or a flag ceremony. Together, my Embassy Dakar farewell party and my receipt of the Order of the Lion award from President Sall had formed the appropriate capstone to my career. I used my remaining days in the department to quietly complete the retirement paperwork and to say goodbye to a few friends. The last time I left the building, when I turned in my badge to the security guard, I realized that my life would begin a new phase.

## Chapter XIX

### Reflections on a Foreign Service Career

SEPTEMBER 17, 2018

*KENNEDY: Okay, I'd like to ask general questions. Now that you're retired, what are your reflections on the Foreign Service?*

ZUMWALT: I recently visited Spelman and Morehouse colleges in Atlanta to meet their students studying international affairs. I told them that the Foreign Service was a rewarding career choice for Americans interested in public service. Where else can one serve one's country, engage with interesting people from many societies, learn something new every day, and experience frequent challenges that enable personal and professional growth? I was honest about what to expect.

Foreign Service careers resemble careers in the military because officers must sometimes subordinate their personal wishes to advance the mission of the organization. Worldwide availability can mean service in a hardship post or separation from one's family. That is what "service" means.

One student asked, "Are you going to make policy?"

I replied, "Foreign service officers influence policy. Foreign service officers alert the U.S. government to emerging issues, they provide important information and context, they frame key factors, and they provide recommendations to aid political decision-makers." I said that a Foreign Service career was rewarding because one can influence the policymaking process while working with other fascinating people and enjoying new experiences.

In my Foreign Service career, I experienced two types of jobs. Overseas, we were more oriented toward policy implementation, whereas in Washington, we could become more involved in the policy formulation process. In the former category, I would place my tour as U.S. Ambassador to Senegal, whereas my experience as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Japan and Korea was in the latter category.

In Dakar, my role as ambassador resembled in some ways the 19<sup>th</sup>-century captain of a U.S. naval ship who had only intermittent contact with his commander in the United States. I had received general orders from the U.S. government — promote democratic values, foster sustainable development, combat transnational threats such as terrorism and infectious diseases, protect American citizens, and pursue commercial opportunities. But the State Department and the White House provided little daily oversight. As long as I was advancing our stated goals, I enjoyed substantial freedom of action in Dakar. I frequently told the Embassy Dakar country team that "We enjoy the best of all worlds. This country matters to Washington, but not so much that they're telling us how to do our jobs."

I encouraged the country team to develop good policy ideas and promised to advocate on their behalf to advance these proposals if necessary. However, our main job was to implement the U.S. policy goals for Senegal and Guinea-Bissau. These general instructions provided us with broad scope for meaningful work.

As I found out when I was in U.S. Embassy Beijing, there is much less maneuvering room for FSOs abroad working on policy regarding a near-peer-competitor like China, a security threat

like North Korea, or an important friend and ally like Japan or South Korea. In these important embassies, there is much more oversight and second-guessing of our actions from Washington.

In Washington assignments, we could have more policy influence. As DAS for Japan and Korea, much of my time was spent in interagency meetings or in trying to persuade the State Department decision-makers to adopt a certain policy. This work too was rewarding, but it could also sometimes be frustrating because of the complex and time-consuming bureaucratic politics involved in foreign policy formulation. I was glad that in my career I could experience both policy implementation and policy formulation jobs.

*KENNEDY: You mention you went to Morehouse and Spelman, traditionally black colleges. What were you getting from them about what they were thinking about?*

ZUMWALT: I was encouraged that many students at Spelman and Morehouse were interested in careers in government service. One student at Morehouse College asked me, “Should I study Japanese or Chinese?” My answer was, “Select one of those languages to study and then work to master it well. Both languages are important and we need people who are fluent in each.” This student had just started studying Chinese, so I said, “In your case, you’ve already started Chinese, so keep going!”

*KENNEDY: Do you have the feeling that Japan was a great focus of American attention and then, with China coming to the fore, that Japan has been pushed to one side?*

ZUMWALT: When I began seriously studying Japanese in the late 1970s, many Americans thought Japan was emerging as an economic super-state. Many American students thought that that Japanese-language ability would boost their business careers. Now, of course, China has become the world’s second-largest economy. China is important, but that does not make Japan less important.

In fact, the rise of China means that our friends and allies in the Indo-Pacific region are even more important to the United States. The United States and Japan share common values and interests; we are democracies, we believe in rule of law and basic freedoms, and we both have market economies. These shared beliefs and common interests make the United States and Japan natural partners. One role of the Foreign Service in the future will be to harness international partnerships with like-minded friends and allies to sustain our shared democratic values and to promote the openness of the international political and economic system.

Managing relations with China is and will continue to be an extremely important foreign policy challenge. But China is not a natural partner because although we share some common interests such as dealing with climate change and mitigating the threat of global pandemics, we do not share common values. China does not have a rule-of-law system. China uses “rule by law,” not “rule of law.” In China, the Communist Party is not subject to law, rather the party uses laws to enforce its decisions on others. Chinese citizens do not enjoy the personal freedoms or legal protections that Americans and Japanese take for granted such as freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and freedom of peaceful assembly. In the future, the United States will need to work with China in areas where we share common interests, while pushing back in areas where our values diverge.

As the National Security Strategy of the United States, published by the White House in December 2017, states, “U.S. allies are critical to responding to mutual threats... and preserving

our mutual interests.” In order to manage the rise of China, the United States must work closely with allies and like-minded partners. Therefore, the rise of China has made Japan an even more important partner for the United States in Asia because of our ability to work together based on our shared interests and common values.

*KENNEDY: Could you talk about what you’re doing now?*

ZUMWALT: I am a Senior Non-Resident Fellow at a non-profit organization called the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, USA. It is a U.S.-based 501(c)(3), incorporated under U.S. law. We seek to promote strong U.S.-Japan relations. We advance this goal in several ways. We sponsor exchange programs for members of Congress and for congressional staff to visit Japan. We organize an Asian Studies seminar for congressional staffers. We also work with partners to program events around the country. We have academics on our staff who conduct research and publish papers about U.S.-Japan relations. We often partner with other think tanks like the Brookings Institution or the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) or the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace to support Japan-related events in Washington DC.

I am also the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Japan-America Society of Washington DC. This organization works to promote strong relations between the United States and Japan at the grassroots level. We sponsor programs such as the annual Sakura Matsuri, the largest one-day street festival that celebrates Japanese culture in the United States. We also sponsor the National Japan Bowl, a high school student competition about Japanese language and culture, and we manage a Japanese-language school for young professionals.

*KENNEDY: Japan, of course, has had a unique role. I’m ninety years old, I remember being a teenager when we were fighting the Japanese and the horrible things you heard about the Japanese. Yet, within a few months, our troops went into occupy Japan and, some years later, I occupied Japan — and it’s just a lovefest.*

ZUMWALT: Harvard professor John W. Dower’s *Embracing Defeat* explains how our views of each other were transformed dramatically as our two nations transitioned from wartime to peacetime. The stereotypes on both sides did not survive the new friendships forged during the occupation. When many Americans came to Japan to live during the occupation, each side’s stereotypes about the other broke down quickly. This was my experience as well. My Japanese host mother told me that, by the end of the war, the Japanese government was so discredited that she no longer believed its propaganda about Americans.

Let me tell you one final story that showcases how people-to-people contacts can dispel misunderstandings and build friendships. On a trip to Yamaguchi prefecture in 2009, I met a 79-year-old Japanese World War II veteran named Matsumuro-san. As a very young man, he joined the Imperial Japanese Navy, where he was trained to carry out a kamikaze mission. As he prepared for his final mission, he was given leave to visit his family in Hiroshima to say his final goodbyes. He remembered well his mother’s tears upon his departure because she knew she would never see her son again. As Matsumuro-san rode the train back to his naval base on the island of Kyushu, he heard a rumor that a powerful bomb had been dropped on his hometown. A few days later, he managed to return to his family home in Hiroshima, only to find it completely destroyed with no trace of his parents or siblings. They had all been killed by the nuclear weapon. Matsumuro-san told me that he could not understand what had happened. He had been

prepared to die while his mother and father were supposed to live. Yet, fate had spared his life at the cost of the lives of his entire family.

Matsumuro-san told me that he became extremely angry. He was angry at the world, he was angry at the war, but especially, he was angry at the Americans who had killed his family. He explained that he began to drink excessively and lived a life without purpose. One day, he was walking down the street and he saw an American marine flirting with a Japanese woman. Enraged, he confronted the marine and they got into a fistfight. The American military police arrested Matsumuro-san for assault and he spent the night in the U.S. military brig while he sobered up. The next day, when he was brought before a U.S. military judge, Matsumuro-san knew that he was in trouble for hitting an American marine. He thought he would be punished severely because Japan had lost the war and he should not have engaged in a fistfight with a U.S. marine. Much to his surprise, he told me, this marine appeared in court and Matsumuro-san was even more shocked when this marine began to testify on Matsumuro-san's behalf. The marine said that he was the one who had started the fight. The marine encouraged the court to show leniency towards Matsumuro-san. The U.S. military judge agreed to dismiss the case.

The outcome of his experience with the U.S. military justice system left Matsumuro-san bewildered. This American marine was the victor in the war, yet he had not acted like a conqueror. Matsumuro-san said he simply could not understand why this marine had shown compassion and forgiveness toward a former enemy. Matsumuro-san later sought out this American marine to find out what had motivated him to appear in court and take responsibility for their fight. They engaged in a long conversation and Matsumuro-san realized that this American marine was nothing like the enemy he had been taught to hate during the war. They became lifelong friends.

Matsumuro-san decided to study in the United States to learn more about the America that he had misunderstood his entire life. He told me that during his stay in the United States, he was impressed by the spirit of volunteerism of Americans. After returning to Japan, Matsumuro-san became an active volunteer in his community's social welfare activities. He later married and had children. When they became old enough, he sent all of his children to study in the United States, where they were sponsored by his American friend from the Marine Corps.

Mr. Matsumuro's story of bitter enemies who become friends reflects the amazing trajectory of U.S.-Japan relations over the past century. It also demonstrates the importance of direct person-to-person contacts in order to overcome stereotypes and prejudices to reach a mutual understanding. My generation has no direct memories of our horrible conflict, but we should remember that humans have the capacity to overcome hatred and distrust in order to live and work together. When I met Matsumuro-san, he was still volunteering as a guest lecturer at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, where he educated younger generations of American marines about his journey toward friendship with America. Meeting Matsumuro-san inspired me to continue my own work to provide opportunities for the next generation of Americans and Japanese to learn about each other's countries and strengthen the foundation for our close bilateral ties.

I am a strong believer in people-to-people exchange programs. The more people travel and experience the world, the more their stereotypes about others will disappear. Youth-exchange programs represent an investment in our future. If young people can be exposed to other cultures, that will make them better able to manage and adapt in a multicultural world.

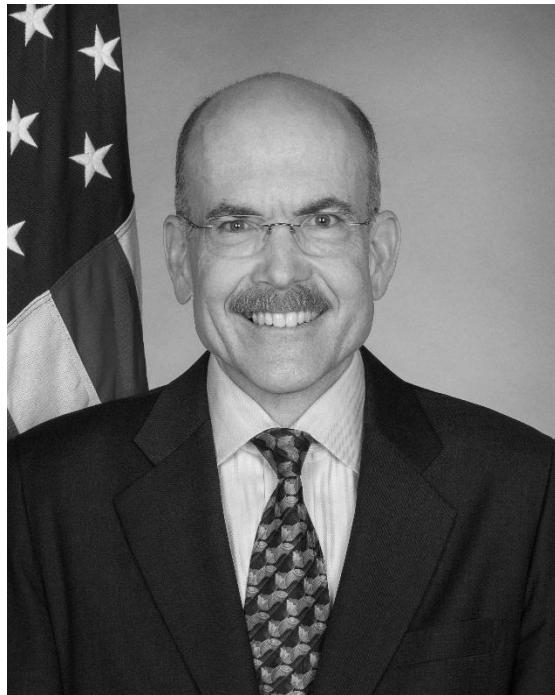
Between the United States and Japan, the grassroots exchange programs are building a foundation to sustain the foundation of our relationship. Many people are doing this work today. There are 38 Japan-America societies around the country. The United States and Japan are also linked by over two hundred sister-city relationships.

*KENNEDY: These interviews have been most interesting.*

ZUMWALT: This process has been a wonderful experience for me too. Many thanks for inviting me to share my experiences with you.

*End of interview*

## About Ambassador James P. Zumwalt



Ambassador James P. Zumwalt is currently the Chairman of the Japan America Society of Washington DC and a non-resident Distinguished Senior Fellow at the Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA. Prior to retiring from the State Department, Zumwalt served as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Senegal and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau from 2015 to January 2017. Previously, he was responsible for U.S. policy toward Japan and Korea as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the State Department Bureau of East Asian Affairs. When the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami struck Japan in 2011, Zumwalt was the Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, where he coordinated the United States' support for American citizens in Japan needing assistance and U.S. efforts to assist the Japanese Government's response to that crisis.

During his 36-year Foreign Service career, Zumwalt served overseas in Kinshasa, Kobe, Tokyo, Beijing, Dakar, and Bissau. In Washington DC, Zumwalt worked in the State Department's Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs and on the Bureau of Asia and Pacific Affairs' Japan, Korea, and Philippine desks. He also worked for the United States Trade Representative's Office of Japanese Affairs. Zumwalt was named a Commander of the Order of the Lion from the Government of Senegal and was inducted into the Order of the Rising Sun, with neck ribbon, from the Government of Japan.

Zumwalt received a Master's Degree in International Security Studies from the National War College in 1998 and a Bachelor of Arts in American History and also in Japanese Language from the University of California at Berkeley in 1979. Born and raised in San Diego, California, he now lives in Washington DC with his wife, Ann Kambara, a retired Foreign Service Officer and social worker who now volunteers for the American Red Cross as a disaster mental health counselor.

## About Charles Stuart Kennedy



Charles Stuart Kennedy has been director of the Foreign Affairs Oral History Program since its inception in 1985.

A career officer in the US Foreign Service from 1955 to 1985, he retired with the rank of Minister Counselor. Mr. Kennedy was consul general in Naples, Italy (1979–81), Seoul, South Korea (1976–79), Athens, Greece (1970–74), and Saigon, South Vietnam (1969–70).

Kennedy was educated at Williams College (BA) and Boston University (MA). He is the author of *The American Consul: A History of the United States Consular Service 1776–1914* and co-author of *The U.S. Consul at Work* and *American Ambassadors in a Troubled World*.

He was awarded the Foreign Service Cup from the Director General of the Foreign Service in 1997 for his work as an oral historian. In June 2014, the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) gave him the Award for Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy in recognition of his distinguished Foreign Service career and a lifetime of public service. Previous recipients of this prestigious award include George H.W. Bush, Lawrence Eagleburger, Cyrus Vance, Thomas Pickering, George Shultz, and Richard Lugar.

In 1986, after retiring from the Foreign Service, Kennedy became managing director of The George Washington University's Foreign Service History Center. There, he created the Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection and began recording the insights and experiences of American diplomats. The program moved to Georgetown University and then, in 1988, to the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. In that capacity, he has personally interviewed more than a thousand retired American diplomats, some of whose careers date back to the 1920s.